

Postmodern Identity. Image, Fashion and New Technologies

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Abstract: *The passage of modernism has brought about a new element in the construction of individual identity. The character of identity as social construct is underlined by the influence that fashion has in experimenting, changing and producing individual identity. The look and style of a person are part of the period's fashion and refer to the possibility for individuals to use the products of the fashion industry just like any other consumption good that can be changed according to the dominant codes of society, either by copying them or by surpassing them. Our research follows the successive steps of identity construction in time, according to the social role, style and clothing of the individuals, with an emphasis on the new ways of influencing identity construction facilitated by the emergence of the fashion industry on the media market.*

Keywords: *modernism, postmodernism, fashion and style, identity.*

The identity of any person is first and foremost a matter of the immediate space and the present time and the possible variations of these two coordinates, directly connected to the events in the life of every individual, assuming the superimposition or alternance of several possible identities: professional, local, regional, ethnical, confessional, religious, national. The multiple identities that are constructed through the identification of individuals with coordinates that configure human personality must also be approached from the perspective of technical innovation, of the forms of democratic cohabitation, of the standards of living.

Thus, the identity of people today is a construct that follows the constructive principles of the postmodern paradigm; it values differences, the dynamic of alterity,

the feeling of a broken world. Postmodern identity depends on the way in which the individuals construct, perceive, and interpret themselves and how they present themselves to others. The individuals are conscious that identity is a construct that requires a constant process of innovation and renewal taking into consideration the evolution of society, new models, even if they are imposed by the consumer society through mass-media. Naturally, postmodern theory defines the notion of identity and explains the way in which it is constructed within postmodern cultural forms.

The problems of postmodern identity have glided from accumulating knowledge to the way in which knowledge is structured and used to configure identity. This concept is based on the fact that understanding the visual phenomenon depends more in who you are than on what you know. It is an ontological question rather than an epistemological one. Through producing and receiving visual images, artistic or not, we configure our way of thinking about the world and about ourselves.

The impact of contemporary images has generated a wide range of socio-political and economic issues, including the influence on individuals' identity, the notion of citizenship, democracy. Often, through the different means of promoting products, the audience is asked to feel free to make a choice, to be themselves, according to the principles of democratic society; at the same time, it is supposed that a consumer must be similar to many other individuals that will acquire and consume the products that correspond to the esthetic, quality and functionality norms of the times. This contradiction gives complexity to the visual text because it suggests at the same time interest in and fear of the profound implication of freedom.

Semiotic theory suggests that visual images are read as texts, being similar from certain points of view to texts. Images and texts are forms of representation; they depend on the use of metaphor and symbols. They are used similarly in television shows, video games, ads. But they are fundamentally similar through the construction of meaning by the consumers, in the same measure in which the former contribute to the latter's construction of identity. The fact that images are perceived holistically, as a whole, can lead to the idea that they are simpler than texts but they affect us in a larger measure than written or spoken texts. We construct images perceiving them as a whole, and they influence us because of their attractiveness, their sensuality. This effect is visible especially in certain productions, action films of series in which the images and effects go way beyond the dialogue between characters (*Mission: Impossible*, *Miami Vice*). This effect is felt even more in the case of fashion shows, where the surprise of the new models created by the designers, the rhythm, the colors, the movement on the catwalk annihilates any commentary regarding the presented creations. In addition, images change rapidly, the camera holds on the details of the outfits, accessories, makeup, hair of the models. In this way, the elegant and often brilliant aspect of the show becomes symbolical form, being a major component of the content. The camera does not allow us to stare extensively at a shot, neither to reflect too much on what is going on. The producers create a mirage

of beauty and refinement out of images and makes the audience think in images. From a postmodern perspective the surface is intertwined with the context and the meaning. And meaning can be symbolical. We can bring as an example of deep connection between image and meaning the choices that individuals make to reveal their cultural identity. The cultural differences are well illustrated in the visual arts and media production in general. Individuals belonging to the same cultural context are tempted to make the same associations through which youth, beauty, luxury are transferred to the proposed products, entirely or only on certain aspects or qualities. The juxtaposition of these qualities creates arbitrary links through which the designers and producers of fashion shows, or stations such as Fashion TV, try to determine the participation of individuals to the reality which they construct, a kind of hyperreality in which they are consumers. Thus, the messages that proclaimed individuality through proposing identity, desire, power models try to shape mass consciousness.

Fashion offers fundamental models and roles for constructing identity. To bring out the characteristics of postmodern identity, in his studies on media culture Douglas Kellner distinguishes elements that define the way identity is built in traditional and in modern societies. Kellner's opinion is that in traditional societies there were fixed roles and codes that allowed the recognition of social status, class and profession of a person by their clothing and appearance. Assuming a certain role in society, work and social status was conditioned by pre-established social codes, and identity was established through birth, marriage or accomplishments in the course of one's life.(Kellner 2000)

Indeed, we may recall that in the medieval age clothing was different for members of different social classes and wearing certain types of clothing for the poorer population was forbidden. These rigid codes have been eliminated in modern societies, starting with the 17th Century; fashion was starting to dictate the changes in the dress and appearance of individuals, with the mention that this was a privilege reserved for the rich, who could afford frequent changes of expensive sets of clothing and make-up products, being, consequently, a symbol of power and social standing.

An important factor in influencing the process of identity construction is the technological development of the 19th Century. The early industrialization of the Western countries allowed the serial manufacture of materials and clothing, leading to the democratization of fashion. More and more people could afford to dress according to the style of the age, and the fact that women slowly became active members of society allowed for changes in the style that contributed to the identification of women's social condition. We need to bring to attention the fact that, at the beginning of the 20th Century, the avant-garde style launched in female couture by Coco Chanel contributed to the creation of a new lifestyle. Clothing, headwear, purse, perfume and jewelry models also promoted a new kind of woman, a free, modern, independent one. The Chanel woman could work, travel, play sports

or have fun dressed lightly and elegantly, in clothes made from unconventional materials, and especially in the ever-present *tailleur*, a style that has later made a career, mainly in office dress styles.

The opportunities that the modern society offers in choosing social roles determines the reflection of the individual upon his options and upon the need to assume a socially validated identity. The individual's options in clothing contribute to the transformation of individuals in familiar characters of the modern era and, implicitly, to the recognition of the other. Still, fashion continues to be conditioned by codes dictated by sex, economic realities and the force of social conformity that says what individuals can and cannot wear, what they can or cannot be. It is important that the 20th Century has opened the markets towards mass consumption in what clothing and cosmetics are concerned. In this situation, until the 60s, different groups had taken existence in Western society, claiming to watch over the observing of good taste. Their ambition was to suggest the decorous fashion, style and attitudes in an attempt to prolong the standards of previous eras, marked by rigid codes.

We are not discussing here the length of the dress, of the frock or of the hair. It is a well-known fact that activity in public institutions, factories or on construction sites required clothing adequate to each type of activity and a certain dress conformity, despite some rebellious outbursts such as those of rock-and-roll singers in the shows of the 50s. More important is the reflection of theorists on the self and identity in the modern age. For Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre self and identity are existential projections of each conscious and active individual, prepared to act for the forming and maintaining of identity. As opposed to the previous periods, when identity was considered to be the inborn, stable and unitary essence of the individual, Sartrean existentialism states that man is free, that man will become what he will have made of himself by choosing a moral code, a type of art or another, an attitude. The existentialist does not assume that man can find any support in a sign given purposefully to orient him, being convinced that man deciphers the sign himself, as he pleases. He expresses the belief that, without any help, man is condemned to invent himself every moment (Sartre 1994). Thus, in the modern age, the self is conscious of identity as a construct and of the fact that changing it depends on the will of the individuals. Different roles, assumed by the individuals during their lifetimes require a certain appearance and an appropriate style, and this is usually dictated by fashion. Of course, models of style and image come from the consumer culture, which is more and more promoted through the media because of the development and globalization on the mass-media. This is why identity becomes less stable.

The complexity and rhythm of life in the postmodern age emphasizes the frailty of identity, which can be subjected to repeated changes, according to the circumstances of life. In this situation, the postmodern discourse questions the very notion of identity. For example, the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard claimed that

postmodern identity no longer has the consistency and stability of the modern self because subjects have become a mass subjected to simulation. Baudrillard talks of a world where boundaries and differences between genders, classes, political, cultural or social theories disappear, fusing in a postmodern kaleidoscope, in which models and styles taken from media culture are more and more visible. The postmodernism that Baudrillard announces manifests itself in a hyperrealistic world, in which models and codes determine thought and behavior, and information and entertainment media offer more intense experiences than those in day-to-day life. The triviality of everyday no longer satisfies the taste of individuals for spectacle and sensational. The simulation of elements of life transforms any trivial thing into shows, election campaigns, rituals, that is, into merchandise destined for consumption and which stimulates consumption, constantly reproducing into new shapes (Baudrillard 1996b, 1996a, 2008)

Contemporary fashion is a part of this show of postmodern life, offering options regarding style, clothing and image to the individual. Through these elements, in the 60s, fashion contributed to the construction of personal identity, together with sex, drugs and rock-and-roll. This period has been shaped by the attempt to overthrow the older cultural codes, and the anti-fashion put forth by the promoters of counterculture have continued to be in vogue for the following decades. Showing flexibility, the fashion industry put into circulation styles and images in constant change, meant for those who preferred the fast change of appearance, according to the new look and implicitly to the new role they wanted to assume. Using the dynamics of fashion, individuals unsatisfied by their identity, outlined by adopting the dominant codes, could choose their own style, opposing the dominant ones, making their own or using the dominant codes in a personal manner. Thus, personal identity was often constructed as a gesture of teenage rebellion against parents or teachers, or in comparison to models and behaviors imposed by television shows, commercials for the most trivial clothing items, or electrical appliances or to the conformity that offered standard reactions to certain life situations.

Gradually, the media culture became a source of cultural models, both through the television shows, films, pop music created by traditionalist conservatives, and through radicals trying to overturn the imposed cultural codes of fashion, values, behavior models and the traditional roles of the sexes. The unconventional clothing, and the long hair of 60s and 70s rock stars supported the counterculture, and favored the adoption of new styles of clothing, behavior, and attitudes. Through the identities it outlines, fashion is part of the socio-political conflict of the period, of the battle between conservatives and radicals, and it changes in accordance to the political changes that offer conservative or liberal values. This situation is very relevant in American culture, in which film or pop music stars such as Madonna or Michael Jackson, rock bands, have rallied behind a position or the other, promoting more liberal dress styles and behavior models. The analysis of the phenomenon made by

Douglas Kellner in *Media Culture* (2000, 311-348) is excellent. The author captures the proteic nature of the stars, the possibilities of changing the style, the look and even the life according to the evolutions in society. Madonna has always managed to be on the forefront of change and to express the deepest wishes of individual or group personality manifestations of the youth in the United States. The hairdo, the clothes, the attitude on stage or in videos, have influenced the style in which American women dressed, did their hair or their make-up. The fashion adopted by the star went from ostentatious and bad taste to haut couture, to techno and to a pastiche of the styles of other periods, in a postmodern way. She changed her appearance going from a sensual body to a sporty one or the techno style of the futuristic characters in science-fiction films or comics. She assumed the roles of femme fatale, sexual object, representative of marginal groups, to the strong, sporty mother, capable of establishing her role and position in a men's world. In the spirit of the previous demonstration, we can say that Madonna herself was transformed into an object of consumption because she managed to produce and sell her own successive images to the audience. The explanation that Kellner gives for this phenomenon is the relationship between political economy and cultural production. The researcher believes that because of the experts she hired, Madonna's success is a marketing success, and the videos, the music, the image, are a triumph of production and sales strategies.

The same reasoning can be applied in the case of the development that the fashion industry has experienced in the last two decades. The great shows of virtuosity and refinement in the presentations held in different world capitals by the great Fashion Houses such as Chanel, Dior, Gucci, Givenchy, Armani and others, are accompanied by sizeable promotion campaigns and sales at exorbitant prices which allow the continuation of this type of shows. The mechanism that ensures the success of the new collections of contemporary designers works both on the podium, where the presentation is transformed into a celebration of beauty, grace and perfection, and behind the scenes, where an army of tailors, make-up artists, hair stylists, complete the work of the designer emphasizing his style through make-up and sophisticated hairdos. The same importance is given to the producers of the shows, to the journalists that comment them, take interviews and report live from these events, to the experts who developed the production and sales strategies of the new clothes, make-up products and hair care and beauty products. In addition to the promotion given by television stations that take advantage of any big event to increase their rating, fashion magazines and also women's and men's magazines such as "Elle", "Vogue", "Look", "Fashion", "Harper's Bazaar", "InStyle" etc. Fashion TV is worth mentioning for its efficiency in promoting all activities in the fashion industry. It provides around the clock coverage of older and newer collections, major events such as Fashion Week in Paris or Milan, the presentations of top rated designers, make-up artists and hair stylists, and, not least, famous models or those who aspire to a successful career.

Another method of promotion is producing new models for cinema stars to be shown on the red carpet at the Oscars or at other major events in the film world. The American Academy Awards are a good occasion for designers to put out new models for the attendees and winners to wear and to show not only to those at the ceremony, but to millions of television viewers around the world. The clothes picked by Oscar winners are a chance for young designers to assert themselves and great publicity for older, established designers, who can set the trends for next season's fashion. More or less famous designers manage not just to sell their collections, but also to induce the audience a desire to be like the stars, to be beautiful, rich, famous and, more importantly, the wish to have a successful career.

Thus, Gwyneth Paltrow and Hilary Swank have presented Ralph Lauren outfits (1999, 2000), Julia Roberts gracefully wore an outfit offered by Valentino (2001) and Halle Berry one offered by Elie Saab (2002); Charlize Theron showed up in a rhinestone Gucci dress (2004), in 2007 Penelope Cruz had a Versace dress, Sienna Miller made a sensation with the outfit of a goddess, and Sarah Jessica Parker came in an evening gown accessorized with Scottish plaid, offered by Alexandre McQuin, or had the chance to wear a precious white Chanel outfit.

The success that the designers promoted in this way have among (especially) young people have inspired several actresses to create their own style and to propose clothes, accessories, cosmetics that are promoted together with their personal image. Stars such as Madonna, Sienna Miller or Jennifer Lopez have managed to promote their style among young people from different social classes and influence the style of entire generations. Young people willing to change something in their life have adopted the light, sophisticated, luxurious style proposed by artists and designers, trying to identify with the image of the dominant trend.

It is interesting to note that different designers have proposed, by means of their collections, different styles, that have influenced the look of a part of the audience and, implicitly, the change in their identity. If we take the example of two British designers, John Galliano and Alexander McQuin, we notice that the two have influenced the audience in completely different ways. John Galliano promotes in his collections the image of a sensual ethereal woman, while Alexander McQuin reinforces the image of a strong woman, master of her own fate, and an equal of the man. He had the reputation of fashion's *enfant terrible* due to the shocking ways in which he did his presentations, the use of new technologies and unconventional presentations.

A lot of designers extend their business by launching perfumes, lines of cosmetics, hats and purses, shoes, sunglasses. Despite the high price of these products, they are bought by a part of the audience that wish to use these elements to modify their old identity or to build a new one. Some fashion houses, like Gucci, have turned towards another segment of the public, launching a line for children.

A growing tendency to estheticize life can be noticed seeping into all levels of social life, and embracing all categories of individuals, regardless of the geographical

area from which they come, age, sex, education, standard of living, occupation, way of life. The appearance of new technologies that are themselves subject to the fancies of fashion favors this process and in its turn influences the evolution of styles, giving them a sophisticated and futuristic aspect.

The one who perfectly managed to influence all the areas of social life through his collections is the Italian designer Giorgio Armani. Renowned as the most successful Italian designer, Armani founded his company in 1975 in Milan, after he had worked a while for other designers or as a freelancer. He managed to create a style of his own, being known for the simplicity and elegance of his creations, be they *pret-a-porter* or *haute couture*. Armani managed to produce luxurious pret-a-porter collections that were a big hit both with the public and with the critics, who immediately recognized the importance of this designer in the fashion world. This was possible because of his collaboration with the industrial group that produced the clothes designed by Armani under the supervision of his company, starting with 1978. Armani understood that the main characteristic that makes a brand last in time is quality and variety. Also, Armani understood that beyond the style he offers, this brand must be a business. The secret of his success is in the fact that, from the beginning, Armani understood that he cannot limit himself to menswear, with which he started his career. He went to creating a line for women and several new lines: *G. A. Le Collezioni*, *Giorgio Armani Underwear and Swimwear*, and *Giorgio Armani Accessories*. Through these collections Armani managed to assert himself to a large audience with different options: some preferred the simple and elegant line, others the sportswear, others still were tempted by the accessories that allowed for unexpected combinations. At the beginning of the 80s he signed an agreement with L'Oreal to create a perfume and to launch other lines: *Armani Junior*, *Armani Jeans*, and *Emporio Armani* lines, followed in 1982 by *Emporio Underwear*, *Swimwear*, and *Accessories*. The last collections contained more youthful objects, but of the same high quality, luxurious and at an accessible price. In this way Armani managed to conquer another segment of the public, the youth to which his clothes were previously inaccessible. The promotion of the Armani brand benefitted itself from some innovative ideas. Besides the numerous posters, the company used TV ads and a magazine that was sent online to faithful customers. The opportunities provided by cinemas were not overlooked either. Armani crated costumes for over one hundred films, starting with *American Gigolo* in 1980 and many more, including 1987's *The Untouchables*.

The expansion of the brand continued with the opening of stores in Japan and the United States and then in China, and with the launching of the lines of glasses, socks, gifts and other lines of clothing for men and women, *A/X Armani Exchange* (1991), which offered light but chic clothes, at affordable prices. Starting with the year 2000, Armani launched the lines of cosmetics, cell phones and the interior design one, through *Armani Casa*. Thus, a great part of the female public is attracted

by the objects created by Armani for decorating their homes and creating personal comfort in their living spaces.

But the ambition of the designer to offer a new lifestyle does not limit itself to these creations. He conquers the world of sports as the president of a basketball club in Milan. He created the flag of Italy's Olympic team for the 2006 Olympics, and twice he created the uniforms for England's national football team and once for Chelsea. For Chelsea he also designed the relaxation area of the management staff.

Using new technologies in promoting the brand led to the live transmission of the 2007 *haut couture* collection on the internet and on mobile phones and to CDs with the *Emporio Armani* collection. Through this intelligent move, the Armani brand gathered the loyalty of young consumers of online content, and entered a rising market.

The objects created for *Armani Casa*, *Armani-branded Dolci* and *Armani-branded Fiori* have been used in a series of hotels, for which design contracts were signed, the latest of which opened in Dubai in 2010. This way the audience can benefit from Armani's style not only at home, in shops, at work, when going to the cinema or watching TV, surfing the internet or using the mobile phone, but also when travelling to exotic destinations.

We believe that Armani is more than a brand, it is a phenomenon that has managed to embrace the most varied markets and market segments, using the most diverse possibilities of promoting their products. What we must remark is the equilibrium that this designer has shown, managing to put forward a large variety of images for all categories of the public without forsaking his style and quality, bringing himself at the top of the market as one of the most important designers of the 20th Century. Unlike other creators, Armani did not shock through extravagance, didn't impose through being ostentatious, but managed to amaze through the elegance and refinement of his creations and through the ability to use the production and marketing strategies that ensured his success. We believe that the successive images Armani created for all the target segments and the innovative way in which he did it managed to reach and influence very dissimilar categories of people in choosing a style, choosing a role and constructing an adequate identity for this role.

Starting from these considerations we intend to understand why in Romania there are few elements of fashion and style that successfully contribute to constructing the individuals' identity. As we have seen, politics can influence the evolutions in society, even those in the world of fashion. The battle between conservatives and radicals was erratic in Romania, after the Second World War. The dominant codes were imposed by the representatives of the single party that gained power by banning all the rest. The communist ethics tried to impose a model of new man, whose options were dependent only on the items of clothing found in the poorly stocked shops or the behavior and attitude models presented in television shows, films, ads, plays in which the subject, the clothing, the hairdo had to correspond to

the rigid codes imposed by the representatives of power. The attempts to promote a more liberal style, more synchronous to the developments in Western Europe were rejected by banning those media productions. In this situation one could not talk about successfully using marketing and production strategies. Few of the designers' creations reached store shelves. The production of the few textile factories was serial, quality items being made for suppliers from other countries with cloth and designs brought by them. The public's and market's reaction of dissatisfaction determined the appearance of some *boutiques* in which clothes, purses and jewelry made by unknown creators, most often made in makeshift home workshops, could be found. These small, profitable businesses proved that the public rejects the codes imposed by the dominant ideology and tries to impose their own style, one closer to the image they wanted to construct. The new identity, influenced by the *boutique* creations, that operated in parallel with the official one, showed the proof of the desire to be different, to be set apart from the others, to create a breach in the uniformity cultivated by the social conformism of the era.

After 1989 the market was taken over by series clothing of dubious quality imported from other countries, determining a few young designers and some rather good collections, at decent prices, to surface. The development of the fashion industry meant the disappearance of some designers and the launching of others, that manage to make themselves an image and a profitable business. Unfortunately, the prices of these clothes are nearly inaccessible for the majority of the population, so they could not conquer the Romanian fashion market. Foreign companies started appearing in this void, more modestly at first, but stronger in the recent years with brands, especially for young people, such as Zara, Motivi, Guara, H&M, Gues, Stradivarius, Mango, Aldo. Still, the discussion of companies such as Valentino, Missoni, Marlboro Classics, Givenchy and Yves Saint Laurent is just being discussed in 2010. These companies will offer both luxury products for people with higher than medium incomes, employees of multinational companies, managers, employees in the banking sector and show business people, and cheaper products for the majority of the population. Among the Romanian designers that have asserted themselves in the more recent years we mention Adrian Oianu, Agnes Toma, Irina Schrotter, Alina Latan, Andreea Tincu, Mihaela Glăvan, Belinda Liu, Bianca Popp, Carla Szabo, Coca Zaboloteanu and Cătălin Botezatu, who is considered the best Romanian designer, proof of this being the titles of best fashion creator awarded to him in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2006 by various Romanian and foreign institutions. Botezatu was also successful abroad, being invited to hold fashion shows in Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Iceland, Malta, Monte Carlo, Athens, Cannes, Milan, Paris. The Romanian designer's presentation in "Book Moda" magazine in the Alta Moda section, in the German publication "Der Stern", Deutsche Welle, "Financial Times" or the broadcasting of his shows on Italian television channels such as Rai 1, Rai 2, TG3, Italia Piu or on Fashion TV Paris speak of his international recognition.

Another important element is the fact that Botezatu has well defined themes for his collections: "Egiptyon", "Buddha Bar", "Angels", "Ameno", "Witches", "Bizantium", "Barbarian", "Kyoto", "Chicago" or "J.O.", in which his creations have been completed by impressive collections of hats, furs and accessories. The chosen themes are exotic, focusing the public's attention towards otherwise marginal areas, spotlighting the women from areas with traditionally different cultures than the Western ones. In this way Cătălin Botezatu promotes clothes featuring stylized elements from the traditional garb of exotic peoples that are, in consequence, more easily accepted by the public. Together with the modern, western, cut, the public accepts more unusual elements, through which they can construct themselves an image that can make them feel differently, differentiate themselves from other individuals. We must not forget that, for a certain part of the more free-spending Romanian citizens, the acceptance of the sophisticated Oriental models is as natural as that of citizens with lower incomes for serial products of dubious quality from the Near East.

Another side of Cătălin Botezatu's activity is his creations for theater plays and cabaret shows. In 2005 the designer created the costumes for Doug Wright's "The Marquis de Sade/Quills", the Odeon Theater, directed by Beatrice Rancea. Then Botezatu created over 200 costumes for the show "Cabaret" at the "Ion Dacian" Operetta Theater in Bucharest. For selling his collections, Botezatu has opened an online store.

Other Romanian designers sell their collections through the online store Fashionup.ro, but the general opinion is that all the items are too expensive, and the younger public that appreciates them can hardly afford them. For the purpose of our demonstration, the important thing is that designers have found a way to reach their target audience. Viewing their collections in these online stores helps young people to be in tune with all the news in Romanian fashion. But what they buy mostly comes from the previously mentioned foreign companies, conscious of the fact that these products can be found all over Europe. In this way they manage to create a style, an image, in accordance with the style promoted by young people all over the world, with the newest trends from the fashion world.

As we have already seen, the developments in the fashion industry express and accompany the developments of society. Young Romanians, the same as young people from other countries, are influenced by the repeated changes in fashion. Together with their clothes they choose a social role, an image and a style that they share with the others and through which they wish to be recognized. The rapid change of image and style is connected to the options that they have for constructing their personal identity. The social, political choices that individuals make in their lifetimes resonate with their choices in clothing, hairstyle, that have the role of emphasizing the type of identity they have constructed. Choices can conform to the dominant, more conservative ideologies, or undermine them. The change in

attitude, in optics, leads to a new choice that shows the character of identity as a social construct that can be modified through the circumstances of life.

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