

Aesthetics of Coherence: Rethinking Dress from Eco-Feminisms and Ethics of Care

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Abstract

I undertake this task reflecting on how materials reach the bodies, aiming to step out from sustainability narratives to reimagine the clothed body outside the scope of biocide fashion, in an exercise of “performing language to create new imaginaries”(Ordóñez, 2016). In this essay I attempt to rethink clothing as an interface that connects bodies with ecosystems from a multidisciplinary approach, taking into account the agency of apparel as a daily care practice, both related to the body and to the earth, using the ethics of care of Virginia Held and ecofeminisms theory as analytic tools. Relatedness, in contrast with individualistic moralities based on Kantian ethics, affords aesthetic experiences which bridge ethical and ecological concerns from eco-feminist perspectives. I conclude that clothing is necessary as an input of embodied materials meant to maintain body stability, healthy relationships with others and with environments, and, so to speak, to guarantee the reproduction of life, just as healthy and sovereign food systems do.

Although this is a work in progress evolving organically, I argue that culturally embedded, appropriate and healthy clothing systems should be a priority, not a whim, for societies that aim to be caring. This raises a political question, opened for further research: Whether clothing systems should be reappropriated as commons, considered a constituent element of the individual, an extension of the ecological and ethical self through aesthetic experience of coherence, and for the pursuit of collective and environmental welfare.

Keywords: Interfaces, ethics of care, eco-feminisms, biocide fashion, good life, caring self, liberal morality, clothed bodies, relatedness, embodied knowledge, food sovereignty.

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