Sociosemiotics of Fashion: Theory, Trends, and Communication Tools

Marianna Boero [ID]

University of Teramo, Abruzzo, Teramo 64100 Italy
mboero@unite.it

Abstract. This paper delves into the language of fashion from a sociosemiotic perspective, exploring how postmodern trends can be expressed and examining the relationship between fashion and social changes. The paper is structured into three parts, each focusing on different aspects of the semiotic analysis of fashion. The first part provides an overview of key studies and research on fashion through a semiotic lens. It emphasizes the linguistic strategies employed in fashion, highlighting its distinct and specialized language. Fashion is viewed as a system of signification and communication, capable of conveying social and cultural meaning through a unique combination of signs, codes, symbols, objects, and practices. The second part concentrates on contemporary fashion trends in advertising, particularly exploring the interplay and intersections between fashion and other social discourses, such as art. This highlights how fashion draws inspiration from diverse domains and incorporates elements from various sources, resulting in the creation of hybrid forms of expression. The third part delves into the tools used for fashion communication, including fashion blogs and social media. It places emphasis on the role of visual narratives in conveying brand values and identities. This section also underscores the significance of fashion as a means of constructing cultural meanings within society while emphasizing the importance of maintaining communication coherence for a brand. Methodologically, the paper adopts a sociosemiotic approach, which examines the continuous and reciprocal relationship between society and fashion, as well as the mutations within the language system of social discourse. The objective is to establish a theoretical framework for comprehending how semiotics contributes to the scientific study of fashion and the analysis of the cultural meanings conveyed through discursive strategies, forms of hybridizations, and visual narratives in the fashion sector.

Keywords: Semiotics, Fashion, Advertising, social media.

1   Theoretical Framework

Semiotics began to scientifically analyze the language of fashion in the late 1960s when Roland Barthes (1915–1980) published "Système de la Mode" [1], which became a foundational text for studies in this area. Prior to Barthes, there were only a few references to this subject found in the works of Ferdinand de Saussure, Pëtr Bogatyrëv, and Nikolai Trubetzkoy. De Saussure, in his work "Cours de linguistique générale" [2],

stated that language is a system of signs comparable to other systems, such as the alphabet of the deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, forms of courtesy, military signs, and the language of clothing. He emphasized that language is the most important among these systems. Bogatyrëv, in his text "The Functions of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia" [3], made a more explicit connection between language and clothing, suggesting that to understand the social function of clothing, we must learn to interpret these signs, much like learning different languages.

The direct study of fashion from a semiotic perspective, however, began with Algirdas Greimas and Roland Barthes. The first part of this paper focuses on their contribution, while the subsequent paragraphs delve into the sociosemiotic perspective in the study of fashion.

1.1 First Studies

In Greimas's studies, fashion was an early and seemingly transient interest. He dedicated his doctoral thesis, "La mode en 1830. Essai de description du vocabulaire vestimentaire d'après les journaux de l'époque" [4], to this topic. It is a work that combines lexicographical reconstruction and sociolinguistics, exploring the study of the fashion lexicon, narrative analysis, reflections on ways of life, and aesthetics. Additionally, Greimas emphasized the different functions of "costume" and "fashion". While the former tends to remain relatively static, fashionable clothing changes rapidly, although both are mutually influential. Bogatyrëv also noted other differences, such as the costume being more conservative and traditional, while fashion relies on creativity and seeks to be distinct from existing styles. Beyond this important distinction, Bogatyrëv's semiotic framework underscores the significance of clothing as an object and a sign simultaneously, much like language. Clothing serves multiple functions and can be worn and interpreted in various ways.

At the beginning of the path towards a more direct semiotic study of fashion, Greimas focused on reconstructing the vocabulary of romantic fashion. This involved examining abundant documentation such as fashion magazines, novels, and memoirs, which serve as testimony to the fact that fashion is a complex cultural phenomenon.

In the introduction to his thesis, titled "Les conceptions de l'élégance vestimentaire", Greimas emphasizes the social-aesthetic dimension that concerns the role of clothing in society. On a collective level, individuals define their social status or aspirations through clothing, while on an individual level, they aim to express their own personalities. Greimas sees this search for identity as seemingly contradictory, involving both a sense of belonging and a desire for originality.

While Greimas presents a historical-social study of French vocabulary rooted in historicist structuralism, Barthes explores the parallelisms between language and clothing in a more radical way. In his book "Le système de la mode" [1] and various articles and essays, Barthes agrees with de Saussure's idea that the semiological approach can be applied not only to verbal language but also to other forms of communication. He began studying fashion as an autonomous system with its own internal rules, functioning similarly to natural language. Drawing parallels between natural language and the language of clothing, he proposed a unified disciplinary perspective for the study of language

and dress, applying Saussurean linguistic categories (langue/parole, synchrony/dia-chrony, signifier/signified) to the study of fashion.

Through his analysis of magazines, Barthes highlighted the central role of captions, as they shift the focus from the dress as a physical object to the realm of language. This narrowing of possible meanings directs the reader's attention to specific details. For Barthes, fashion provides an opportunity to demonstrate a system like language. The term "language" in his theory encompasses not only verbal communication but also all sign systems through which humans shape their position and relationship with the world. Fashion falls within this definition because it possesses an axiological function, that is, the ability to generate social values.

In Barthes's theory, an important analytical distinction is made between "custom" and "clothing". While custom is seen as an institutional reality with a primarily social nature independent of the individual, clothing is considered an individual reality through which individuals manifest the general custom within their own identities. If the phenomenon of clothing is the subject of psychological research, the phenomenon of custom, according to Barthes, is better suited for sociological or historical research. The dichotomy between tradition and clothing aligns with de Saussure's distinction be-tween langue (social institution) and parole (individual act). Barthes places fashion within the realm of custom, although there are instances where it oscillates between the dispersion of custom within clothing and the broadening of clothing into the phenome-non of custom.

1.2   Towards a Sociosemiotics of Fashion

In the late 1990s, semiotics began to closely analyze the connection between fashion and society. According to Calefato [5], the social significance of dress colors is a topic of reflection. In certain societies, the color black is traditionally associated with mourn-ing and is prohibited from being worn by infants. This restriction aims to shield them from culturally imbued negative connotations such as night, death, and fear. Similarly, black is generally not considered an appropriate color for a wedding dress. These cus-toms become ingrained in society and seem to maintain their morphological stability. However, in the case of fashion, the social significance of colors diminishes as various languages and social discourses emerge. Fashion sometimes allows for different colors in different contexts, diverging from traditional associations. For example, wedding dresses have undergone fashion changes, abandoning white in favor of "provocative" colors and forms, such as the use of red, black, slits, necklines, and very short skirts. Calefato cites examples like "urban tribes" (for example, punk and dark tribes), the semiotic relationship between fashion and cinema, and the notion of the "designer style". In these cases, garments no longer solely represent collective events but serve as signs of style and consumer goods.

Please note that the first paragraph of a section or subsection is not indented. The first paragraph that follows a table, figure, equation, etc. does not have an indent, either.

1.3   Lurie and the Language of Fashion

Lurie [6] also highlights the communicative value of clothing and the body that wears it, considering clothing as a language with its own grammar and vocabulary, akin to other languages. The vocabulary of dress encompasses not only clothes but also accessories, hairstyles, jewelry, makeup, and body decorations. It has an extensive vocabulary, potentially larger than that of other languages, as it includes every invented item, hairstyle, and type of body decoration. Selecting clothing becomes a means of defining and describing oneself. Just like in verbal language, everyone possesses their own repertoire of "words" and employs personal variations in tone and meaning. However, in practice, a person's dressing lexicon may be quite limited. For instance, a farmer's vocabulary may consist of only five or ten words, resulting in basic and undecorated expressions that convey predominantly fundamental concepts. In contrast, a fashion influencer may possess hundreds of thousands of words to construct sentences encompassing a multitude of meanings. Lurie draws an analogy between verbal language and the language of clothing. Dressing casually, for instance, can convey fluidity, relaxation, and vitality, similar to how slang operates in spoken language. In some cases, different articles of clothing can be equated with different parts of speech. Trimmings and accessories, for example, fulfill a similar function to adjectives and adverbs, enriching a dress or a phrase. However, it is important to recognize that certain ornaments and accessories that were once integral to one particular period may become essential elements of another. Fashion vocabulary often changes due to its fickleness and its reflection of the passage of time.

Within the constraints of the economy, clothes are acquired, used, and discarded, much like words, as they fulfill our needs and express our ideas and emotions. Attempts by experts to preserve outdated words or persuade people to use new terms correctly often prove futile. Similarly, individuals choose and wear clothes that align with their identity or the image they wish to project at a given time. Other clothing options are set aside, even if promoted through mass communication. Lurie asserts that the fashion industry can no longer maintain a style that people have abandoned due to it disconnect from emerging social contexts, nor can it successfully introduce new styles that people are unwilling to adopt.

1.4   Floch and the Chanel's Total Look

Another important semiotic study in the field of fashion was conducted by Jean-Marie Floch [7], who viewed fashion as a discourse and examined the total look of Coco Chanel. His approach diverged from previous semiotic studies, particularly those of Barthes and Greimas, who focused on linguistic naming as the sole pathway for meaning and studied non-verbal signification systems only after they had been lexicalized. In contrast, Floch expressed disinterest in discourses about fashion, such as meta-discourses found in journalistic fashion vocabulary or the lexical system of fashion professionals. Instead, he concentrated on analyzing fashion as a discourse itself.

Initially, Floch explored the figurative dimension of Chanel's total look. He examined the clothing and accessories created by the designer, which functioned as identifying signs of the brand. Examples include trousers, the black dress, the blazer with golden buttons, the sailor's cap, and black-tipped shoes. By examining the historical context in which these inventions emerged, it becomes apparent that Chanel systematically rejected the most prominent features of women's fashion during that period. The designer dismissed anything that did not serve a practical and comfortable function, allowing women the freedom to walk, work, and move freely. The first narrative aspect of Chanel's look, from a figurative standpoint, symbolizes the attainment of individual freedom because of modernity.

The second aspect of Chanel's look is characterized by a distinct vision of femininity, accentuated by paradox. The silhouette incorporates signs associated with men's work (jersey, sailor, striped vest) and men's clothing (cap, trousers, tie, short hair), deviating from the prevailing female fashion of the time. However, these signs act as signifiers that evoke contrasting meanings, such as femininity and luxury. Through this inversion of signifiers and meanings, Chanel aimed to establish an original definition of female identity that was uniquely her own. The timeless quality of Chanel's look stems from its production methods. It represents real bricolage, a combination and adaptation of signs from different origins and eras. The utilization and coexistence of these signs suspend the temporal differences they signify. While fashion can go in and out of style because it is tied to signs, the look itself is timeless, representing a tangible and intelligible structure created at the expense of the signs, regardless of their historical characteristics or original purpose.

2   Fashion Trends in Advertising

Between fashion and advertising, there has always been a profound relationship [8]. Since the late eighteenth century, fashion advertising has significantly contributed to the evolution of communication languages in general, specifically in the field of advertising communication.

Throughout time, fashion has developed a unique style of communication that seems to defy the conventional rules of advertising. While advertisements typically aim to highlight the product and constantly employ innovative themes and imagery to generate unexpectedness, surprise, and capture the audience's attention, fashion system advertisements rely heavily on the power of visuals [9]. They construct aesthetic compositions that prioritize the presentation of the product through the flawless and distant allure of models. This distinct style, however, often suffers from a noticeable repetition of form and content, as well as a lack of creativity.

Fashion and advertising hold a significant place in the collective imagination of entire nations, as they shape the way people perceive, envision, and interpret the world. Fashion, and its ever-changing trends, become immediate representations of social status through posters. They serve as mirrors reflecting the rapid social and economic changes, moods, trends, whims, and dreams of the era.

Specifically, advertising plays a crucial role in the promotion and communication of fashion brands, trends, and products to the target audience. It employs various strategies to convey messages and plays a significant role in setting and influencing trends. This section of the paper focuses on the new trends in the language of fashion as observed in European advertising campaigns from 2020 to 2023 [10].

2.1 Fusion

Fusion represents a significant trend in the language of fashion within postmodern society. It refers to the blending of diverse and often contradictory elements or beliefs in original combinations [11]. This process challenges the principle of non-contradiction, which Fabris [12] describes as a "dogma in Western cultures". While not entirely novel, fusion has become more prevalent than in the past when it was often regarded as eccentric or transgressive. In fashion, this blending of distinct elements with strong identities gives rise to striking contrasts in styles, materials, and colors. Over the past decade, the clothing sector has witnessed a reinterpretation of styles and trends [11]. Initially, individuals began expressing fashion in personal terms by creatively mixing different items. This gradually evolved into becoming designers themselves, combining modern and vintage pieces, expensive and affordable garments, as well as renowned brands with lesser-known clothing. Presently, we observe a coexistence of ethnic and Western cultural styles, simple and coarse fabrics alongside mohair and alpaca, and denim paired with luxurious materials. Fashion showcases various contrasts, such as past versus present, luxury fashion versus street fashion, local versus global, and Western versus Eastern Europe. Unconventional color combinations and contrasts are also common. Tartan-rock, sporty-chic stiles are examples of this trend.

2.2 Nostalgia and the Revisiting of the Past

The language of fashion embraces a selective retrieval of the past, neither denying nor solely appreciating it, but rather rediscovering it when deemed appropriate. Nearly every sector of the market now offers ventures into the past. For instance, the food industry places increasing emphasis on the traditional dishes of a few years ago, while the automotive sector is increasingly oriented towards reviving styles from bygone eras. However, the revival of the past is particularly evident in the realm of clothing. Fashion has always presented seemingly arbitrary resurrections of bygone dressing styles. Vintage fashion entails the selective reclamation of pre-owned high-fashion garments, which are repurposed into contemporary clothing styles. These pieces have not lost their original appeal over time; in fact, time has only added to their allure [11]. Vintage fashion has permeated diverse sectors and brands. While initially associated with a small elite, mainly composed of young people who sought out American-made jeans and garments, it has now spread to a wider range of the population, aided by the proliferation of specialty stores.

On one hand, we witness the vintage trend, which is also intertwined with the sustainability movement. On the other hand, references to the past are made through specific era reminiscences, such as the full skirts and tight bodices of the 1950s, the flare pants of the 1970s, the styles of the 1990s, and presently, the resurgence of the 2000s trend. The revival of past fashion styles and elements serves multiple purposes in the language of fashion. One aspect is the desire for nostalgia and the sentimental longing for a bygone era. By evoking the aesthetics and fashion of the past, individuals can experience a sense of connection to earlier times, triggering feelings of comfort, familiarity, and a longing for simplicity.

Furthermore, the resurgence of past fashion trends can also be seen as a form of self-expression and individuality in a world saturated with mass-produced, homogenized fashion. Embracing vintage and retro styles allows individuals to differentiate themselves and stand out from the crowd. It offers a unique way to make a fashion statement by incorporating elements that have historical and cultural significance, expressing a personal sense of style and creativity.

2.3   Sustainability

Contemporary fashion promotes environmentally friendly practices, such as the use of specific materials and production methods. This includes the use of organic or recycled fabrics, reducing water consumption and pollution, and minimizing the use of harmful chemicals in the manufacturing process. Sustainable fashion also emphasizes durability and longevity, encouraging consumers to invest in high-quality, timeless pieces that will last longer and reduce the need for frequent replacements.

The vintage trend aligns with the growing sustainability movement within the fashion industry. By repurposing and reusing pre-owned garments, vintage fashion promotes a more environmentally conscious approach to consumption. It encourages the idea of reducing waste, embracing slow fashion, and valuing timeless pieces that can be enjoyed for years to come.

Another important aspect of sustainable fashion is the promotion of ethical labor practices. The fashion industry has faced criticism for exploitative working conditions, particularly in low-wage countries where garment production is outsourced. Sustainable fashion aims to address this issue by promoting fair wages, safe working conditions, and workers' rights throughout the supply chain. It also encourages transparency and accountability from fashion brands, urging them to disclose information about their sourcing and production practices.

The language of fashion now includes terms such as "eco-friendly", "ethical fashion", "slow fashion", and "conscious consumerism", which reflect the growing importance of sustainability in the industry. Fashion brands are increasingly incorporating sustainability into their messaging, marketing, and product offerings to meet the demands of environmentally and socially conscious consumers.

The integration of sustainability into the language of fashion includes the promotion of more responsible consumption practices for a more ethical and sustainable future.

2.4   Loss of hegemony of minimalism

In recent years, minimalism has been one of the most significant trends in fashion. This movement, which embraced simplicity and purity of lines by rejecting excessive decoration, gained momentum through two influential factors. Firstly, the economic crisis of the 1990s played a significant role in driving the diffusion of minimalism. The financial downturn not only led to reduced spending on clothing but also fostered a cultural shift towards more restrained and sober styles. This new sociocultural climate of austerity shaped the way people dressed, seeking practicality and functionality.

Secondly, minimalism emerged as a reaction to the excessive aestheticism of the 1980s. The fatigue with exaggerated figuration and opulence greatly influenced the spread of minimalism. It was seen as a necessary departure from the extravagance and formal exuberance of the previous fashion era. Minimalism symbolized a break from the flamboyant and bold designs, embracing a more understated and streamlined aesthetic.

However, in the context of postmodernity, minimalism has seen a decline in its dominance. The shifting sociocultural climate has led to a rediscovery of the pleasure of dressing, emphasizing glamour, playfulness, and a willingness to blend different styles and influences. This doesn't imply that minimalism will vanish entirely; in a fragmented society like the postmodern one, there will always be a niche for minimalism. It will continue to exist, but it will no longer hold a prominent position in the consumer world and may not be viewed as culturally relevant in the same way as before.

2.5   Art and aesthetics of everyday life

Fashion and art have a long and intertwined relationship, with each influencing and inspiring the other. Fashion can be seen as a form of artistic expression where clothing and accessories become wearable art. At the same time, art has been a significant source of inspiration for fashion designers, who often draw upon artistic movements, techniques, and iconic works to create their collections.

Historically, fashion has drawn inspiration from various art forms, including painting, sculpture, and architecture. Artists such as Pablo Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky, and Piet Mondrian have had a profound impact on fashion through their bold use of colors, shapes, and patterns. Their abstract and avant-garde creations translated into innovative and unconventional designs in the fashion world. Fashion designers have also collaborated with artists, blurring the boundaries between fashion and art. These collaborations often result in unique and visually striking pieces that challenge traditional notions of clothing. Artists like Salvador Dalí, Yayoi Kusama, and Jeff Koons have worked with fashion houses to create limited edition collections, where their artistic visions are translated into wearable artworks.

Moreover, fashion shows and runway presentations have increasingly become immersive experiences, merging fashion with performance art. Designers collaborate with choreographers, set designers, and multimedia artists to create captivating and visually stunning shows that go beyond presenting clothing. These fashion spectacles blend

fashion, music, technology, and art, creating multisensory experiences that captivate audiences. Additionally, fashion collections draw inspiration from artistic movements, such as impressionism, revealing an increasing intersection between fashion and art. Contemporary artists continue to explore the relationship between fashion and art, pushing boundaries and challenging conventional notions.

This is related to the trend of aesthetics in everyday life, which refers to the appreciation and cultivation of beauty and style in ordinary, mundane activities and objects. It involves finding beauty in the simple things, embracing the aesthetics of one's surroundings, and infusing daily routines with a sense of visual pleasure and harmony.

Fashion, as a form of self-expression, allows individuals to incorporate their personal aesthetics into their everyday lives. The choices we make in clothing, accessories, and grooming contribute to the overall aesthetic of our daily appearance. Whether it's a carefully curated outfit or a specific hairstyle, fashion enables individuals to create a visual narrative that reflects their taste, personality, and values. Fashion also influences the aesthetics of everyday life by setting trends and establishing style norms. It shapes popular aesthetics and influences the way people dress and present themselves in various social contexts. Fashion magazines, social media influencers, and celebrities often dictate what is considered fashionable, thus impacting the aesthetics of everyday life on a broader scale.

3   Fashion Blogs and social media

The emergence of Web 2.0 communication has brought about a shift in traditional communication modalities, which were based on the notion of a passive user who solely consumed media messages. With the rise of social networks, there has been a rediscovery of the active role of the receiver, as they actively contribute to the construction of texts and establish a connection with the brand's world. In virtual spaces, recipients chart their own reading paths and select pages based on personal parameters, often challenging the brand's control. Brands that previously focused on "communicating to" the audience now need to learn how to "communicate with" them, as the conversational dynamics on the web are markedly different from the past [13]. This shift has given rise to the concept of the attention economy, which refers to the careful management of user attention that is challenging to capture and maintain.

This section focuses on fashion blogs and social media, tools used by fashion brands to communicate their identity and core values.

3.1   Fashion blogs

Fashion blogs have emerged as valuable tools that require attention from brands. They exist outside the controlled communicative territory of brands and provide authors with a platform to openly and rapidly publish news, stories, reflections, ideas, personal

opinions, and information, displayed in reverse chronological order. While the internet jargon defines a blog as a diary, this description fails to capture the essence of what a blog truly is. A blog can be a diary, notebook, calendar, collection of stories, or anything the author desires; it is the conversational and informal tone that characterizes a blog, facilitated by technology, and propagated by fashion bloggers. While a diary is personal, a blog is meant to be shared. Furthermore, any user can leave comments on each article, fostering discussions among users around the presented topics [14].

In recent years, blogs have gained widespread popularity. Initially born out of individual users' desire to freely write and engage with others' comments, blogs have become a source of interest for brands. Nowadays, many online companies have their own blogs, aiming to create an informal and direct meeting point with customers. The writing style on blogs differs from the institutional tone found on brand websites or newspapers. Blog posts tend to be informal, with short messages accompanied by sources and links for additional information. Compared to other web tools and services, blogs possess distinct characteristics. They amplify the traditional form of personal diary writing while transforming individualism into a shared experience. Blog content is accessible to a potentially unlimited audience, open to debate, comments, and revisions. Other users can modify or question the content in an ongoing dialogue that, despite resembling spoken communication, exhibits the typical features of written discourse.

In fashion blogs, fashion bloggers themselves serve as effective communication extensions of the brand. The strategies employed by fashion blogs can vary greatly. Some choose to foster a warmer and more direct relationship with the audience by inviting them to recreate the showcased looks in their own personal styles and allowing ample space for comments. Others opt for a more detached and self-referential language reminiscent of high fashion magazine services. In such cases, images generally take precedence over verbal elements, resulting in lower audience engagement. Nevertheless, there are recurring characteristics that warrant further exploration.

A common feature of fashion blogs is the prominence of visual elements. While text is always present in blog posts, images take on the primary communicative role. This trend aligns with the foundation of popular social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, where visual content garners the most attention due to its immediate communicative impact. Consequently, skillful utilization of images to tell stories has become crucial for brands. The significance of visual aspects extends to the narrative level as each image represents a core story, sometimes complemented by additional microstories. The effectiveness of storytelling lies in the combination of visual signs, which stage actors, spaces, and times. While some images provide informational content, others employ visual narration playfully to create atmospheres and evoke emotions. Through images, different types of gazes, both formal and informal, are invoked, and they cater to specific reader profiles through visual statements.

Fashion blogs integrate the promoted products into the lives of bloggers, bridging the gap between the narrated world and the readers' real world. The stories revolve around relationships between fiction and reality, showcasing credible environments, characters, and relatable situations that depict scenes from everyday life and replicable usage practices. This approach allows recipients to identify themselves with the presented stories. While the blog text aims to narrate experiences and practices from real

life, its similarity to reality contributes to the construction of consumers' perception and experience of their own reality. In other words, blogs possess the ability to articulate the surrounding reality, in a specific language, in which consumers themselves are included as subjects of experience.

3.2   Social media

In recent years, fashion advertising has evolved with the rise of digital platforms and social media. Fashion brands now utilize online channels to reach a wider audience and engage with consumers in a more interactive and personalized manner. Social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become key channels for fashion advertising, allowing brands to connect with their audience, showcase products, collaborate with influencers, and create immersive brand experiences.

They challenge conventional representative canons and introduce a reading contract that incorporates playful values such as irony [7]. Communication on social media paves the way for alternative beauty models that gradually gain legitimacy, defining not only new standards of elegance and wearability but also diverse images of their recipients. In this sense, social media generates identities and serve as channels for the emerging logic of taste independence.

Fashion and social media have become intertwined in today's digital age, creating a significant impact on the fashion industry and the way people engage with fashion. Social media platforms have revolutionized the way fashion is consumed, shared, and experienced by individuals all around the world.

First and foremost, social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok have provided a democratic space for fashion enthusiasts, bloggers, influencers, and brands to share their unique perspectives and content. Fashion bloggers and influencers have emerged as influential voices, shaping trends and inspiring millions of followers with their personal style and fashion recommendations. They have become a bridge between fashion brands and consumers, showcasing products, sharing reviews, and offering style advice.

Social media has also democratized access to fashion. Previously, fashion was predominantly dictated by traditional gatekeepers such as fashion magazines and runway show. However, now anyone with a smartphone and an internet connection can participate in fashion discourse. Users can discover emerging designers, street style inspiration, and niche fashion communities, expanding the diversity and inclusivity of fashion conversations.

Fashion brands have recognized the power of social media as a marketing tool. They utilize social media platforms to amplify their brand message, showcase their latest collections, and engage directly with their audience. Brands collaborate with influencers to create sponsored content, product placements, and influencer campaigns, effectively leveraging their reach and influence to promote their products and reach new customers.

Social media platforms also offer a seamless shopping experience. Many fashion brands integrate e-commerce functionalities into their social media accounts, allowing

users to shop directly from their posts or stories. This has transformed social media into a virtual storefront, enabling users to discover, browse, and purchase fashion items with just a few clicks.

Furthermore, social media has played a significant role in driving fashion trends. It has accelerated the speed at which trends spread and evolve, as users share and engage with fashion content in real-time. Hashtags, challenges, and viral movements on social media platforms have fueled the popularity of specific fashion styles, accessories, and even specific brands. The aesthetic of everyday life mentioned earlier is a prime example: social media embodies this newfound focus on the aesthetic dimension in every aspect of consumers' lives, offering the public a plethora of images and "slice of life" moments characterized by an incessant quest for beauty and pleasure.

However, social media's influence on fashion is not without its challenges. Issues such as the pressure to present an idealized self-image, the rise of fast fashion and its environmental impact, and the potential for promoting unrealistic beauty standards have sparked important discussions within the fashion community. Semiotics aims to analyze these new communication models, such as models of beauty, family, maternity, etc., and uncover the stereotypes and myths perpetuated through social media. Its goal is to raise public awareness about the construction of these models by social media and, the process of naturalizing cultural concepts that they consistently engage in.

4   Conclusion

The studies we have mentioned outline the field of semiotics of fashion and clarify its specific contribution compared to neighboring disciplines like sociology. While we have explored different perspectives on studying fashion as a language, it is essential to consider what it means to study fashion in the present context. Are the descriptive categories of semiotics effective in addressing the ongoing changes in the language of fashion? After all, this language is undergoing significant transformations, both in terms of new textual forms of expression and the emergence of a new vocabulary that redefines the expressive dimension and conceptual field of fashion.

The language of fashion is constantly evolving and adapting to new trends and cultural shifts [15]. With the emergence of new technologies and the rise of digital platforms, several notable trends have emerged in the language of fashion. Fashion trends within societies are not unilaterally imposed by a superior external authority but are instead formed through complex processes of negotiation, repetition, and accumulation [16]. They are created through intricate interactions and self-regulation. By renewing object forms and codes of behaviour, fashion instigates objective changes [17]. Simultaneously, it also influences the subjects themselves, who, by following fashion, adopt new perspectives on objects, behaviors, and ultimately, themselves. Consequently, individuals become inclined to alter their habits and judgment criteria, aligning with the currently in vogue values [18].

Today, fashion embraces a more diverse range of styles, allowing individuals to express their individuality and experiment with various aesthetics. The desire for self-

expression, personalization, and the celebration of individual uniqueness have become driving forces in the fashion industry. This shift has led to a more inclusive and dynamic fashion landscape, where multiple trends coexist and cater to the diverse tastes and preferences of consumers.

It is important therefore to rethink the space of semiotics in the study of fashion, not only to analyze the various discourses prevalent within the new digital landscape but also to examine the role of semiotics in understanding the evolving consumption practices, particularly in the metaverse. Semiotics offers valuable insights by decoding the intricate meanings and signs that arise in this dynamic context. Furthermore, it is essential for semiotics to engage in a constant dialogue with other disciplines interested in this phenomenon, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of fashion communication in the digital age.

References

1. Barthes, R. Système de la Mode, Editions de Seuil, Paris. (1967)
2. Saussure, F. de. Cours de linguistique Générale. Paris: Payot. (1916)
3. Bogatyrev, Peter. The Functions of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, (1971)
4. Greimas, A. J., La mode en 1830. Langage et société: écrits de jeunesse, Paris, PUF. (1948)
5. Calefato, P. Moda, corpo, mito: storia, mitologia e ossessione del corpo vestito, Castelvecchi, Roma. (1999)
6. Lurie, A. The language of clothes, Vintage Books, UK. (1981)
7. Floch, J.M. Identités visuelles, Paris, PUF. (1995)
8. Galoforo G., Montebelli M., Pomodoro S., Moda e pubblicità. Stili e tendenze del fashion system, Carocci, Roma. (2005)
9. Codeluppi V. Moda e pubblicità. Una storia illustrata, Carocci, Roma. (2016)
10. Boero, M. Linguaggi del consumo. Segni, luoghi, pratiche, identità, Aracne, Roma. (2017)
11. Boero, M. "The language of Fashion in Postmodern Society: A Social-semiotic Perspective", Semiotica - Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies. Berlino: De Gruyter Mouton. (2015)
12. Fabris. G. Il nuovo consumatore. Verso il postmoderno, FrancoAngeli, Milano. (2003)
13. Traini S. - Boero M., "Esperienze sul web. Il caso dei marchi di moda", in Pezzini I. e Spaziante L. (eds) Corpi Mediali. Semiotica e contemporaneità, Edizioni ETS, Pisa. (2014)
14. Boero M. "Semiotics of Fashion. Theories and Considerations about the (new) Objects", in Giovanna Motta (eds.) La forza della moda. Potere, rappresentazione, comunicazione, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, Roma, 2019, pp. 219-235. (2019)
15. Segre Reinach, S. Un mondo di mode. Il vestire globalizzato, Laterza, Bari. (2011)
16. Marrone G. Corpi sociali, Piccola biblioteca Einaudi, Torino. (2001)
17. Volli U. Contro la moda, Feltrinelli, Milano. (1988)
18. Volli U. "Semiotica della moda, semiotica dell'abbigliamento?" in Ceriani G e Grandi R. (eds.) Moda, regole e rappresentazioni, Franco Angeli, Milano, (1995)