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Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice

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Introduction

“There is an obvious and prominent fact about human beings,” notes Turner (1985: 1) at the start of *The Body and Society*, “they have bodies and they are bodies.” However, what Turner omits in his analysis is another obvious and prominent fact: that human bodies are *dressed* bodies. Dress is a basic fact of social life and this, according to anthropologists, is true of all human cultures that we know about: all cultures “dress” the body in some way, be it through clothing, tattooing, cosmetics or other forms of body painting (Polhemus 1988; Polhemus and Proctor 1978). Conventions of dress transform flesh into something recognizable

and meaningful to a culture and are also the means by which bodies are made “decent,” appropriate and acceptable within specific contexts. Dress does not merely serve to protect our modesty and does not simply *reflect* a natural body or, for that matter, a given identity; it *embellishes* the body, the materials commonly used adding a whole array of meanings to the body that would otherwise not be there. While the social world normally demands that we appear dressed, what constitutes “dress” varies from culture to culture and also within a culture, since what is considered appropriate dress will vary according to the situation or occasion. The few mere scraps of fabric that make up a bikini are enough to ensure that the female body is “decent” on beaches in the West, but would be entirely inappropriate in the boardroom. Bodies that do not conform, bodies that flout the conventions of their culture and go without the appropriate clothes are subversive of the most basic social codes, and risk exclusion, scorn or ridicule. The “streaker” who strips off and runs across a cricket pitch or soccer stadium draws attention to these conventions in the act of breaking them: indeed, female streaking is defined as a “public order offence,” while the “flasher,” by comparison, can be punished for “indecent exposure.” As these examples illustrate, dress is fundamental to microsocial order, and the exposure of naked flesh is, potentially at least, disruptive of that order. Indeed, nakedness, in those exceptional situations where it is deemed appropriate, has to be carefully managed (nude bathing in the UK and other Western countries is regulated and restricted; doctors must pay close attention to ethical codes of practice, and so on). So fundamental is dress to the social presentation of the body and the social order that it governs even our ways of seeing the naked body. According to Hollander (1993), dress is crucial to our understanding of the body to the extent that our ways of seeing and representing the naked body are dominated by conventions of dress. As she (1993: xiii) argues, “art proves that nakedness is not universally experienced and perceived any more than clothes are. At any time, the unadorned self has more kinship with its own usual *dressed* aspect than it has with any undressed human selves in other times and other places.” Hollander points to the ways in which depictions of the nude in art and sculpture correspond to the dominant fashions of the day. Thus the nude is never naked, but “clothed” by contemporary conventions of dress. Naked or semi-naked bodies that break with cultural conventions, especially conventions of gender, are potentially subversive and are treated with horror or derision. Competitive female body-builders, such as those documented in the 1984 semi-documentary film *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, are frequently seen as “monstrous” (Kuhn 1988: 16; see also Schulze 1990 and St Martin and Gavey 1996).

However, while dress cannot be understood without reference to the body and while the body has always and everywhere to be dressed, there has been a surprising lack of concrete analysis of the relationship between

them. In this article, I want to flesh out a study of the dressed body that attempts to bridge the gap that exists between theories of the body, which often overlook dress, and theories of fashion and dress, which too frequently leave out the body. I want to suggest some of the connections that can be made between the various theorists in these related areas, suggesting how one might make a study of the dressed body. In doing so, I sketch out a theoretical framework that takes as its starting-point the idea that dress is an embodied practice, a *situated bodily practice* that is embedded within the social world and fundamental to microsocial order (Entwistle 2000a). While emphasizing the social nature of dress, this framework also asserts the idea that individuals/subjects are active in their engagement with the social and that dress is thus actively produced through routine practices directed towards the body. In order to capture this sense of dress as both socially structured and embodied and practical, I shall draw on a wide range of theoretical resources.

The main discussion will focus on the uses and limitations of both the structuralist and post-structuralist approaches, since these have been influential in recent years in the sociological study of the body. In particular, the work of Mary Douglas (1973, 1984), Marcel Mauss (1973) and Michel Foucault (1977, 1986) offers fruitful insights into the way in which the body is rendered meaningful by culture. However, such approaches are limited when it comes to acknowledging the “fleshy” body and its experiential dimensions. They also neglect to account for how structures and rules result in actual embodied practices, sometimes with the effect of reducing individuals to puppet-like actors. In contrast, the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1976, 1981), which begins with the idea of the body as the “existential ground of culture” (Csordas 1993), is suggestive of the ways in which dress can be understood as an *embodied practice*. These theoretical traditions may seem at odds with one another; and indeed, according to Crossley (1996), they have been considered incommensurable by some. However, as he argues, they offer different and complementary insights into the body and embodiment in society. Following Crossley (1995a, 1995b, 1996) and also Csordas (1993, 1996), I shall argue that an account of dress as a situated bodily practice can draw on the insights of these two different traditions, structuralism and phenomenology, and indeed must do so. Dress as both a social and a personal experience is a discursive and practical phenomenon. A study of the dressed body thus requires understanding of the socially processed body that discourses on dress and fashion shape, as well as of the experiential dimensions of embodiment wherein dress is translated into actual bodily presentation. In addition to these two paradigms, Goffman (1971, 1972) and Bourdieu (1984, 1989, 1994) are particularly useful in that they both bridge the gap between these traditions and acknowledge how social structures are reproduced at the level of bodily practices.

Ad-dressing the Literature

If nakedness is unruly and disruptive, this would seem to indicate that dress is a fundamental aspect of microsocial order. When we dress we do so to make our bodies acceptable to a social situation. Given this issue of social order, it seems strange to find little discussion of dress within sociology and other disciplines that have been concerned with this on both a macro and a micro level (for example in the work of Parsons and Goffman). This would seem strange given that the force of pressure on the body to conform has a moral imperative to it as well. Dressed inappropriately we are uncomfortable; we feel ourselves open to social condemnation. According to Bell (1976), wearing the right clothes is so very important that even people not interested in their appearance will dress well enough to avoid social censure. In this sense, he argues, we enter into the realm of feelings “prudential, ethical and aesthetic, and the workings of what one might call sartorial conscience” (1976: 18–19). Classical social theory failed to acknowledge the significance of dress, largely because it neglected the body and the things that bodies do (Turner 1985). The emergence of a sociology of the body in the last twenty years would seem an obvious place to look for literature on dress and fashion; but, as with mainstream sociology, it too has also tended not to examine dress (as noted above, Turner does not discuss dress in his account of bodily order). Moreover, the literature on fashion and dress, coming out of history, cultural studies and other fields, has paid little attention to the body, focusing instead on the communicative aspects of adornment (adopting a rather abstract and disembodied linguistic model from Saussure) and examining the spectacular, creative and expressive aspects of dress rather than the mundane and routine part it plays in reproducing social order (Barthes 1985; Hebdige 1979; Lurie 1981; Polhemus 1994).

Between these bodies of literature, between the theorists of the classical tradition and those theorists of the body who tend to overlook dress, and those theorists of fashion and dress who have focused rather too much attention on the articles of clothing, the *dressed body* as a discursive and phenomenological field vanishes. Either the body is thought to be self-evidently dressed (and therefore beyond discussion) or the clothes are assumed to stand up on their own, possibly even speaking for themselves without the aid of the body. And yet the importance of the body to dress is such that encounters with dress divorced from the body are strangely alienating. Wilson (1985) grasps this when she describes the unease one feels in the presence of mannequins in a costume museum. The eeriness of the encounter comes from the “dusty silence” and stillness of the costumes, and from a sense that the museum is “haunted” by the spirits of the living, breathing humans whose bodies these gowns once adorned. Our experience of the costume museum, along with our sadness when confronted with the clothes of dead relatives, points to the ways in which we “normally” experience dress as alive and “fleshy”: once removed from

the body, dress lacks fullness and seems strange, almost alien, and all the more poignant to us if we can remember the person who once breathed life into the fabric. The body and dress operate dialectically: dress works on the body, imbuing it with social meaning, while the body is a dynamic field that gives life and fullness to dress (Entwistle and Wilson 1998). Thus the dressed body is a fleshy, phenomenological entity that is so much a part of our experience of the social world, so thoroughly embedded within the micro-dynamics of social order, as to be entirely taken for granted. With a growing literature emerging on fashion, dress, the body, embodiment, and performativity, it seems almost a cliché to insist that fashion and dress operate on the body and that, by implication, the body and dress are now a crucial arenas for the performance and articulation of identities. And yet the precise relationship of the body to dress and dress to the body remains unclear and under-theorized. In the discussion that follows, I want to suggest the theoretical resources that can be brought to bear on the analysis of the dressed body as situated practice.

Situating the Dressed Body in the Social World

Dress lies at the margins of the body and marks the boundary between self and other, individual and society. This boundary is intimate and personal, since our dress forms the visible envelope of the self and, as Davis puts it, comes “to serve as a kind of visual metaphor for identity”; it is also social, since our dress is structured by social forces and subject to social and moral pressures. If, as Mary Douglas (1973, 1984) has so forcefully demonstrated, the boundaries of the body are dangerous, it is therefore no surprise that clothing and other forms of adornment, which operate at these “leaky” margins, are subject to social regulation and moral pronouncements. It is no surprise either to find individuals concerned with what to hang at these margins. Douglas articulates this relationship between the individual body and the social forces pressing on it, arguing that there are “two bodies”: the physical body and the social body. She summarizes (1973: 93) the relationship between them in *Natural Symbols*: “the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other.” According to Douglas, “the body is capable of furnishing a natural system of symbols” (1973: 12). This means that the body is a highly restricted medium of expression, since it is heavily mediated by culture and expresses the social pressure brought to bear on it. Indeed, the body becomes a symbol of its cultural location. She gives the example of laughter, arguing that the social situation determines the degree to which the body can laugh: the looser the social constraints, the more free the

body is to laugh out loud. In this way, the body and its functions and boundaries symbolically articulate the concerns of the particular group in which it is found. Her analysis (1973) of shaggy and smooth hair also illustrates this relationship between the body and the situation. Shaggy hair, once a symbol of rebellion, can be found among those professionals who are in a position to critique society, in particular, academics and artists. Smooth hair, however, is likely to be found among those who conform, such as lawyers and bankers. This analysis can of course be extended to the analysis of dress and adornment. The dressed body is always situated within a particular context, which often sets constraints as to what is and what is not appropriate to wear. The degree to which the dressed body can express itself can therefore be symbolic of this location: for example, the more formal and conservative the occupation, the more constraints set around the body and thus on dress. Therefore traditional or conservative occupations are likely to have stricter codes of dress and necessitate the wearing of a suit, while more “creative” professions will set few restrictions on the body and dress.

Mauss (1973) has likewise discussed the way in which the physical body is shaped by culture when he elaborates on mundane “techniques of the body,” and these have some potential for understanding the situated nature of the dressed body. The techniques he outlines are not “natural,” but the product of particular ways of being in the body that are embedded within culture and his examples also point to the ways in which these are gendered. Ways of walking, moving, making a fist, and so on, are different for men and women because, in the making of “masculine” and “feminine,” culture inscribes the bodies of men and women with different physical capacities. Mauss’s “techniques of the body” have obvious application to dress and the way in which dress modifies the body, embellishing it and inflecting it with meanings that, in the first instance, are gendered. Although he says little about dress, he does note how women learn to walk in high heels that would be difficult and uncomfortable for men, who are generally unaccustomed to such shoes. Illustrative of this particular technique in her exaggeration of it is Marilyn Monroe’s sashaying gait in *Some Like It Hot*, which was apparently the product of high heels cut diagonally at each side. These lop-sided shoes enabled her to generate the wiggle that constituted part of her performance as the sexually provocative Sugar Cane.

Although they don’t acknowledge Mauss’s work, Haug *et. al.* (1987) provide ample evidence of the ways in which femininity is reproduced through various techniques, bodily and sartorial. They argue that the female body and its ways of being and adorning are the product of particular discourses of the body that are inherently gendered. These discourses are explored through the work of Foucault; and I want to suggest some of the ways in which his concept of discourse, with its emphasis on the body, could be utilized for analysis of the situated nature of the body.

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault (1977) argues that bodily practices are part of the capillary like operations of power which work to render bodies docile, obedient. While feminists such as McNay (1992) and Diamond and Quinby (1988) argue that Foucault ignores the issue of gender, they also point out that his theoretical concepts can provide feminists with a framework for understanding the ways in which the body is acted on by power/knowledge. Indeed, Foucault's notion of discourse can enable the analysis of fashion as a discursive domain that sets significant parameters around the body and its presentation. Fashion (defined here as a system of continually changing styles), which sets out an array of competing discourses on image and is the dominant system governing dress in the West, has been linked to the operations of power, initially marking out class divisions, but more recently playing a crucial role in policing the boundaries of sexual difference.

Although utilized by Wilson (1992), Foucault's work on the body has not been usefully employed in the analysis of fashion as a textual site for the construction of the body, although it would seem that it would have some application. Fashion, particularly as it is laid out in the fashion magazine, is "obsessed with gender" (Wilson 1985: 117), and constantly shifts the boundary between the genders. This preoccupation with gender starts with babies and is played out through the life cycle, so that styles of dress at significant moments are very clearly gendered (weddings and other formal occasions are the most obvious examples). Such styles enable the repetitious production of gender, even when gender appears to break down, as with androgynous fashion, and are aided in part by the repetition of gendered styles of bodily posture routinely reproduced in fashion magazines. While these styles of being reproduce gender as a body style, they are also open to subversion through exaggeration and parody, as Butler (1990, 1993) has forcefully suggested, although some of the most exaggerated performances, such as drag, could be said to reinforce rather than undermine conventions of gender (Gamman and Makinen 1994).

In addition, Foucault's insights into the ways in which bodies are subject to power and discursively constituted can be utilized to show how institutional and discursive practices of dress act upon the body, marking it and rendering it meaningful and productive. For example, styles of dress are regularly employed in the workplace as part of institutional and corporate strategies of management. This is explored by Freeman (1993), who draws on Foucault's notion of power, particularly his idea about the panopticon, to consider how dress is used in one particular context, a data-processing corporation, *Data Air*, as a strategy of corporate discipline and control over the female workforce. In this corporation a strict dress code insisted that the predominantly female workers dress "smartly" in order to project a "modern" and "professional" image of the corporation. If their dress does not meet this standard they are subjected to disciplinary procedures by their managers, and may even be sent home to change their clothes. The enforcement of this dress code

was facilitated by the open-plan office, which kept the women under constant surveillance by the gaze of managers.

Such practices are familiar to many offices although the mechanisms for enforcing dress codes vary enormously. Particular discourses of dress such as “smart” or “professional” dress, and particular strategies of dress such as the imposition of uniforms and dress codes at work, are utilized by corporations to exercise control over the bodies of the workers within. This is true of men’s dress for work as much as it is of women’s. The male suit, perhaps the most formally coded dress for men today, exerts itself with considerable force over the bodies of men in a wide range of occupational settings, while looser codes of bodily presentation are often set over the bodies of “professionals,” who, rather than being told what to wear, are expected to have internalized the codes of the profession. For example, the discourse of power dressing, which I have analyzed elsewhere (Entwistle 1997, 2000a, 2000b), sets out clear codes of dressing for success; but its adoption by professionals is largely dependent upon their having internalized a particular notion of themselves as “enterprising” subjects. The discourse on power dressing called upon career women to think about and act upon their bodies in particular ways as part of an overall “project of the self” (Giddens 1991) in order to maximize one’s chances of career success. The rules of such dressing as delineated in dress manuals and magazine articles set out a strategy of dressing for work that relies on technical knowledge of dress and its “effects” (the term “wardrobe engineering,” devised by the most famous exponent of power dressing John T. Molloy (1980), captures this technical and instrumental concern).

As I have demonstrated, Foucault’s framework is quite useful for analyzing the discursive aspects of dress. In particular, his notion of discourse is a good starting-point for analyzing the relations between discourses on dress and gender as they are constituted in fashion texts and organizational strategies of management and are suggestive of particular forms of discipline of the body. However, there are problems with Foucault’s notion of discourse as well as problems stemming from his conceptualization of the body and of power, in particular his failure to acknowledge embodiment and agency. These problems stem from Foucault’s post-structuralist philosophy, and these I now want to summarize in order to suggest how his theoretical perspective, while useful in some respects, particularly for textual analysis, is problematic for a study of dress as a situated bodily practice. In other words, his theoretical concepts do not stretch to the analysis of dress as an embodied practice.

Foucault’s account of the socially processed body provides for analysis of the way in which the body is talked about and acted on; but it does not provide an account of dress as it is lived, experienced and embodied by individuals. For example, the existence of the corset in the nineteenth century and the discourses about the supposed morality of wearing one (the terms “loose” and “straitlaced” used to describe a woman refer to

the wearing of a corset, and illustrate, if metaphorically, the link between this article of clothing and morality) tell us little or nothing about how Victorian women experienced the corset, how tightly they chose to lace it, and what bodily sensations it produced. However, it would seem that by investing importance in the body, dress opens up the potential for women to use this for their own purposes and experience pleasures that are perhaps the “reverse” of dominant ones. However, as Ramazanoglu (1993) argues, while the notion of reverse discourse is potentially very useful to feminists, it is not developed fully in Foucault’s analysis. So while the corset is seen by some feminists (Roberts 1977) as a garment setting out to discipline the female body and make her “docile” and subservient, an “exquisite slave,” Kunzle (1982) has argued in relation to female tight-lacers that these women were not passive or masochistic victims of patriarchy, but socially and sexually assertive. Kunzle’s suggestion is that women more than men have used their sexuality to climb the social ladder, and that tight-lacers experienced sexual pleasures from the tightly laced corset that went against the dominant norm of the Victorian woman as asexual. If his analysis is accepted, these particular Victorian women could be said to illustrate the ways in which power, once invested in the female body, results in “the responding claims and affirmations, those of one’s own body against power . . . of pleasure against the moral norms of sexuality, marriage, decency . . .” (Foucault 1980: 56). In other words, illustrative of “reverse discourse.”

However, this issue lies dormant in Foucault’s own analysis, partly because Foucault’s particular form of post-structuralism is not sensitive to *practice*. Instead it *presumes* effects, at the level of individual practice, from the existence of discourse alone. He thus “reads” texts *as if* they were practice rather than a possible structuring influence on practice that might or might not be implemented. In assuming that discourse automatically has social effects, Foucault’s method, as Turner (1985: 175) notes, “reduce(s) the individual agent to a socialized parrot which must speak/perform in a determinate manner in accordance with the rules of language.” In failing to produce any account of how discourses get taken up in practices, Foucault also fails to give an adequate explanation as to how resistance to discourse is possible.

Moreover, his analysis lacks sensitivity to the body as the environment of the self and tends to assume a notion of the “passive body,” thereby failing to explain how individuals may act in an autonomous fashion. If bodies are produced and manipulated by power, then this would seem to contradict Foucault’s concern to see power as force relations that are never simply oppressive. Such an account might lead to the discussion of fashion and dress as merely constraining social forces and thus neglect the way individuals can be active in their selective choices from fashion discourse in their everyday experience of dress.

The extreme anti-humanism of Foucault’s work, most notably in *Discipline and Punish*, is questioned by McNay (1992) because it does not

allow for notions of subjectivity and experience, and she proposes that his later work on “technologies of the self” offers a more useful theoretical framework. However, as she herself later acknowledges (McNay 1999), Foucault’s notion of subjectivity as developed in his “technologies of self” is disconnected from his earlier work on the body, and is thus strangely disembodied. In terms of producing an account of embodiment and of agency, McNay suggests that Bourdieu’s notions of the *habitus* and *the field* are more productive. If the dressed body is to be understood as always situated in culture and as an embodied activity located within specific temporal and spatial relations, then these concepts from Bourdieu offer much potential. I shall discuss Bourdieu’s work in more detail below.

Further problems arise from Foucault’s rather ambivalent notion of the body: on the one hand, his bio-politics would appear to construct the body as a concrete, material entity, manipulated by institutions and practices; on the other hand, his focus on discourse seems to produce a notion of the body that has no materiality outside the representation. Such a vacillation is problematic, since the question of what constitutes a body is one that cannot be avoided—does the body have a materiality outside language and representation? The body cannot be at one and the same time both a material object outside of language and a solely linguistic construction. This refusal to develop an ontology of the body fits with Foucault’s general refusal of all essence, as Turner (1985) notes. However, Terence Turner (1996: 37) goes so far as to suggest that Foucault’s body is more contradictory and problematic in terms of his own claim to critique essences: it is “a featureless *tabula rasa* awaiting the animating disciplines of discourse . . . an a priori individual unity disarmingly reminiscent of its arch-rival, the transcendental subject.” If, as it seems, Foucault errs on the side of the body as a discursive construct this would appear to undermine his aim to produce a “history of bodies” and the investments and operations of power on them. What is most material and most vital about a body if not its flesh and bones? What is power doing if not operating on, controlling or dominating the material body?

However, if the body has its own physical reality outside or beyond discourse, how can we theorize this experience? How can one begin to understand the experience of choosing and wearing clothes that forms so significant a part of our experience of our body/self? With these issues in mind, Csordas (1993, 1996) details the way forward for what he calls a “paradigm of embodiment,” which he poses as an alternative to the “paradigm of the body” that characterizes the structuralist approach. This methodological shift “requires that the body be understood as the existential ground of culture—not an object that is ‘good to think with’ but as a subject that is ‘necessary to be’” (1993: 135). The body, in phenomenological terms, is the environment of the self, and therefore something acted upon as part of the experience of selfhood. This is in contrast to the semiotic model, which considers the body as a symbolic and discursive object worked on by culture. Csordas’s express aim is

therefore to counter-balance the “strong representational bias” of the semiotic/textual paradigm found in works such as that of Douglas (1973, 1979), Foucault (1977) and Derrida (1976). Csordas calls for a shift away from a semiotic/textualist framework to a notion of embodiment and “being in the world” drawn from phenomenology.

He notes how, “of all the formal definitions of culture that have been proposed by anthropology, none have taken seriously the idea that culture is grounded in the human body” (Csordas 1996: 6). Thus the phenomenological concern with embodiment starts from a different premise to structuralist and post-structuralist accounts of the social world, positioning the body as “the existential ground of culture and self” (Csordas 1993). He argues for a study of embodiment that draws on the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty (1976, 1981) as well as Bourdieu’s (1989) “theory of practice.” His paradigm of embodiment thus marks a methodological shift away from a concern with texts to a concern with *bodily experience* and *social practice*. According to Csordas, both Merleau-Ponty (1976, 1981) and Bourdieu (1989, 1994) shift the concern away from the body as an inert object to an idea of the body as implicated in everyday perception and practices. A similar distinction is drawn by Crossley (1995a, 1995b, 1996), who argues that the “sociology of the body” is concerned with “what is done to the body,” while “carnal sociology” examines “what the body does” (1995b: 43). He, too, identifies this latter tradition with the work of Merleau-Ponty, but looks also to Goffman whose account of microsocial interactions positions the body as the central vehicle of the “self.” In the following section, I want to detail the theoretical and methodological assumptions underlying a “paradigm of embodiment,” drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty, and suggest how phenomenology might enable a study of dress as situated practice. I want also to suggest how the work of Bourdieu and Goffman may be applied to the study of the dressed body and how their insights bridge the gap between structuralist and phenomenological concepts. In the work of both, the body is both a socially constituted object, determined by social structures, and yet also the site of social and personal identity.

Dress and Embodiment

Merleau-Ponty (1976, 1981) places the body at the center of his analysis of perception, arguing that the world comes to us via perceptive awareness, i.e., from the place of our body in the world. Merleau-Ponty stresses the simple fact that the mind is situated in the body and comes to know the world through what he called “corporeal or postural schema”: in other words we grasp external space, relationships between objects and our relationship to them through our position in, and movement through, the world. Thus the aim of his work on perception, as he (1976: 3–4) points out in *The Primacy of Perception*, is to “re-establish the roots of

the mind in its body and in its world, going against doctrines which treat perception as a simple result of the action of external things on our body as well as against those which insist on the autonomy of consciousness.” As a result of his emphasis on perception and experience, subjects are reinstated as temporal and spatial beings. Rather than being “an object in the world” the body forms our “point of view on the world” (1976: 5). In this way, Merleau-Ponty counteracts the tendency in Foucault to see the body as a passive object. According to Merleau-Ponty, we come to understand our relation in the world via the positioning of our body physically and historically in space. “Far from being merely an instrument or object in the world our bodies are what give us our expression in the world” (1976: 5). In other words, our body is not just the place from which we come to experience the world; it is through our bodies that we come to see and be seen in the world. The body forms the envelope of our being in the world, and our selfhood comes from this location in our body and our experience of this. In terms of dress, approaching it from a phenomenological framework means acknowledging the way in which dress works on the body which in turn works on and mediates the experience of self. Eco (1986) captures this very well when he describes wearing jeans that are still too tight after losing some weight. He (1986: 192–4) describes how the jeans feel on his body, how they pinch and how they restrict his movement, how they make him aware of the lower half of his body; indeed, how they come to constitute an “epidermic self-awareness” that he had not felt before:

As a result, I lived in the knowledge that I had jeans on, whereas normally we live forgetting that we’re wearing undershorts or trousers. I lived for my jeans and as a result I assumed an exterior behavior of one who wears jeans. In any case, I assumed a demeanor . . . Not only did the garment impose a demeanor on me; by focusing my attention on demeanor it obliged me to live towards the exterior world.

If, for the most part, we don’t experience our jeans (or any other item of clothing for that matter) in this way, then this hints at our “normal” experience of dress and its relationship to the body; namely that it becomes an extension of the body that is like a second skin. Dressed uncomfortably, on the other hand, we may develop the “epidermic self-awareness” Eco refers to since the garment/s impinge upon our experience of the body and make us aware of the “edges,” the limits and boundaries of our body. This body/dress awareness is gendered: as Tseëlon (1997: 61) notes, women’s sense of self (and self-worth) is frequently a “fragile” one, and dress can either bolster confidence or make one acutely self-conscious and uncomfortable.

Merleau-Ponty’s notion of subjectivity is neither essential nor transcendental: the self is located in a body, which in turn is located in time and space. The notion of space was for Merleau-Ponty crucial to the

phenomenology of lived experience, since the movement of bodies through space was an important feature of their perception of the world and their relationship to others and objects in the world. This concern with space is apparent in Foucault's work on the institutions of modernity; but while his account of space acknowledges its disciplinary and political dimensions, it lacks any sense of how people experience space. Foucault's analysis looks at space in relation to social order and, ultimately, power: a phenomenological analysis of space, such as that offered by Merleau-Ponty, considers how we grasp external space via our bodily situation or "corporeal or postural schema" (1976: 5). Thus, "our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space" (1976: 5). For Merleau-Ponty, body/subjects are always subjects in space; but our experience of it comes from our movement around the world and our grasping of objects in that space through perceptual awareness. Space is grasped, actively seized upon by individuals through their embodied encounter with it. Of course, space is a crucial aspect of our experience of the dressed body, since when we get dressed we do so with implicit understanding of the rules and norms of particular social spaces. A formal dinner, a job interview, a shopping expedition, a walk in the park, to name a few situations, demand different styles of dress and require us to be more or less aware of our dress, make it more or less an object of our consciousness.

In bringing embodiment to the fore of his analysis and emphasizing that all human experience comes out of our bodily position, Merleau-Ponty's analysis offers a fruitful starting-point for the analysis of dress as situated bodily practice. Dress is always located spatially and temporally: when getting dressed one orientates oneself/body to the situation, acting in particular ways upon the surfaces of the body in ways that are likely to fit within the established norms of that situation. Thus the dressed body is not a passive object, acted upon by social forces, but actively produced through particular, routine and mundane practices. Moreover, our experience of the body is not as inert object but as the envelope of our being, the site for our articulation of self. Merleau-Ponty's insistence on the embodied nature of subjectivity means that it is crucial to the experience and expression of self, and what could be more visible an aspect of the body than dress? This relationship between the body and identity and between identity and dress has been the subject of many discussions within fashion theory, as well as of some accounts of the body (Davis 1992; Finkelstein 1991; Synnott 1993; Wilson 1985, 1992). However, these accounts have tended not to talk of embodiment and of the ways in which dress constitutes part of the experience of the body and identity. In unifying body/self and in focusing on the experiential dimensions of being located in a body, Merleau-Ponty's work demonstrates how the body is not merely a textual entity produced by discursive practices but is the active and perceptive vehicle of being.

There are, however, a number of problems with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Firstly, he neglects to consider the body as gendered, when in everyday life gender plays a significant part in the way in which

individuals, male and female, experience embodiment and come to live in their bodies. Not only is gender in part the product of “techniques of the body” such as those described by Mauss above; the body itself moves through time and space with a sense of itself as gendered. This is illustrated by the ways in which men and women experience the spaces of the public realm differently, as described by Bourdieu. As I have discussed elsewhere (Entwistle 1997, 2000b), the spaces of work are experienced differently by women and men, and this affects the ways in which the body is dressed and presented. Furthermore, as argued by numerous theorists (Berger 1972; McNay 1992; Mulvey 1989; Wolf 1990), women are more likely to be identified with the body than men, and this may generate different experiences of embodiment. It could be argued that women are more likely to develop greater body consciousness and greater awareness of themselves as embodied than men, whose identity is less situated in the body. Tseëlon’s (1997) work in this area would seem to testify to this. Secondly, Merleau-Ponty’s approach remains philosophical: as a method, it cannot be easily applied to the analysis of the social world. However, Crossley (1995a) and Csordas (1993) see much potential in the works of Goffman and Bourdieu respectively, since both draw some inspiration from phenomenology, but develop approaches to embodiment that are sociological rather than philosophical, and ground their accounts in empirical evidence of actual social practices. I want to explore what each has to say about Goffman and Bourdieu, as well as to suggest the ways in which these two theorists could be applied to the study of the dressed body.

Dress and Embodied Subjectivity

Crossley (1995a) suggests that there are many other fruitful connections to be made between Goffman (1971, 1972) and Merleau-Ponty (1976, 1981), particularly their insistence on subjectivity as embodied. Furthermore, Goffman’s concern with the temporality and spatiality of interaction provides another point of contact with Merleau-Ponty, whose work is concerned with these aspects of perception. In terms of providing an account of embodied subjectivity as experienced within the flow of everyday life, Goffman’s concepts have some considerable potential for understanding the dressed body. They enable description and analysis of the way in which individuals, or social actors, come to orientate themselves to the social world and learn to perform in it, and recognize how the body is central to this experience. In Goffman’s work, the body is the property of both the individual and the social world: it is the vehicle of identity, but this identity has to be “managed” in terms of the definitions of the social situation, which impose particular ways of being on the body. Thus individuals feel a social and moral imperative to perform their identity in particular ways, and this includes learning appropriate ways of dressing. Like so much bodily behavior, codes of dress come to be taken

for granted and are routinely and unreflexively employed, although some occasions, generally formal ones (like weddings and funerals) set tighter constraints around the body, and lend themselves to more conscious reflection on dress. Goffman's work thus adds to Douglas's account of the "two bodies" by bringing embodiment and actual bodily practices into the frame.

In considering the body as central to interaction, his analysis also lends itself to the understanding of the dressed body, and thus to an account of dress in terms of situated bodily practice. Not only does dress form the key link between individual identity and the body, providing the means, or "raw material," for performing identity; dress is fundamentally an inter-subjective and social phenomenon, it is an important link between individual identity and social belonging. Davis (1992: 25) argues that dress frames our embodied self, serving as "a kind of visual metaphor for identity and, as pertains in particular to the open society of the West, for registering the culturally anchored ambivalence that resonates within and among identities." In other words, not only is our dress the visible form of our intentions, but in everyday life dress is the insignia by which we are read and come to read others, however unstable and ambivalent these readings maybe (Campbell 1997). Dress works to "glue" identities in a world where they are uncertain. As Wilson (1985: 12) puts it, "the way in which we dress may assuage that fear by stabilizing our individual identity." This idea is the basis of much subcultural theory on the symbolic work performed by members of subcultures, who, it is argued, deploy cultural artifacts such as dress to mark out the boundaries of their group and register their belonging (Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979; Luck 1992; Willis 1975, 1978).

While Goffman does not discuss the ways dress is used and its role in the "presentation of self in everyday life," his ideas could however be elaborated to discuss the way in which dress is routinely attended to as part of this "presentation of self in everyday life." Most situations, even the most informal, have a code of dress, and these impose particular ways of being on bodies in such a way as to have a social and moral imperative to them. Bell (1976) gives the example of a five-day-old beard, which could not be worn to the theater without censure and disapproval "exactly comparable to that occasioned by dishonorable conduct." Indeed, clothes are often spoken of in moral terms, using words like "faultless," "good," "correct." Few are immune to this social pressure, and most people are embarrassed by certain mistakes of dress, such as finding one's fly undone or discovering a stain on a jacket. Thus, as Bell (1976: 19) puts it, "our clothes are too much a part of us for most of us to be entirely indifferent to their condition: it is as though the fabric were indeed a natural extension of the body, or even of the soul."

Thus in the presentation of self in social interaction, ideas of embarrassment and stigma play a crucial role, and are managed, in part, through dress. Dressed inappropriately for a situation we feel vulnerable and

embarrassed, and so too when our dress “fails” us, when in public we find we’ve lost a button or stained our clothes, or find our fly undone. However, the embarrassment of such mistakes of dress is not simply that of a personal *faux pas*, but the shame of failing to meet the standards required of one by the moral order of the social space. When we talk of someone’s “slip showing” we are, according to Wilson (1985: 8), speaking of something “more than slight sartorial sloppiness”; we are actually alluding to “the exposure of something much more profoundly ambiguous and disturbing . . . the naked body underneath the clothes.” A commonly cited dream for many people is the experience of suddenly finding oneself naked in a public place: dress, or the lack of it in this case, serves as a metaphor for feelings of shame, embarrassment and vulnerability in our culture, as well as indicating the way in which the moral order demands that the body be covered in some way. These examples illustrate the way in which dress is part of the micro-order of social interaction and intimately connected to our (rather fragile) sense of self, which is, in turn, threatened if we fail to conform to the standards governing a particular social situation. Dress is therefore a crucial dimension in the articulation of personal identity, but not in the sense sometimes argued by theorists, for example, Polhemus (1994) and Finkelstein (1991) who err too much on the side of voluntarism, dress as freely willed, “expressive” and creative. On the contrary, identity is managed through dress in rather more mundane and routine ways, because social pressure encourages us to stay within the bounds of what is defined in a situation as “normal” body and “appropriate” dress. This is not to say that dress has no “creative” or expressive qualities to it, but rather that too much attention and weight has been given to this and too little to the way in which strategies of dress have a strong social and moral dimension to them that serves to constrain the choices people make about what to wear. Tseëlon (1997) has argued that dress choices are made within specific contexts, and provides good examples of the ways in which occasions such as job interviews, weddings, etc. constrain dress choices. Her work therefore points to an important aspect of dress that requires that it be studied as a situated bodily practice. Different occasions, different situations, operate with different codes of dress and bodily demeanor, so that while we may dress unreflexively some of the time (to do the grocery shopping or take the kids to school), at other times we are thoughtful, deliberate and calculating in our dress (I must not wear that white dress to the wedding; I must buy a new suit/jacket/tie for that job interview). Furthermore, dress is also structured in the West (and increasingly beyond) by the fashion system, which, in defining the latest aesthetic, helps to shape trends and tastes that structure our experience of dress in daily life.

Crossley (1995a) suggests that another point of contact between Goffman and Merleau-Ponty is that both take account of space in their analysis. He argues that while Merleau-Ponty is good at articulating spatiality and the perception of it, Goffman provides us with concrete

accounts of how this occurs in the social world. Goffman's (1972) sense of space is both social and perceptual, and provides a link between the structuralist/post-structuralist analysis of space delineated by Douglas (1973, 1979) and Foucault (1977) in terms of social order and regulation, and the phenomenological analysis of space as experiential. Moreover, according to Crossley, Goffman takes the analysis of bodily demeanor in social situations further than either Merleau-Ponty and indeed Mauss. Goffman elaborates on Mauss's "techniques of the body," not only recognizing that such things as walking are socially structured, but considering also how walking is not only a part of the interaction order, but serves also to reproduce it. For Goffman, the spaces of the street, the office, the shopping mall, operate with different rules and determine how we present ourselves and how we interact with others. He reminds us of the territorial nature of space, and describes how, when we use space, we have to negotiate crowds, dark quiet spaces, etc. In other words, he articulates the way in which action transforms space. This acknowledgment of space can illuminate the situated nature of dress. If, as I have argued, dress forms part of the micro-social order of most social spaces, when we dress we attend to the norms of particular spatial situations: is there a code of dress we have to abide by? who are we likely to meet? what activities are we likely to perform? how visible do we want to be? (do we want to stand out in the crowd or blend in?), etc. While we may not always be aware of all these issues, we internalize particular rules or norms of dress, which we routinely employ unconsciously. I have argued elsewhere (Entwistle 2000b) that the professional woman is more likely to be conscious of her body and dress in public spaces of work than at home or even in her private office. Space is experienced territorially by professional women, who routinely talk of putting on their jackets to go to meetings and when walking around their workplaces, but taking them off when in the privacy of their offices, the reason being to cover their breasts so as to avoid unsolicited sexual glances from men. Thus spaces impose different ways of being on gendered bodies: women may have to think more carefully about how they appear in public than men, at least in some situations, and the way they experience public spaces such as offices, boardrooms, or quiet streets at night, is likely to be different to the way men experience such spaces. The spaces at work carry different meanings for women, and as a consequence they have developed particular strategies of dress for managing the gaze of others, especially men, in public spaces at work. Their strategies of dress both reflect the gendered nature of the workplace and represent an adaptation to this space in terms of their experience of it. In a similar way, women dressing up for a night out might wear a coat to cover up an outfit, such as a short skirt and skimpy top, which might feel comfortable when worn in a nightclub, but which might otherwise make them feel vulnerable when walking down a quiet street late at night. In this respect, the spaces of the nightclub and the street impose their own structures on the individual and her sense of her body, and she may in

turn employ strategies of dress aimed at managing her body in these spaces.

Dress and Habitus

Bourdieu's (1984, 1989, 1994) work offers another potentially useful sociological analysis of embodiment, and his analysis, which builds a bridge between approaches to the world that prioritize either objective structures or subjective meanings, provides a way of thinking through dress as a situated bodily practice. His notion of the habitus marks an attempt to overcome the either/or of objectivism and subjectivism. As "a system of durable, transposable dispositions" that are produced by the particular conditions of a class grouping, the habitus enables the reproduction of class (and gender) through the active embodiment of individuals who are *structured* by it, as opposed to the passive inscription of power relations on to the body. Thus, the notion of lived practice is not individualistic, it is more than "simply the aggregate of individual behavior" (Jenkins 1992). In this respect, Bourdieu's work elaborates in concrete ways Merleau-Ponty's philosophical approach to embodiment. As Csordas (1993: 137) argues: "to conjoin Bourdieu's understanding of 'habitus' as an unselfconscious orchestration of practices with Merleau-Ponty's notion of the 'pre-objective' suggests that embodiment need not be restricted to the personal or dyadic micro-analysis customarily associated with phenomenology but is relevant as well to social collectivities." In this way, the habitus is the objective outcome of particular social conditions, "structured structures," but these structures cannot be known in advance of their lived practice. The individual social agent develops a "feel for the game," and in the process, comes to interpret, consciously or unconsciously, the 'rules' and improvise around them.

According to McNay (1999), in foregrounding embodiment in his concept of the habitus and in arguing that power is actively reproduced through it, Bourdieu provides for a more complex and nuanced analysis of the body than Foucault whose "passive body" is inscribed with power and an effect of it. The potential of the habitus as a concept for thinking through embodiment is that it provides a link between the individual and the social: the way we come to live in our bodies is structured by our social position in the world, but these structures are only reproduced through the embodied actions of individuals. Once acquired, the habitus enables the generation of practices that are constantly adaptable to the conditions it meets. In terms of dress, the habitus predisposes individuals to particular ways of dressing: for example, the middle-class notion of 'quality not quantity' generally translates into a concern with quality fabrics such as cashmere, leather, silk, which, because of their cost, may mean buying fewer garments. However while social collectivities, class and gender for example, and social situations structure the codes of dress,

these are relatively open to interpretation and are only realized through the embodied practice of dress itself. Thus dress is the result of a complex negotiation between the individual and the social and, while it is generally predictable, it cannot be known in advance of the game, since the structures and rules of a situation only set the parameters of dress, but cannot entirely determine it.

Bourdieu's habitus and his theory of practice are useful for overcoming the bias towards texts and towards the discursive body, and have much potential for understanding the dressed body as the outcome of situated bodily practices. The strength of Bourdieu's account applied to dress is that it is not reductive: dress as lived practice is the outcome of neither oppressive social forces on the one hand, nor agency on the other. As McNay (1999: 95) argues, "it yields a more dynamic theory of embodiment than Foucault's work which fails to think through the materiality of the body and thus vacillates between determinism and voluntarism." Bourdieu provides an account of subjectivity that is both embodied, unlike Foucault's passive body and his "technologies of the self," and active in its adaptation of the habitus. As such, it enables an account of dress that does not fall into voluntarism and assume that one is free to self-fashion autonomously. Polhemus's (1994) analysis of "streetstyle" is illustrative of such a voluntarist approach to fashion and dress, which is what has tended to define recent work in this area. In his idea of the "supermarket of style" Polhemus argues that the mixing of youth culture "tribes" in recent years has meant less clearly differentiated boundaries between groups, while his metaphor suggests that young people are now free to choose from a range of styles at will as if they were choices on display in a supermarket. However, such an emphasis on free and creative expression glosses over the structural constraints of class, gender, location, and income that set material boundaries for young people, as well as the constraints at work in a variety of situations that serve to set parameters around dress choice. As McNay (1999: 97) argues, Foucault's later work on technologies of the self rather assumes that identity is open to self-fashioning, and thus fails "to consider fully the recalcitrance of embodied existence to self-fashioning."

However, the notion of the habitus as a dynamic, durable and transposable set of dispositions does allow some sense of agency on the part of individuals. Dress in everyday life cannot be known in advance of practice by examination of the fashion industry or fashion texts. It is a practical negotiation between the fashion system as a structured system, the social conditions of everyday life, such as class, gender and the like, and in addition the "rules" or norms governing particular social situations. Choices over dress are always defined within a particular context: the fashion system provides the "raw material" of our choices but these are adapted within the context of the lived experience of the woman, her class, race and ethnicity, age, occupation and so on. The outcome of this complex interaction cannot be known in advance precisely because the

habitus enables improvisation and adaptation to these conditions. It thus enables one to talk about dress as individuals' attempts to orientate themselves to particular circumstances, and thus recognizes the structuring influences of the social world on the one hand, and the agency of the individuals who make choices as to what to wear on the other.

The habitus is also useful for understanding how dress styles are gendered and how gender is actively reproduced through dress. However much gendered identity has been problematized of late, and however much gender roles may have changed, gender is still entrenched within the body styles of men and women, or, as McNay (1999: 98) puts it, "embedded in inculcated, bodily dispositions," which are "relatively involuntary, pre-reflexive." To give a concrete analysis of a particular *field* and return to the example of dress at work, it is apparent that there are gendered styles of dress within the workplace, especially the white-collar and professional workplace. Here we find that the suit is the standard "masculine" dress; and, while women have adopted suits in recent years, theirs differ in many respects from men's. Women have more choices in terms of dress, in that they can, in most workplaces, wear skirts or trousers with their jackets; they have wider choice in terms of color than the usual black, gray, or navy of most male suits for the conventional office, and can decorate them more elaborately with jewelry and other accessories (Entwistle 1997, 2000b; Molloy 1980). However, in order to understand this field one must take account of the historical modes of being in the workplace, as well as the nature of the habitus of this particular field. Significantly, women's adoption of tailored clothes has to do with the orientation of women's bodies to the context of the male workplace and its habitus. In this field, sexuality is deemed inappropriate (it is distracting from production), and the suit, which covers all the male body except for the neck and hands, has become the standard style of dress for men. The meanings of the suit are complex and nuanced, and, while it does not obliterate the sexuality of the male body, it works to obscure, blur or reduce it, as Collier (1998) has argued. In addition, it has come to connote "professional." By examining different styles of dress and corporeality at work, Collier (1998: 34) argues that the male body at work attempts to distance itself from connotations of the body and eroticism: the suit serves the purpose of de-sexualizing the male body, "not in the sense of rendering men in suits beyond erotic attachment (far from it) but rather in terms of erasing the sexed specificity of the individual male body." In other words, rendering "invisible" the male body, the suit hides sexed characteristics, but more importantly, as the standard of dress long established, "this body is normative within the public sphere, it has come to represent neutrality and *disembodiment*" (Thornton in Collier 1998: 34).

Women's movement into this sphere, as secretaries and later as professionals, required them to adopt a similar uniform to designate them as workers and thus as public as opposed to private figures. However, the feminine body, as Berger (1972), McNay (1992), Mulvey (1989) and

Wolf (1990) have argued is always, potentially at least, a sexual body, and women have not entirely been able to escape this association, despite their challenge to tradition and the acquisition, in part, of sexual equality. In other words, women are still seen as located in the body, whereas men are seen as transcending it. Thus, while a woman can wear a tailored suit much the same as a man, her identity will always be as a “female professional,” her body and her gender being outside the norm “masculine” (Entwistle 2000b; Sheppard 1989, 1993). While her suit may work to cover her body and reduce its sexual associations (the jacket is the most crucial aspect of female professional dress, covering the most sexualized zone, the breasts, as was noted above), as I have argued (Entwistle 2000b) it can never entirely succeed, since a woman brings to her dress the baggage of sexual meanings that are entrenched within the culturally established definitions of “femininity.” This is not to say that women are embodied and men are not; but that cultural associations do not see men as embodied in the way that women are. In his analysis Collier (1998: 32) argues for consideration of male corporeality at work, suggesting that different styles of masculinity operate in legal practice, but that the “sexed specificity of this style has, in contrast to the growing literature on the corporeality of women in the profession, remained largely unexplored.” In other words, men’s bodies are taken for granted or rendered invisible, in contrast to the attention paid to female bodies at work and in other public arenas. Thus, as he argues, men are embodied, but the experience of embodiment is often left out of accounts of masculinity. He (1998: 32) suggests that this “de-sexing” of men has been dependent “on certain deeply problematic assumptions,” and asks, “does this mean that a courtroom consisting solely of men is without, or beyond the erotic? Such an argument would presume, first, that intra-male relations are asexual . . . and secondly, that as sexed beings, men’s eroticism is confined to the private, affective sphere.”

However, while the male suit can, at least superficially, efface the male body, it cannot obliterate the female body, which is always “feminine” and by association, “sexual.” Thus, while more women work, and increasingly in male-defined arenas, break with more traditional images of femininity, “the transformatory impact upon embodied feminine identity and upon the collective subordination of women in society is far from certain” (McNay 1999: 106). McNay (1999: 106) therefore argues that “in pointing to the rootedness of gender divisions in social forms, the concepts of the habitus and ‘le sens pratique’ serve as a corrective to sociologically naïve claims about the transformation of social and sexual identities.” This is due, in part, to the largely unreflexive nature of gender, which, if we draw again on Mauss (1973), is reproduced through “techniques of the body” that come to feel “natural.” Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus allows for the analysis of such differences in gender in terms of how it is socially reproduced through bodily styles. It enables consideration of how gender is embodied through various techniques, practices,

and styles, and how these are repetitive and deeply embedded within unreflective practice. Changes in the social world, such as the changing status of women, are, according to Bourdieu, slow to find their way into the habitus. However, he does also recognize that the habitus is a *relatively* open structure, and one that is constantly, if slowly, modified. Thus, according to McNay (1999: 105), he produces an account of gender identity that is “not a mechanistically determining structure but an open system of dispositions.” These dispositions are “durable but not eternal” (Bourdieu, quoted in McNay 1999: 105).

Conclusion

This article has set out the theoretical framework for a sociology of the dressed body as a situated bodily practice. I have argued that understanding dress requires adopting an approach that acknowledges the body as a social entity and dress as the outcome of both social factors and individual actions. Foucault’s work may contribute to a sociology of the body as discursively constituted, but is limited by its inattention to the lived body and its practices, and to the body as the site of the “self.” Understanding dress in everyday life requires understanding not just how the body is represented within the fashion system and its discourses on dress, but also how the body is experienced and lived and the role dress plays in the presentation of the body/self. Abandoning Foucault’s discursive model of the body does not, however, mean abandoning his entire thesis. This framework, as I have shown, is useful for understanding the structuring influences on the body and the way in which bodies acquire meaning in particular contexts. However, the study of dress as situated practice requires moving between, on the one hand, the discursive and representational aspects of dress and the way the body/dress is caught up in relations of power, and on the other hand, the embodied experience of dress and the use of dress as one means by which individuals orientate themselves to the social world. Dress involves practical actions directed by the body upon the body, which result in ways of being and ways of dressing, such as ways of walking to accommodate high heels, ways of breathing to accommodate a corset, ways of bending in a short skirt, and so on. A sociological account of dress as an embodied and situated practice needs to acknowledge the ways in which both the experience of the body and the various practices of dress are socially structured.

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