

Androgyny

Rokiatou Bah

New York City College of Technology

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Abstract

This paper presents the manifestation of androgyny and its effect in the fashion industry. The paper has selected two magazines to help unravel the meaning of the term androgyny, especially in the fashion context. It also explores how the term has emerged from the unknown or infamous status to a point where it is framed as a source of identity in the fashion industry. The contemporary world today views the term, androgyny, as a dandy. The theories of trans-gender and trans-feminism have been implied here to try to justify the evolution of androgyny on a more favorable term in the fashion media. The transformation of the stereotype towards the transgender has also been exemplified. In this case, there seems to be freedom in the expression of self and the need for self-identification. In my opinion, the society, through the fashion industry and the need for individuals to acquire identity, has helped to decimate the stereotype that came with androgyny.

Keywords: Gender, androgyny, fashion, and visibility.

Introduction

People communicate in different ways. Besides, “by manipulating properties of the body modifications, people communicate their personal characteristics, including the important distinctions of gender. (Tormakhova, 2019). The fashion industry has been very dynamic. The term, fashion, would mean that it is anything that is additional to the kind of attires that people dawn (Tormakhova, 2019). The clothes that people wear are the source of determining gender. However, this symbolic representation has been so derogatory (Insani, 2018). It is true that in the fashion industry, anything can potentially become appealing to the eye. The structural happenings and contexts in our contemporary society best explains the changes that the fashion

industry undergoes. There is a strong symbiotic relationship between the fashion industry and the society (Tormakhova, 2019). This fact means that society is deprived of a valuable part when the fashion industry is killed.

Gender identity of a people has always been a challenge in the fashion industry. The clothes that people wear are a reproduction of sexuality and the stratification in the society (Insani, 2018). Furthermore, fashion is a mirror of contemporary happenings in a society. Therefore, androgyny is best viewed as a cultural aspect, which implies that sexuality difference is regarded as a difference in cultural aspect. Sexual identity also keeps transforming. This fact means that to be a man or a woman or rather, a boy or a girl, is a function of an asset such as dressing in a society (Tormakhova, 2019). Therefore, fashion is capable of gender identity.

The fashion publications in magazines also encourage the readers to think of themselves in terms of how their bodies look. This aspect brings a challenge of gender transfusion. Besides, a man's beauty is something that is of female gender, and a woman appeals to the men (Tormakhova, 2019). The titles in the magazines exemplify the assertion herein, such as Mrs. Dandy.

Symbolic Meaning of Androgyny

Attires and fashion are clear distinctions of sexuality. The socialization process places the clothing and appearance as a point of departure in gender differentiation (Crepax, 2017). Therefore, clothes are the visual sets of separating a man from a woman. The clothes people put on through socialization are coded, which means that they are one of gender references (Crepax, 2017). This fact implies that clothing does more than provide warmth and even a source of comfort.

Theoretical Framework

The trickle-down theory applies in this case. This theory asserts that fashion is embodied by the elites in the society, then trickles down to the ordinary individual (Crepax, 2017). Evidence of this framework is an individual assuming the traits of elites. Therefore, the reason behind this is the mainstream of such fashions.

Visible and Invisible Clothing

Style of attire may be a sign of very weird identities. Moreover, it is evident that a person's gender is not God-given, and fashion could be used to explain this fact. For instance, if a woman dresses in suits and tuxedos that deem to be masculine, then it is a sign of being a homosexual (Crepax, 2017). Therefore, visibility deconstructs the traditionally held gender symbolism.

Gender in the Contemporary Fashion

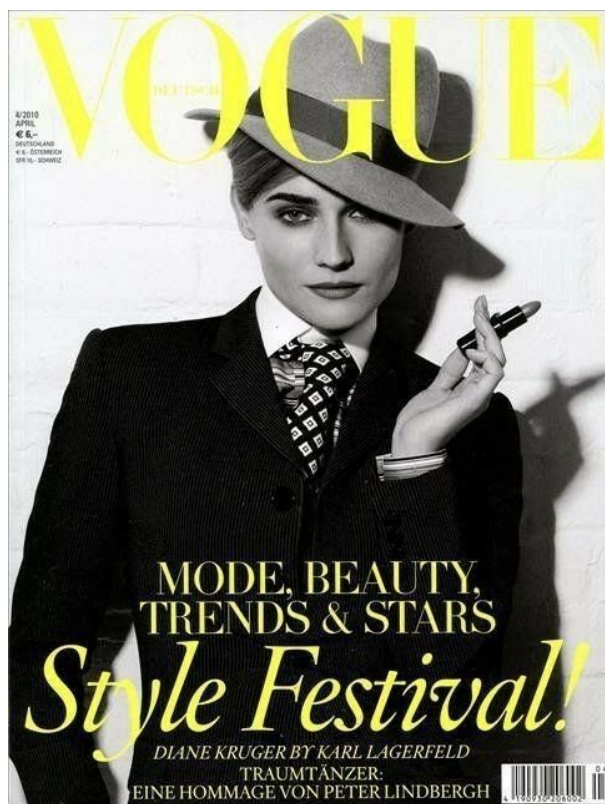
Androgyny in the present society is viewed as a comfort zone. This fact means that there is a discrepancy between the inner self and the type of clothing that an individual dawn (Crepax, 2017). Therefore, the choice of clothes that an individual puts on is a departure of gender identification. The fashion industry today is preoccupied with breaking the gap between the male and females. The current trends in the fashion industry depicts the thriving androgyny (Crepax, 2017). Moreover, andragogy depicts people who do not belong to both the masculine and feminine gender (Ranathunga & Uralagamage, 2019). This scenario, in recent years, has only attracted the courageous individuals in the industry. Androgyny is also part of the popular culture. It is represented in articles, pictures, and adverts, among other media related aspects. This fact means that the contemporary society is at peace of defining or changing the stereotypic gender identity through the fashions design.

Clothes Have No Gender

The fashion industry is a unisex middle ground. Besides, feminine fashion has always depicted men's fashion (Därth, 2020). It is now true that boys' fashion is borrowing from girls' (Därth, 2020). Women have also been known to wear masculine trousers, which has reached the mainstream. This aspect creates an atmosphere of sexual ambiguity.

Age of Androgyny

The magazine of the contemporary world expands on androgyny. An example is the Karl Lagerfeld dedication to the celebrities who were unisex (Därth, 2020). The German actress, Diane Kruger, has been exposed as possessing the characteristics of androgyny (Därth, 2020). This aspect is depicted in the picture below.



Diane Kruger by Karl Lagerfeld

Source: Vogue Germany (2020).

The fashion industry is fascinated with the context of androgyny. The image above is a representation and contradiction of the patriarchal definition of separate gender. The fashion represents an image of a woman who has adopted certain masculine traits, such as the cap, having a tie, and holding the lipstick in a manner that represents a male who is smoking a cigar.

Androgyny Bodies

The body is able to assume very many types of gestures and postures. This aspect is part of gender identity (Därth, 2020). The body in certain adverts also displays it as a commodity that can be re-modified to become what it is desired. Moreover, the body has been demeaned to represent “contemporary obsessions, gendered patterns of social relations, and bio-politics” (Därth, 2020). Therefore, people present themselves to society the way they manipulate their bodies. Therefore, the body is the greatest asset for individual representation.



Lara stones in the 2010 Calvin Klein Campaign.

Source: Calvin Klein Advertising Campaign (2010).

The media presents androgynous pictures. It has reached its peak in the contextualization of obsession in the current societal context (Ranathunga & Uralagamage, 2019). The position of

being a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, is not a determination of the dress, occupation, or strength, but the possession of certain genitals.

The Calvin Klein campaign in the 1990s was the cornerstone of androgyny. The campaign marked a certain gender identity for both the men and women (Därth, 2020). The image used by a campaign represents the pre-ordained ideology of androgyny. In this case, the patriarchal attitudes towards the man or woman is not important.



Image 1



image 2



Image 3

Kate Moss and Lea T in three different covers

Source: LOVE magazine, Spring/Summer (2011).

The first image represents two ladies kissing. This aspect is perceived to be an identity of homosexuality. The second image is a representation of a masculine figure by a feminine one. The last image presents a very difficult representation to decipher.

Conclusion

It is evident from the test that androgyny is a historical vogue concept. The meaning of androgyny in the contemporary world has greatly multiplied. Several answers have also been provided to this effect. In this case, what really comes out is the avoidance of defying masculinity and femininity in a polarized manner. Fashion has brought out the close link between androgyny and dandyism. In essence, culture determines fashion, androgyny, and its effects on shapes. This aspect has reached the mainstream, which begs the question of whether or

not individuals think of the future. Therefore, it would be proper to conclude by reaffirming the statements of Claun Cahun “Under this mask, another mask”.

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