

## Fashion and the Crossroads: a Theoretical-methodological Essay

### *A moda e as encruzilhadas: um ensaio teórico-metodológico*

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#### ABSTRACT

The article proposes a theoretical and methodological essay to undertake the decolonial turn on fashion research. Coming from a multidisciplinary approach, the essay explores two concepts: a social back stitch in fashion and tear up in fashion to demonstrate the first steps that the practice of the cross method requires in the context of fashion research. The crossroads, as a concept, is used in its political and epistemological function, guiding the theoretical-methodological proposal to the transgression of western canons and colonies that still operate in fashion studies. The crossroads is associated with the metaphor of the drawing and the sewing machine bobbin, which broadens the thinking of fashion gears and, therefore, operates the decolonial turn.

**Keywords:** Fashion. Crossroads. Theory. Method.

#### RESUMO

*O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar um ensaio sobre os passos teórico-metodológicos para compreender o giro decolonial nas pesquisas de moda. Com base em abordagens pluridisciplinares, o texto explora dois conceitos: retrocesso social em moda e rasgo em moda, para demonstrar as primeiras etapas que a prática do método do cruzo exige no âmbito da pesquisa. Como conceito, a encruzilhada é empregada em suas funções política e epistemológica, direcionando a proposta teórico-metodológica à transgressão dos cânones ocidentais e coloniais que ainda operam nos estudos de moda. À encruzilhada, é associada a metáfora do desenho e da bobina da máquina de costura, o que permite ampliar o pensamento das engrenagens da moda e, assim, operar o giro decolonial.*

**Palavras-chave:** Moda. Encruzilhadas. Teoria. Método.

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## THEORETICAL TACKS

In studies on fashion, postcolonial and decolonial references are currently perceived that promote a debate through the epistemological review of the field itself. The postcolonial debate dialogues with the decolonizations of Africa and Asia that took place in the mid-twentieth century. Intellectuals such as Edward Said (2007) and Frantz Fanon (2008), from these continents, present a fruitful debate on the need to: decolonize scientific production; analyze the impacts of colonization and imperialism on the lives of the colonized, including knowledge production and intellectual work; listen to the voices of Africans and Asians about themselves, as well as their analytical perspectives on the world; to question the traditionally held approaches — and all their theoretical apparatus — by European intellectuals regarding colonized societies.

The decolonial discussion, on the other hand, has Latin American roots and was initiated in the mid-1970s. Later, in the break with coloniality, decolonial authors, especially Aníbal Quijano, and the modernity/coloniality group, as well as Walter D. Mignolo, bet on a break with European knowledge references, opting to use concepts developed based on local knowledge references.

Given this context, since June 2020, the research and work group Coletivo Moda e Decolonialidade: Encruzilhadas do Sul Global (Comode) has been systematically dedicated to the study of fashion based on postcolonial and decolonial approaches. In the meetings, we generally develop<sup>1</sup> theoretical debates that are guided by readings of multidisciplinary authors, and we dedicate ourselves to applying the discussed concepts to the context of Brazil. Our gaze is guided by the construction of epistemological tools that allow for a decolonial turn in studies on fashion, that is, “inverting the look of analyses provincializing Europe and locating in the ‘discovery’ of the Americas the very possibility of the existence of European modernity” (SANTOS, 2020). Thus, we have methodologically thought about how to define the steps and techniques for the decolonial turn. The crossroads corresponds to the reference for the methodological understanding that decoloniality demands, and in view of this, we feel the need to textually record the method that we propose as a research and work group.

Our understanding of the term decolonial is in line with the meaning defined by the translators Jamille Pinheiro Dias and Raquel Camargo, of the book *Um feminismo decolonial*, (*A Decolonial Feminism*) by Françoise Vergès (2020), when they mention that the term refers to “the continuous movement of turning thoughts and practices increasingly free from coloniality” (DIAS; CAMARGO, 2020, p. 8), that is, discourses that overcome colonial logic. The crossroads, for us, corresponds to a symbol that “crosses any and all knowledge that claims to be unique” (RUFINO, 2019, p. 86). The crossroads takes place through the art of crossing, and this practice

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1 The text uses the first person plural in order to break with the false notion of neutrality that the hidden subject presupposes in academic norms. Its use is a condition for registering a collective thought, the result of exchanges between the members of the group and which also welcomes the dialogue with the person who reads it.

corresponds to the movement “of erasure, disauthorization, necessary transgressions, resilience, possibilities, reinventions and transformations” (RUFINO, 2019, p. 86). This thought is based on what Simas and Rufino (2018) call crossroads pedagogy.

Thus, as a working method, we articulate our proposals with these assumptions to hold a debate on fashion as a field of knowledge in the Brazilian context and its relationship with the colonality of power. We propose concepts for facing the colonial matrix and record them throughout this article. Accordingly, our objective is to present the theoretical developments listed by the group, proposing a description of the methodological steps to undertake the decolonial turn.

Since we are an multidisciplinary group of researchers, the intention is to help us think about the ways in which fashion has been reflected in recent years. We believe that this essay has pedagogical value, as we do not segregate the reality of the teaching experience from the reality experienced by students, as a two-way street; we want to instigate and expand the debate and reflection about the very practice of fashion at the crossroads.

The essay is divided into two phases. In the first, we present our two methodological concepts: *social back stitch in fashion* and *tear up in fashion*, both developed by the research group in our meetings. The terms created by us represent the paths necessary to define the methodological steps to undertake decolonial thinking *in* fashion and also in some expressions of clothing production practices. In the second, we bring our discussion and proposal to look at the field of fashion. Although the concept of field refers to the theory of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (2005), the definition used by Comode refers to the space through which clothing circulates and in which it demarcates the relationships between people and objects, including the academic sphere, in the which clothing becomes an object of research. Thus, our proposal and discussion encompass the ideas resulting from the application of the concept of crossroads and the possible metaphors with the making of fashion and its instruments.

## UPDATING CONCEPTS

For us at Comode, reflecting on fashion involves analyzing the impact of colonial/modern concepts of race, gender and class, even if not in isolation from other fields of social life. This process of reassessment through postcolonial and decolonial conceptual keys of the social oppression schemes applied to fashion is called by us as *social back stitch in fashion*.

Our use of the word *back stitch* is not random. Immediately, it bypasses the common sense meanings associated with it, that is, delay or ruin. Moving away from this definition, for professionals who work in the day-to-day production of clothing, the word back stitch is known and recognized as the movement of a sewing stitch, skillfully performed from the bobbin to the sewing machine, which is applied in clothes where, once the seam line has been passed over the fabric, this line is inverted/backwards over the first seam, demarcating new stitches and, subsequently, moving forward once more. This procedure reinforces the seam at the point where

the process is applied, so that the union made by the seam between the parts of the garment does not easily break.

With the use of the notion of *social back stitch in fashion*, we propose to reconsider what has been formulated to date. As notions aligned with the production of the colonality of power, with regard to practices and theories about the field of fashion, it is necessary to invert the traditional meaning of scientific production, based on the idea of evolution and to return to certain concepts to next submit them to analysis so that we can continue with a reflection that overlaps the first ones. Thus, contrary to denying it, we recognize the importance of what has been developed so far, but we emphasize the urgency and the need to reassess the concepts. The notion of *social back stitch in fashion* for us, as the stitch in the seam suggests, represents reinforcing and making more consistent the seams of meaning that are made about fashion.

We can say that the concept of *social back stitch in fashion*, in methodological terms, makes an effort similar to that undertaken by postcolonial authors. These, from Africa and Asia, graduated from European universities and, with the tools of authors from the North, criticized the traditional ideas conceived about the South, as well as developed new concepts to think about themselves, their societies of origin and the global economic-political logic that promoted colonialism and imperialism, in addition to the value structure that enlists modernity itself.

We also consider that, at times, a conceptual break will be necessary to assess the extent to which we reproduce the colonial logic in our productive, teaching and research practices, and get away from such approaches. In this case, we present the concept of *tear up in fashion*. Unlike the cutting process, in which a fabric is, with the use of an instrument such as scissors, divided into two or more parts. When we tear a fabric, we break, in a rough way and often with our own hands, the interweaving that characterizes it. The *tear up in fashion*, therefore, is understood by the group, based on some readings carried out on the practices, theories, teaching methods and other actions that reproduce the colonial, hegemonic and imperialist logic in the field of fashion, as the extreme breaking process.

The concept of *tear up in fashion* dialogues with the work of Latin American decolonial researchers, as we approach what these authors from the modernity/coloniality group called the decolonial turn (QUIJANO, 2005; MALDONADO-TORRES, 2017). The movement consists of abandoning concepts and pointing out the structures of domination that underlie them to rethink and reinvent local notions and texts *with them* and *based on them*. It is about founding and substantiating epistemologies according to the South Axis, researching, disseminating about what we are, considering concepts created in the favelas/shantytowns, suburbs, samba schools, funk dances, Umbanda and Candomblé houses, prostitution spots, on corners, at crossroads. Consider everything that neoliberal, political and intellectual logic based on Northern grammar has discarded as legitimate.

It is, in this sense, to carry out what Luiz Rufino (2019) called the epistemological stroll in Pedagogy of Crossroads, that is, "through the refusal of the condition

of immobility propagated by these effects that we must transgress its parameters” (RUFINO, 2019, p. 17). Thus, we believe that analytical examples can contribute to the reader’s understanding. We will use the notion of copying for both analyses, demonstrating how the theme can be approached in the face of the two methodological concepts and how they contribute to a different understanding of a theme according to the methodology used in the research..

- *Social back stitch in fashion*: the notion of copying is frequently used by fashion studies to assess the type of relationship established between local ways of dressing and European references. When we go back, we understand that it is first necessary to locate in which intellectual context such reflections took place. Considering that a good part of the debate about fashion is inserted in a logic of authorization, we understand that the authors who used the concept of copying perceived, as authorized to have a relationship with fashion, only one social group: the elite. Restricted to this group, perhaps the concept of copying makes sense, as can be seen in the *trickle down* theory applied to fashion. However, for us to move forward in our reflections, we have to move forward and think that copying is *one of the ways in which Brazilian society relates to fashion*. After all, there was a whole local knowledge about the care of clothes, in addition to a local production of clothes for the colonized (free poor men), catechized natives and subjected to compulsory and slave labor, which cannot be disregarded. With this understanding, retrogression works as we do not abandon the concept of copying but strive to locate it socially to expand our gaze to other productions of local clothing. It is known that the authors who researched local clothing are aware that they are analyzing the elites, but we understand that a step back is necessary so that we stop seeing copying and the elites as the only legitimate way of relating to clothing and so that we can also look at these elites as capable of producing some kind of resignification. We can even look at copying as an integral part of the creation of producers from the North Axis. Otherwise, we would pejoratively designate as copies the “inspirations” made by European creators based on non-European references, whose examples are countless, and some of them are found in the studies of Jennifer Craik (2003). As a mimetic gesture, the act of copying is part of all creation. Therefore, what Europeans defend as an original creation, focused on value and the concept of originality, is always a copy;
- *Tear up in fashion*: here, we take a different approach. We abandon the idea of copying as a historical-analytical reference, and consider that such a perception is consistent with a perspective that understands only the West as a fashion producer. In this way, the colonial logic of knowledge production is inverted, and the idea is constructed that local clothing production dialogues with world fashion, *just as all fashions in the world dialogue with each other*. Therefore, there is no copying, because copying is impossible in societies characterized by crosses/transits. What we have here is a relationship, that is, an exchange.

Given the above, it is worth mentioning that both concepts indicate steps that reach different levels on the subject of copying and, therefore, on the way in which the subject will be considered in research and studies in fashion. While the *social back stitch in fashion* corresponds to a stage that allows the verification of predefined standards and judgments for approaching a given theme, the *tear up in fashion* represents the break with these standards and the indication of other definitions that provide new forms of knowledge construction. We can summarize that the concept of *social back stitch in fashion* seeks to revise the theme, as exemplified in the case of copying, in order to reinforce the understanding of the colonial tradition of construction of thought itself and to criticize the definitions. With that, the *tear up in fashion* operates the split with certain approaches, concepts and meanings that still remain, evidencing the inadequacy of its permanence and the opening of spaces for other terms and concepts. As the meaning of copy does not hold up because of the colonial meaning of its definition in the context of cultural research, we are left with the exclusion of the term.

## **CROSSING THEORIES AND METHODS**

In this section, we expose a theoretical-methodological approach through a textual description, in view of the discussions we are developing about the world of fashion. To this end, we interweave theoretical discussions about the field with concrete examples from the world of fashion, so that our ideas gain materiality for us to think about the validity of the approach.

In the first place, it is important to remember the considerations pointed out by Sandra Niessen, Ann-Marie Leshkovich and Carla Jones (2003) and other authors who highlight the power dynamics of the field of fashion, highlighting the way in which a field of disputes was constituted in that the West develops for itself the exclusiveness of fashion and, more importantly, provides itself with the authority to judge what is fashion and what is not, as well as who is capable of turning objects and ideas into fashion and who is only capable of copying them.

This structure that defines the West as modern and innovative dialogues with the colonial spectrum itself: immersed in an evolutionary logic permeated by the scientific racism that still lingers among us, the production of the peoples of the North is always perceived as superior. Even if elements appropriated from other societies are evident, the contemporary colonizer, or neo-colonizer, is provided with the presumption of innocence. Its appropriation is not copying, but inspiration or rereading. In a metaphor, we can think of the scene of a trial. The Court, being the manifestations and producers of European fashion and responsible for the sentence, is assembled, and its decision, already defined *a priori*, after all the jury, the prosecution and the judge were bought, since they share the same ideology.

The strategy is more violent, however: the judge also has the power to evaluate and decide which foreign players will be able to play on his team, that is, which among them are competent to do so. And they do it in two ways: on the one hand, they give power to the judges of the local courts, those more to the

south, so that the local *criollo* agents, who receive these micropowers, can also decide who is fashionable and who is not. within their republic. What do these local agents get in return? Prestige and economic capital, even if in the global North they continue to be considered Latin doormats, that is, evaluated by the grammar of subalternity, hierarchies of knowledge and discourses that enlist the inequalities defined by the North.

The other way that the judge does this job of defining fashion is directly, when he raises a local producer by giving him the endorsement of “with fashion”. However, as pointed out by Rabine (2002), Craik (2003), Niessen, Leshkovich and Jones (2003) and Almann (2004), among others, this *status* is always accompanied by a process of exoticization, a kind of inferiority mark. In general terms, Western fashion is *The Fashion*, and the rest are fashions with reservations, Latin, African, Asian and/or anything that might mark them as different. Exotic, hot, wild, colorful, sexy: any resemblance to colonial discourse of racialization or ethnicization is no mere coincidence.

For this type of logic of looking and thinking about fashion, we can imagine the visual representation of a triangle. This form is structured through levels, and at the top are those identified with Western fashion. Just below, there are those selected by the first and who are outside the West, and, below them, those without fashion. These levels are not closed structures, that is, there are several possible configurations between these poles, since society is much more complex than any ideal type (WEBER, 1992) can try to apprehend, however imagining this form helps us to understand the proposed here, that is, a hierarchical structure of fashion.

After a series of readings and discussions, the group proposed a reading of fashion that faced this traditional hierarchical perspective. It is important to highlight that the idea is methodological. It's about turning around, moving our gaze and analyzing European production like other world productions and on the same level as them. To do so, we adopt two assumptions. We move from *fashion* to *fashions*, in the sense that all forms relating to clothing are now understood as *fashion*. Here, we propose a theoretical-methodological reading based on the idea of *social back stitch in fashion*. Then, we gave up the term fashion to try to define another concept that represented the idea that all relationships with clothing are possible, equal and on the same level, and can only be evaluated from itself (local development of a given society) in its relations with global production, relations that are of permanent contact, crossing, transit, exchange and resignification and that inevitably include change.

This discussion led us to a circular perception of fashion and to a vision that did not reproduce fashion in a vertical, uncritical way, with the West as the universal and defining point of binarism. Thus, fashion here it is understood as horizontal, because it is also a geopolitical relationship in which colonial cartography has always inserted Europe at the top of the maps. In this way, we will understand horizontality as an axis so that we can look at all productions and relationships with clothing on the same level. Circularity, in turn, lies in the fact that all relationships with fashion

will be perceived as circular structures whose contour lines, however, are not closed to the outside (exchanges, contacts, resignifications), but close in on themselves same, in the sense that they are individual units of varying sizes and complexities.

The analysis, however, was improved, through the counterattacks versed in the notion of pedagogy of the crossroads, by Simas and Rufino (2018, p. 22): "A political/epistemological/educational project whose main purpose is to disobey the burdens of racism/colonialism through the transgression of the Western canon". For the group, the type of relationship that we propose to be established between the fashions, in addition to contact, exchange and resignification, is a true crossroads of stories. In this way, we propose that each manifestation or phenomenon of fashion and clothing be considered as a macro representation, crossed by lines that cut the entire world system of fashion, as this is how relations were actually established since the first contacts between humans: in the encounters, in the crossings, in the knowledge that touches each other and that makes each part follow its path, transformed by what touched them, that is, renewed and reborn.

The definition of crossroads proposed by Simas and Rufino (2018, p. 18) allows us to align the theoretical-methodological assumptions of fashion research work. To do so, we rely on the metaphor of drawing. As the crossroads presupposes the notion of a path, we can associate the path with the definition of a line that traditionally corresponds to the element that allows any stroke in a drawing. If the crossroads refers to the crossing of paths, then its representation can be stated in the form of a crossing of lines.

In drawing theory, a line is formed by countless points. However, when we think of the practical action of traversing graphic material on a support, as is the case with a pencil on paper, we can say that the line is the trace, the path, the movement that a point makes on the plane of the surface. When touching the pencil to the paper, the slightest contact generates a unit that is configured as a point. This is the smallest and first visual element (LUPTON; PHILLIPS, 2008, p. 14), but any displacement that the point performs will form a line, which may be curved, straight, continuous or dashed; that is, its characteristics will depend on the movement and the direction the point takes.

Observing the format of the crossroads, what happens is that it is formed by the crossing of lines that correspond to different paths. The crossing itself demarcates a specific point which is the one through which the two lines cross. In the language of geometry, this point alludes to the pair of coordinates  $x$  and  $y$  and can be taken, for our theoretical-methodological metaphor, as the place of the point of view that we want to emphasize and highlight in the perspectives on fashion.

Based on the notion that the entire epistemological understanding of the crossroads takes place in a space, to apply it to our theoretical-methodological research proposal in fashion, we need to imagine the planar representation of the globe, such as a map, to thus visualize the world system. Unlike the recurrent images of continents and their countries, we are going to abstract the divisions and adopt the notion that spaces are formed by countless points and that these, by



themselves, already represent crossroads, since culture is not immobile, and this qualification corresponds to a colonial canon attributed to non-European cultures. On the various points arranged on the surface, the fashion paths to be traced can be drawn by innumerable lines that highlight the cultural intersections of clothing systems. In this way, the points of different spaces are connected by the lines that generate the intersections. The crossroads of fashion are formed by the paths of the different points of the clothing systems that meet through movement in space. In the words of Rufino (2019, p. 18), “the cross is the becoming, the unfinished, salient, unordered and elusive movement. The cross is seen as crossing, erasure, slit, contamination, catalysis, bricolage — exusiac effects”.

From a methodological point of view, thinking about fashion in view of the crossroads means facing the tactical action that the cross represents.

The crosses cross and demarcate border areas. These crossed zones, borders, are the places of emptiness that will be filled by bodies, sounds and words. From these fillings, other possibilities for the invention of life will emerge, based on the tones of the diversity of knowledge, radical transformations and cognitive justice (SIMAS; RUFINO, 2018, p. 22, our translation).

Working with the cross is “erasing the alleged universality of the Western canon” (SIMAS; RUFINO, 2018, p. 19, our translation), that is, transgressing it through a cross from other perspectives. This transgression, for us, must be accomplished by a turn in the understanding of lines and the movements of points. For this, let’s adopt another metaphor: the sewing machine bobbin.

As we well understand, the heavy work of clothing production takes place on the factory floor, sometimes unhealthy places that configure neo-slavery relationships and subhuman conditions. There is the place where the masses are allocated, where men and women are exploited to maintain the capitalist individualism of fashion for some and bodies of the sacrifice zone for others. As proposed by Sandra Niessen (2020, p. 7), “the vicinities/cultures classified as having “non-fashion,” a construct of colonial and capitalist fashion should be recognized as ‘fashion sacrifice zones’”. Metaphorically, we are going to expose our perceptions about this relationship that we have just mentioned and, for that, we are going to use examples extracted from sewing machines and their accessories, as well as their purpose in the process of making clothes.

Among fabrics, threads and needles, there is the figure of the seamstress, a fundamental piece in the making of clothing. To be able to produce her clothes on a daily basis, she needs to have at least one straight machine model. This is one of the oldest machines, and it was in the Industrial Revolution that its first gears were developed. It is not by chance that the most significant transformations took place in the production of clothing. Well, how these gears work and how this reflects on the final product is what we are going to think about. Furthermore, our reflection not only brings these gears to the center of the debate, but also makes use of brief associations with the subjects that keep these gears turning.

With new technologies in the textile industry, the industrial straight sewing machine has gained new devices to meet the demands of productivity in garment

manufacturing. Modern machines work through various mechanisms and accessories, many of which are indispensable for making a garment. Among them are needles, presser feet, spools..., accessories that speed up and enhance the quality of the finished product. We want to bring to our essay two fundamental parts of this gear, the bobbin case and the bobbin.

The function of the bobbin is to support the thread that sustains the upper seam, the one that is exposed in the pieces and is appreciated by admirers of a good finish, that is, backstitching. The topstitches are part of the requirements that define a well-made, valuable piece. What almost nobody sees is that behind all the beauty of a well-finished garment are the invisible stitches fed by the bobbin. How does the gearing of this bobbin work and what is the bobbin case in the sewing machine frame?

We can say that the bobbin case is the heart of the machine, which generates the rotation that keeps the vertical and horizontal axis working. It is the mesh of the gears, as it is at the crossroads of an operating system that ignores its existence. The stitches launched by the bobbin are regulated, adjusted and controlled by the upper mechanism of the machine. The coil does not operate by itself, but the instant it stops turning, the whole system is paralyzed. It is impossible to rotate the shaft without what we understand as the heart of the machine. Even in the oldest machines, if the bobbin is not in its proper place, there will be no clothes, there will be no production. And if you are wondering "what about the motor? Wouldn't it be the heart of the machine?" Motors came into existence at the end of the 19th century. Before, the machines operated on the system of cranks and pedals, but they always needed what we now understand as bobbin case and bobbin.

As you can see from the description of how the machine and the role of the bobbin work, the threads cross each other during sewing, and there is tension caused by the stitches as one thread is positioned above and another below. In our view, the sewing threads can symbolize the asymmetry that exists between North and South in fashion practices: the bobbin thread, as is visible, would be contained in the underside of the sewn fabric, thus representing the whole part that sustains the fashion system itself. Although the North part is delimited by the equator line, we believe that the division is even more asymmetrical, since what is considered North is not restricted to the geographic notion of the hemispheres. Different places that are above the equator are considered south on the world system power scale and, at the crossroads of fashion, are made invisible by the upper seams.

Given this metaphor, it is worth noting that the role of the seamstress as an agent that feeds the entire clothing production chain can also be understood by the function of the bobbin mechanism in the sewing machine. According to the group, these professionals correspond to those who support the fashion system and who are made invisible by the lines that sew the topstitching of the clothes' finishes. This image is also parallel to the one that Françoise Vergès (2020) describes about racialized women who carry out cleaning work in companies in French society. For the group, the proposal of a decolonial turn through a cross method implies making these professionals research agents, that is, dimensioning the approach to fashion

beyond that visible image, to all relations between agents of clothing production. Therefore, the sense of going beyond corresponds to not observing the seams and crossroads of fashion only on the right side of the fabric, that is, seeing only the result of the upper lines of the seams.

For the group, turning requires looking at the reverse side of the fabric: that side where the bobbin thread is visualized and perceived as fundamental for sewing to take place. The rotation causes the image to be seen in reverse, and the perception, similar to the provocation undertaken by Joaquín Torres García, in 1943, when he drew the map of South America inverted, stating “our North is the South”. Seeing the inside out corresponds to changing the poles and highlighting the lines made invisible by the crossroads of fashion. With this, the crossroads method presupposes contact with the place of tension. Within the scope of research, he indicates the way in which the paths cross, or, as in sewing, the way in which the lines intertwine. Analyzing the pressure on the line, the strength of the lines, the type of line and its links on the mechanisms of fashion indicates opening the observation by the paths of the crossroads.

## FINAL TOUCHES

The cross method has challenges because

humanity has always faced the crossed paths with fear and enchantment. The crossroads, after all, is the place of uncertainties, paths and the astonishment of realizing that living presupposes the risk of choices. Where to walk? The crossroads is uncomfortable; that's your fascination. What we can say about this whole story is that we enchanted our lives ourselves. The rite must be practiced; we asked the invisible for permission and continued on as tiny heirs of the human spirit, making astonishment the common thread of luck. We who are from the crossroads are suspicious of those on the straight path (SIMAS; RUFINO, 2018, p. 23-24, our translation).

For the group, this theoretical-methodological proposition of doing research on/in fashion is to denote the emergence of connections and correlations, which only in the face of crosses and transits will paths be opened to unload colonial stains that have regulated the ethical, aesthetic, imagery senses and subjective aspects of producing, circulating and researching in the field of fashion.

We believe that, in this way, we will be able to leave “epistemological sofas and launch ourselves at the crossroads of alterity” (SIMAS; RUFINO, 2018, p. 19, our translation). In this action of launching oneself, we consider that the *social back stitch in fashion* and the *tear up in fashion*, addressed in the first section of this article, correspond to strategies that allow research agents to carry out their movements and twirls. Carrying out the exercise of determining what should be reconsidered and what should be discarded is part of an action that seeks to deconstruct the rigidity and immobility of theories and methods still applied in fashion studies. When we talk about fashion, we are taking into account the fashion system, which corresponds to an institutionalized system that presupposes agents and diffusion mechanisms that operate the systematic production of change and legitimize the figure of the creator/designer (CASARIN et al., 2022, p. 9).

Furthermore, the dedication to the tensions of the sewing stitches at the crossroads of fashion is configured as an orientation to the work of the subject-researcher-creator who undertakes research in the field. Recognizing that the place from which the research emerges already corresponds to a crossroads makes the opposite of fashion become visible. That is, that North and South, as well as inside in and inside out of the seam, are understood as directions of the paths of the same world.

Accordingly, we believe that the considerations pointed out in this theoretical-methodological essay are fundamental for researchers who focus on fashion, considering its creative aspect in an economic and symbolic logic. The perception of the development of creative practices cannot remain associated with canons that reproduce epistemological models that subjugate or even refute the invention produced in countries such as Brazil. It is through these strategies described here that we will untie ourselves from the modernity and coloniality binarism, and we will then be able to “weaves genealogies that have remained disjointed” (VÁZQUEZ, 2020, p.18), to face what has been systematically silenced and actively planned to be and remain invisible. According to Comode, by recognizing historical processes, their formation, celebration and contemporary violence, we will be able to contribute to a practical and methodological decolonial critique *about* and *in* fashion.

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