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FIT DIFFERENT!
AN EXPLORATION OF APPLE FITNESS+ ARTIFICIAL AFFECTS MACHINE

Elsa Soro*

Titolo in italiano: Mettiti in forma diversamente! La macchina degli affetti artificiali di Apple Fitness+

Abstract: la crescente domanda e offerta di servizi e soluzioni digitali per il fitness, incrementatasi durante la pandemia di Covid 19, ha presumibilmente riarticolato le sfere dello sport e del tempo libero, insieme al loro significato sociale e culturale. Questo lavoro intende indagare gli effetti di senso derivati dalla nuova valorizzazione della pratica del fitness. In particolare lo studio si interessa a come le tecnologie basate sull'intelligenza artificiale ambiscano a sostituire la motivazione infusa da attori umani negli spazi adibiti al fitness.
Prendendo in considerazione l'ambito di studi ormai consolidato che si concentra sulle dimensioni socioculturali del fitness digitale, questo articolo intende partire da come le app di fitness, in interazione con il corpo dell'utente, risemantizzano le motivazioni e le aspirazioni verso questo ambito di esperienza.
L'articolo analizza le interfacce, le *affordance* e le narrazioni visive prodotte Fitness+, l'app per il fitness di Apple Inc., e confronta quest'ultima con un campione di altre app per il fitness basate sull'intelligenza artificiale. Si utilizzerà una lente semiotica per interpretare il modo in cui il corpo, i movimenti e gli affetti sono inseriti nella cornice dei valori di "progresso" e "diversità" espressi dal marketing dalla *big tech* californiana.

Key–words: digital fitness, Artificial Intelligence, semiotics, affects theories

1. Stay (fit and motivated) at home

Since the advent of the Covid 19 pandemic, due to the limitations imposed on conventional sports activities, the use of digital sport and fitness services has grown significantly. These digital solutions include a

* Università degli Studi di Torino.

vast array of technological services and applications, ranging from on-demand online training to free workouts on YouTube and TikTok, etc. At the same time, the market for wearable devices such as smartwatches for motion tracking has multiplied its revenues.

The increasing demand for and offer of devices for digital fitness services and solutions has arguably rearticulated the fields of sport and leisure, along with their social and cultural meanings. Indeed, sport and fitness facilities have been relocated to domestic or public spaces and the presence of fitness professionals and peers has been replaced by digital personas who act as trainers and online communities. In this regard, fitness services have proposed different solutions to digitally recreate the motivation for sport, whether it be competing in a race or sharing the effort and energy with peers. Seemingly, online fitness communities share motivational hashtags and images of achievement.

Arguably such processes of remediation and relocation of workouts and physical exercises have ultimately impacted the body and its own proprioception. If, generally speaking, in the traditional fitness facilities individuals imitate the movement of the instructors while looking at their reflections in the classroom mirror, the use of online applications with their digital screens transforms this awareness of movement and coordination. Furthermore, the infusion of motivation and the monitoring of exercises which, along with the supplying of equipment, can be considered at the core of the services delivered by the gymnasiums with their staff of instructors, has had to be digitally recreated and therefore discursively readapted.

In this regard, the use of artificial intelligence in digital fitness (Farrokhi *et. al.* 2021) has been implemented by fitness service providers to fill the gap left by the absence of a shared physical space where bodies and movements were at the same time monitored, compared and therefore motivated to improve, as well as the absence of person-to-person interaction that was supposed to create engagement towards fitness.

Like other fields and industries, the premise of the AI functioning in fitness is the availability of big amounts of data from wearables, sensors, cameras, and other connected devices related to eating habits, workout performance, and fitness goals. According to the marketing discourse conveyed by the apps (Meng 2021), the processing

of such data can generate AI–powered recommendations to optimize user perfomance.

The motivation factor, traditionally supplied by a human trainer in sport facilities, has been recreated in many apps and services through the visualization of live performances and their metrics thanks to bio–data tracking. The screens of smartphones or smartwatches have thus become an extension of the internal organs[1] that can be *seen working* on the screens and contrasted with previous performances by other users. This way, the physical sensation during the workout can be transformed into a number and metric to which a value can be attributed. In turn, those data become analytics that feed the creation of new metrics and therefore predictive data.

The possibility of tracking motion through sensors and AI–powered computer vision can also ensure that users perform the exercises *correctly*, and at the same time produce a new archive of digital images of the human body on the move, aggregated with metrics and values.

2. "Fit" different: Apple Fitness+ motivator

Within this ideology of constant improvement and robotization of the human body that can be visualized on digital screens as data and metrics, the different services on the market have to differentiate themselves with a variety of commercial offers. For each of them the visual restitution of the motivation to exercise through technological solutions has to replace human and spatial interaction as experienced in physical fitness facilities.

Through the commercialization of its first wearable device that can carry out electrocardiograms (ECGs), the Apple watch and the consequent launch of Apple Fitness, the well–known Californian manufacturer of personal computers and software has become one of the major digital fitness providers.

The launch of a fitness app by one of the biggest tech companies in the world can be considered a very relevant case within the ongoing digital reshaping of the leisure spheres and of body experience. In order

(1) Carbone et al. have extensively problematized the relations between screens and the human body within what they call an *anthropology of screen experiences* (see particularly Carbone et al. 2021).

to grasp certain dimensions of this transformation, this piece of work will focus on the analysis of the Apple Fitness ecosystem of values and aesthetics within which fitness experience is included.

Through the examination of Fitness+ affordances, interfaces and visual textualities this paper will articulate an investigation into how the biometric tracking embedded in the digital fitness providers is visually pertinentized (or not) and which effects of meaning such (un)visibilization strategies convey.

The data collection process is the result of a netnography carried out by the author as a user of the service over more than 5 months, during which she joined the Fitness+ "club" and practiced a variety of workouts as part of the offer. Such empirical observations have been combined with desk analytics and a descriptive analysis of the service interface and visual contents.

Regarding the structure, this study is articulated as follows: the first part will look back in time to a famous case of virtual fitness in the 1980s featuring Jane Fonda and its legacy for fitness influencers on social media; the main strands of research on digital fitness and how they dealt particularly with the gendered and normative body of female users will be reviewed in the second part; then a sample of fitness app commercialized as "AI based will be resigned. For each of them the opposition human–machine as displayed by the app visual and textual discourse will be unmasked. Such sample of apps will be functional to introduce the "difference" and "diversity" represented by Fitness+.

Through an analytic description of discursive and enunciative arrangements of Fitness+ in conjunction with the user body accessorized with the wearable Apple devices, the work will ultimately attempt to shed light on the integration of bodily movement and exercise experience in the wider affective and aesthetic system produced by tech corporations such as Apple.

3. Jane Fonda on TikTok

Despite the acclaimed success of digital fitness in concomitance with the spread of the global pandemic, the act of training with virtual

instructors is not a novelty. In the 1980s Hollywood star Jane Fonda popularized the format of virtual classes with her Workout Starring Jane Fonda, a series of recorded classes supported by videotape. The initiative stemmed from the actress' intention to subvert the traditional masculine dominance in gyms and create a space where women could "burn calories" and build muscles. The workouts were shot in a theatrical set, in a ballet studio located in Beverly Hills where the actress led a group of fitness practitioners.

After its launch, the product was the top–selling VHS tape for a few years, "positioning" the actress as an influencer *ante–litteram*. More than 30 decades later, Jane Fonda's workouts have appeared on YouTube and Tik Tok, revamping her characteristic leg warmers and striped leotards and pelvic lifts.

These days on social media one would tag Jane Fonda's workouts as "Fitspiration" or "fitspo" (a mix of the words "fitness" and "inspiration"), a popular hashtag that circulates in social media and refers to a "global philosophy of health, strength and empowerment"(Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2018). With the emergence of the social media platforms of video sharing such as Youtube, Instagram or TikTok and the consequent phenomenon of the influencers, the free offer of contents related to fitness has radically increased and consequently the "authority" of the trainers has started to be "distributed" among a plethora of actors whose credibility may be measured by quantifying the hits and likes that they receive. This phenomenon reverses the model launched by Jane Fonda where arguably the role of celebrity preceded that of fitness influencer.

When the global pandemic started in 2020 with a series of national lockdowns and corresponding restrictions, the consumption of mediated fitness contents drastically escalated. As a response to the temporary closing of fitness facilities, the home was refunctionalized as a place of "everything", including workouts. In this vein, several videos on social media platforms instructed users on how to "use household items" such as plastic bottles of water or packets of rice or even books as dumbbells.

Along with the diffusion of free fitness–related contents on social media platforms with the emergence of innumerable influencers, a variety of mobile applications have appeared on the market. These services

can be differentiated between the workout apps that show exercises and explain how to do them and the tracking apps that track movement (either workout or normal movement).

Both typologies can be paired with wearable devices that collect and visualize the performance data in real time (typically the heartbeats). Furthermore, numerous health– and fitness–related apps include gamification features in the attempt to engage users by rendering routine aspects of everyday life into games; these are thus referred to as "serious games" in the medical literature.

If the market has certainly noticed the expansion of the demand for digital fitness and rapidly reoriented business models to this digital transformation, in Academia a nascent literature has problematized the psychological, social and cultural aspects of online fitness cultures. In the following section, some relevant strands of research will be examined as background to this paper.

4. Body of researches on Fitspiration: a quick review

In their bibliometric study of this field to better understand the current state of research, Liu and Avello (2021) found that the contributions to the topic of digital fitness belonged primarily to the fields of medicine, computer science, and health sciences. Nonetheless, the sociocultural dimensions of digital fitness have also been addressed by scholars, with a special focus on conceptions of body appearance and paying particular attention to the equality of treatment between male and female bodies (Fardouly et al. 2018).

In this regard, scholars of sport have used affects theory to explore the ways in which women's exercising "bodies intersect with embodied feelings and affects, sexual subjectivities, and desires" (Roy 2013, 331; also see Pavlidis and Fullagar 2015; Waitt 2014).

Drawing upon feminist theorizations of affect and the body (Ahmed 2004), Kim Toffoletti & Thorp analized the BBG fitness community on Instagram and focused on the emotions and sensations that reverberate through bodies as they circulate and are amplified via the interactive and content–sharing features of Instagram; they support the

thesis that mediated fitness culture "complicates linear associations between fitspiration media and women's body image concerns" (p.2).

A post–feminist biopedagogical perspective (Wright, 2009) guided Camacho et al. (2019) in their analysis of how young females negotiate discourses around health and fitness whilst engaging with Instagram. The concept of perfection entangled with the neoliberal ideologies of continuous self–improvement is at the center of Camacho and Gray's (2021) examination of the social media presence of Patry Jordán, a famous Spanish fitness influencer followed by young women. A further examination of young female bodies in relation with health–related social media by Goodyear and al. (2021) investigated the media's influence in the learning processes associated with a normative healthy body.

A complementary subject of research within e–fitness and e–health have been the data assemblages produced by the self–tracking activities enabled by body sensors and self–tracking devices such as the Apple Watch or Fitbit. Australian researcher Deborah Lupton (2018) considers the data generated by self–tracking devices to be "lively", since they are:

> generated from life itself (...), open to constant repurposing by a range of actors and agencies (...). Due to the advent of algorithmic authority and predictive analytics that use digital self–tracked data to make inferences and decisions about individuals and social groups. (2018, p.14)

In her book "Quantified self", a name borrowed from QS, "an international community of users and makers of self–tracking tools who share an interest in "self–knowledge through numbers", Lupton describes where the harvested wearer data go and for what purpose by visualizing privacy concerns. This use of the lively data by actors and agencies and third parties within the capitalist system is considered a biopolitical goal of governments that encourage healthy behaviours and "promote a culture of dataveillance" (Lupton 2016).

This body of studies about the so–called "fitspiration" media practices has mainly focused on the exposition, often gendered, or the surveillance of bodies in social media through empirical research on users' experiences of self–tracking, or on the use of the app and services

including strategies that practitioners utilise "to avoid conforming to a form of 'techno–optimism' (Esmonde, 2018)". Less attention has been given to the construction of the fitspiration experience by the service itself and application affordances, interfaces and visual discourses showcased on the device's screen. In this regard, this piece of work aims to start from the fitness app and the discousivization of the assemblage with the user body. In particular how the interaction between the human body–machine is problematized by the commercial discouse of the fitness apps.

Such considerations will then pay the way to present the value proposition of Fitness+, consisting in "being different" from the rest of the AI based fitness apps.

5. Artificial intelligence *vs* human body in the "rest of" fitness apps marketing strategy

In the vast territory of fitness apps, we selected a sample of applications sorted among the first five in the Apple Store and in the Google Store (during the period December 1st — May 1st 2022), by using the keywords "Fitness" "App" and "Artificial Intelligence". The small series of apps appearing among the first five entries in the two stored consisted of FitnessAI, Freeletics, Fitbod, Aaptiv Coach, Gymfitty. Of the five apps, the corresponding landing page of website where the product is descripted and marketed by the seller, will be analysed in order to grasp the different valorization of the AI — in interaction with the human body.

The first app of the sample uses the Artificial Intelligence already in the name, FitnessAI, followed by the slogan "Get Stronger with A.I.". It is an app for iPhone that uses artificial intelligence to generate personalized workouts. It is based on 5.9M workouts for which the AI optimizes sets, reps and weight for each exercise the user works out. According to the seller, the app would *outperform* any human personal trainer. Accordingly, FitnessAI website feature image consists of a dark background out of which a human silhouette whose facial features are barely visible is lifting a workout bar. This occultation of the human face could reinforces the emphasis of the *power* of the technology over

the human. This is also reinforced by the fact that the slogan — "See the Algorithm at Work" — provides the technologies of an agency.

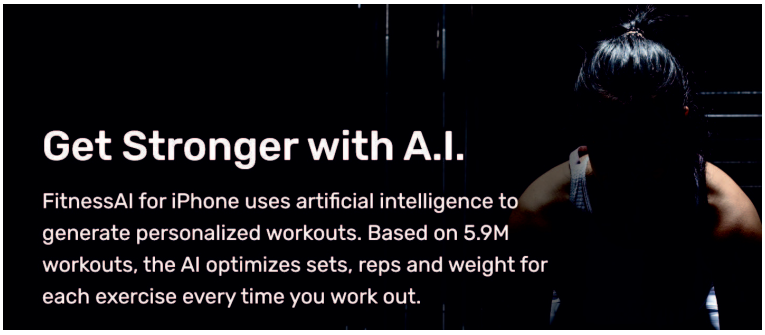

Figure 1. FitnessAI app.

The header of Freeletics website consists of a male human figure caught while performing a planck position. His gaze, stars at the spectator, as a form of *embrayage*. In the scene no technological device appears and the slogan "To the endorphin lovers: bodyweight, weights, running" stances a sort of organic (and therefore anti–technological) isotopy. In the app discourse, the occultation of any technologic element in

Figure 2. Freeletics app.

favour of the mere human body exposed with its organic components is further reinforced by the app description below the website header: "The AI does the thinking, you do the sweating". In this case, the AI seems to be ancillary of the human one and of the human and organic body which in this case seems to hold the agency.

In the spectrum of different types of marketing discourses displaying a technological–machinic valorization *vs* a human–bodily and organic one, FitnessAI and Freeletics represent the two more polarized positions. In between, the other three apps represent more "moderated" marketing choices that lean towards the interaction technology–humans.

In such vein, Fitbod website heater presents the actual app visualized in a cellular phone.

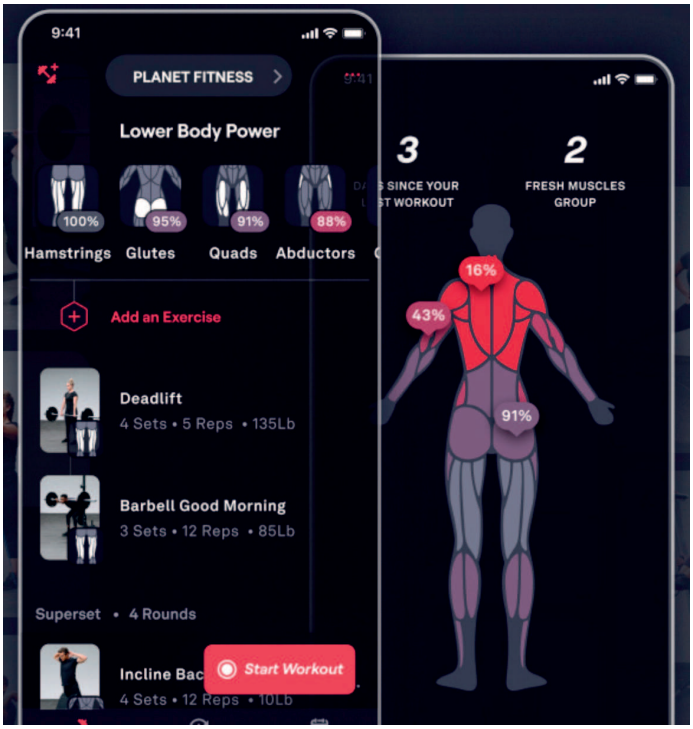

Figure 3. Fitbod app

The app shows a gallery of digital images of muscles targeted by different exercises featured by the app: "Built for better. Workouts that

improve as you do", the slogan says. Fitbod value proposition is indeed based on a learning–together mechanism. According to the seller, Fitbod creates workouts tailored to the user based on muscle usage, exercise achievements and track the user fitness progress. The routine created by the app then change over time and by algorithms and machine learning (ML) modify training volume based on previous exercises so to maximize outcomes. According to such offering, machine and humans progress together.

A similar interaction human–machine is thematized by the Gymfitty landing page. Here the heater is in motion: a video of different human actors, a young woman boxing, another jumping a rope, a young man lifting weights, another doing push up. All have extremely muscled and fit bodies and a close–up on them focuses the tone of their sweating fleshes. Though, at the bottom of the page a image of a runner positioned at the race starting point has at his left a chat box where a conversation with a trainer bot is going on: "Ready", "Yes", "Start running".

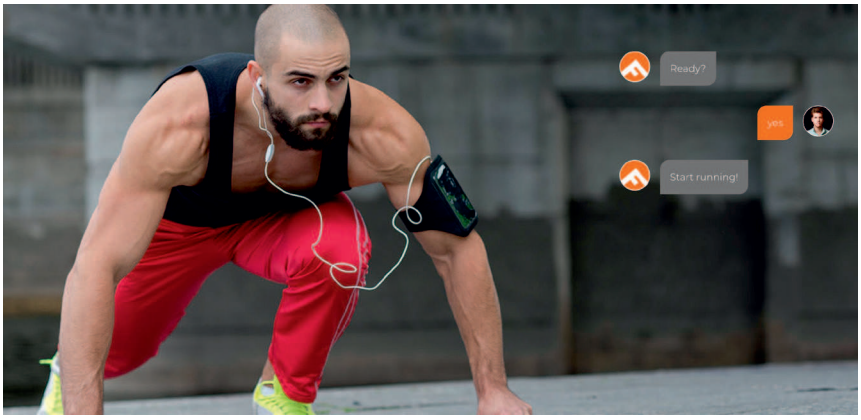

Figure 4. Gymfitty app.

According to the seller, this app has developed complex algorithms that use artificial intelligence for creating personalized sessions of work. The app monitors the performance in real–time and adapts the workout accordingly. The description of the app points out: "just as if you have your trainer right there alongside you". In the exact moment of the performance, that right here–righ now, the human body does not

act alone. Arguably such close–up of the heater stands for the external machinic eye of the AI who constantly monitor "you", in the very moment of the physical performance.

The visual architecture of Aaptiv Coach website is conceptually different from the previous examples. The actual app is displayed in the heater that showcases its different functionalities. From the functioning point of view, Aaptiv Coach provides Aaptiv members with a personalized coaching plan that incorporates fitness, mindfulness, and healthy habits, as part of a holistic approach to maintain a *healthy lifestyle*. In the section of the website "How it works", the user is invited to "Enter your goals", "Choose a workout based on duration, trainer, music, and more", "Put on your headphones and let our trainers guide you".

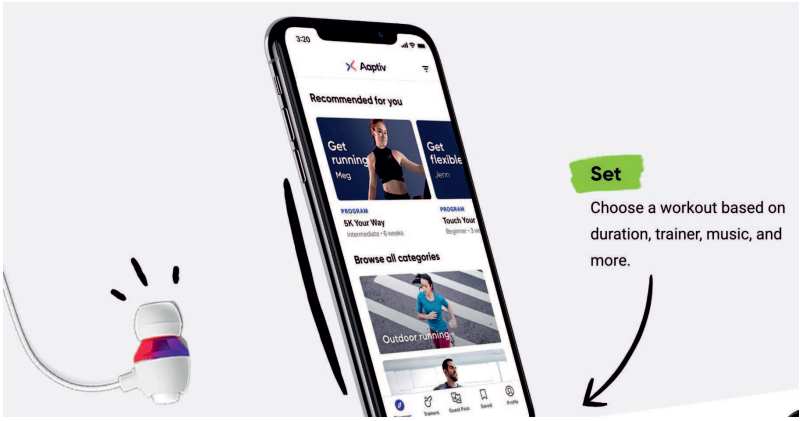

Figure 5. Aaptiv Coach app.

All the steps are figurativized by a mobile phone displaying the correspondent section of the app. On each side, an indexical arrow points at the bottom to push.

According to the app mission, not only the service assists the user while working out. Also, the app offers *lifestyle* programs based on the user particular objectives, current exercise levels, eating habits. All those data are gathered through wearable devices such as a wristwatch or activity tracker. In this way, thanks to the presence of a wearable device, Aaptiv Coach promotes a permanent interaction between the body and

the machine that goes beyond the mere exercise and seems to spread more deeply into the user lifestyle.

In the following section this study will approach how such continuous and pervasive feedback between machine and human is packed into the Apple Inc. ecosystem and frame of values.

6. "It is amazing what you can do with your wrist"

Since the 1990s *Think Different* campaign, Apple's communication strategy and visual identity have been widely studied. Semioticians are not an exception in this regard. In such vein, Jean Marie Floch in *Identités visuelles* (1995) analyzed the "mythogram" of the curvy bitten apple, in comparison with the IBM one of which it constitutes an inversion. In opposition to "competency" as the value of the IBM logo, the bitten apple represents the embodiment of "creativity", "conviviality" and "freedom".

This "alternative" character of the Apple brand within the IT industry is further marked by the Switch advertising campaign launched by Apple on June 10, 2002. According to Apple, "The Switcher" refers to a person who changes from using the Microsoft Windows platform to the Mac. The eccentric figure of Apple co–founder Steve Jobs and his premature death have contributed to the fact that every Apple product enters the mythical sphere. The construction of the myth has also been contributed to by the popular Apple events in which the company unveils new products and services that have previously been kept secret to create a buzz.

At one of these launching events, in September 2014, the Apple CEO announced Activity, an exercise tracking companion app. The ceremony was premiered by the presentation of the iPhone 6, after which, at Tim Cook's words "One more thing", the first images of the Apple Watch were shown. "It is amazing what you can do with your wrist", Cook said, connecting the Apple products and devices with an idea of lifestyle based on the "stay active" motto.

In fact, along with the launch of the first models of the Apple Watch, two applications had been developed: a Fitness app to monitor all activities throughout the day and a workout app with which it was possible

to set specific goals for specific types of workout.

The promotional video of the campaign streamed during the launch ceremony described a "typical" daily user routine. The plurality of uses that the device incorporates were figurativized by different actors engaging in different routines: an elegant businesswoman busy with work meetings, a muscular man performing strength workouts, a cyclist involved in performative riding in a natural environment and two athletic women running outdoors in a striking rocky coastal landscape. Despite their different narrative programs, each of them succeeded in making it through the day and getting where they wanted to.

This sense of accomplishment in both phones and watches is figurativized by the "activity ring", the Apple interface though which users who wear the Apple watch know whether they reach the goals which they have set themselves (or which the app has suggested on the basis of the data introduced by them). This figure is composed of 3 concentric circles, a red one that shows how many active calories the user has burned; a green one that displays how many minutes of brisk activity the user has performed and a light blue one that shows how many times during the day the user has stood and moved for at least one minute per hour. The goal of a "good" user is to close all three rings by the end of the day, with the rings resetting the next day so people can close them all over again. Moreover, along with the daily challenge, the users can set weekly or monthly ones and win "badges".

Since the launch of the Apple Watch, the Californian computer manufacturing company has not only expanded and differentiated its array of devices: at the same time, having — as the CEO enthusiastically announced — literally the control of the user's wrist, another sphere of life has been assimilated into the Apple ecosystem (and by so doing another series of user data concerning the body) with the consequent possibility of carrying out forms of control over it.

7. Close your ring!

Since 2014, the wristlet has expanded its capacity of doing things with the wrist to continue with the expression used by Cook. On September

2020 the Apple Special Event was celebrated without an audience because of the restrictions due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This time Cook was shown while walking in the circular groundscraper of Apple Inc.'s corporate headquarters in Cupertino. In his speech, Cook made a reference to the challenge represented by the pandemic and how incredibly people had adapted. He then emphasised the role of Apple products in overcoming isolation, bringing people together and moving forward.

The health isotopy that emerged in his speech in connection with the pandemic was then reevoked with regard to the Apple Watch's new features, such as the heart monitor which, according to the words of Apple's CEO, "in certain circumstances saved people lives".

On this occasion Cook gave the floor to Jay Blahnik, a former Nike contract athlete and Nike consultant, in his capacity as Director of the new area Fitness Health Technologies, in the meantime implemented for the introduction to the public of Apple Fitness+. While launching the service, Blahnik was located in a set for fitness. Behind him, in the background, a graffiti reproduced the three colours of the rings. The Director presented the features in detail, for instance the metrics, showing in real time on the user's wrist and on the screen of the iPhone all the types of workouts available. He emphasized the plurality of possible locations (at home, at the gym, outdoors, in a hotel room) where the workouts could be performed; the variety of workouts and the curated playlist were two other features promoted by Blahnik.

A promotional video of Fitness+ presented the community–focused dimension of the service. In this video, a voice off affirms "Welcome to the club, the club has no rules", while different environments where people exercise pop up ranging from a fancy house, tiny flats, parks, urban areas surrounded by blocks, mountain peaks, garages, etc. The voice off continues: "The club has no door and no roof, there are walls that can be thrown down". The selection of people who exercise accurately displays a variety of diversities in terms of gender, ethnicity, disabilities, and even non–human actors, such as pets. The voice off states at the end: "the club is the largest club in the world because the club is the world".

The imaginary of the community regarding digital fitness is surely not a novelty. In fact, one of Fitness+'s main competitors (with 1.3 million

subscribers), the paid fitness service Peloton, derives its name from the French word "platoon", which means a group of riders — usually in a race — who save energy by riding closely together. The semantic of community, from the Latin word *communĭtas* implies the sharing of a set of norms and expectations regarding different spheres such as the use of a language(2). The philosophical complexities of the notion will not be the object of further inquiry here, but a reference to the work of Roberto Esposito on the opposition *Communĭtas* vs *Immunitas* (2020, 2022) brings out the implication of the immunization occurring in a community against any foreign element that appears to threaten them from the outside.

From a semantic standpoint, a club is not exactly a community. Indeed, according to the Oxford Dictionary, the first entry for "club" regards the sphere of sport: "an organization for people who share an interest or do a sport or activity together", followed by "an association of persons for some common object usually jointly supported and meeting periodically".

Closer than a community, the club therefore entails a form of membership that gives access to certain private facilities (ranging from sport to nightlife). However, in contrast to this semantic, as declared by the promotional video, the Apple fitness club has no rules. In the oxymoronic notion of a club without doors, emphasised by Blahnik's affirmation that "everyone feels invited to the party", lies the hybridization of exclusivity and inclusivity that characterizes the whole body, aesthetics and discursive experience of Fitness+.

7.1 *The Club*

Along with the notion and the correspondent spatiality of a "club", Blahnik referred to the Fitness+ service as a "studio workout". According to the Oxford dictionary, a studio is firstly "a place where movies are made or produced". The Director of Apple Fitness continued: "We built the studio in a way that would allow shooting all the angles to make the right choices to show just the right angle at just the right time".

(2) Translation of the author of the definition of the Italian Word "comunità" according to Treccani dictionary.

In Apple's new 23,000–square–foot space, in a wood–panelled and wood–floored fitness studio with three sliding glass doors opened to reveal a verdant garden, the classes are streamed in cinematic spatiality thanks to the high–end Super 35–format cinema cameras mounted on robotic arms that enable smooth movement, in high definition.

The plastic transformations of chromaticity and luminosity of the space afforded by the mobile cameras articulate the production of a mobile and dynamic viewpoint. The multiplicity of angles — seven robotic cameras focus on the trainers from the front, sides, and even directly above — accentuate different points of attention: not only are the body and the movement of particular muscles highlighted, but also sometimes at the centre of the visual composition is the face of the trainer, smiling despite the effort or singing along to a track from the selected playlist. Occasionally the trainer invites the user to check the ring on their wrist so that the focus moves out of the enunciative space and onto the user's body.

There are usually three trainers per workout. The leader is a specialist in the workout, and there is at least one modifier. By having "delegates" of different kinds of potential users on stage, the narration underlines this dimension of the club's inclusivity. The same effect is produced by the offers of workouts that feature pregnant women.

7.2. *The diversity fair*

Where other apps use animated caracters or AI bots, Fitness+ features a series of trainers, diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, and background, ranging in age from their 20s to their 60s. Browsing the profiles on the Fitness+ website, the trainers seem a mosaic of tokens of an accurately selected diversity within American multuculturalism, aligned with the values of Apple workforce culture.

The diversity is not only ethnic, with members of Latino, Afro–American and Afro–Caribbean origin, but also linguistic: both American and British English are used as well as Spanish, sign language and gender neutral language. Furthermore, the trainers figurativize a repertoire of a–normative bodies, challenging the "normal" fit–looking appearance and also including bodies with surgical protheses, as in the case of Amir who has a prosthetic leg.

In the profile gallery, a little information about each trainer is provided below black and white profile pictures of the smiling trainer, viewed both frontally and from the side. In the profiles, not only are the corresponding sports discipline speciality and professional CV (i.e. former UCLA football player) presented, but also contextual episodes from the trainer's life are displayed that have apparently nothing to do with the sports sphere ("after losing his left leg in an accident", "a busy mother", "she went from playing bass guitar in a band to being featured in fitness magazines", "Jessica has surfed in 80 countries around the globe and she is unapologetically obsessed with anything in leopard print"). Such "additional" information contributes to expanding Fitness+ beyond its own borders and turning it into a wider lifestyle Destinant.

This role is also reinforced by the expansion of the app into social media, as conveyed by the presence of the Instagram Account at the bottom of each trainer profile on the Apple website. If one browses a trainer's social media profile, a relevant degree of consistency will be found with the persona showcased within the fitness app. Every trainer's IG profile refers to their involvement in the Fitness+ project, along with motivation quotes, tastes, beliefs (i.e. "gay, black and proud"; "proud latina woman"; "social justice advocate").

By surfing the posts and monitoring the stories, one can observe that such tastes and beliefs are narrated throughout the digital self–presentation of the trainer, who is often portrayed while involved in activities in sports facilities or beautiful outdoor locations or engaged in leisure activities (such as music festivals). We can refer to this as a reverberation of Apple Fitness values with a further expansion of its ecosystem beyond its own digital and commercial borders.

8. Fitness and affects

In the description and analysis of the "Fitness+ experience" textualized in the Fitness app and related social media platforms, we have noticed the magnification of what we can call an *affective dimension* of digital fitness and consequently a narcotization of its merely quantifiable and metric aspects.

Even if this latter sphere is present in the affordances, interfaces and visual discourses carried out by the trainers, the analytic and empirical observations of the app lead to a consideration of the predominance of the affective dimension. The ring, to which the measuring function is delegated, arguably denies this numeric quantification function. Instead, through the circular number–free representation of the "work done", the ring visual rhetoric seems to obscure precise measurement in favour of a more impressionistic boosting of an aesthetic lifestyle.

Through both technical and discursive and figurative arrangements, without forgetting the role of the music selection, the user has been provided with a high quality spectatorship experience at the same time as he is training. The user *watches* the show of the workout performed by the three actors while listening to the stories and anecdotal experiences and even jokes being told and to the music selection accurately chosen and commented.

Differently from other fitness services, where the value proposition has relied on the AI's capacity of monitoring movement in real time and recommending certain moves, Fitness+ appeals to different motivations for engaging in digital fitness.The access to a fitness "club" populated by diverse and multicultural subjectivities — the progressive and multicultural West Coast in a nutshell — has to do, in our view, with the articulation of a promise of belonging.

This aspirational status, promised by the visual and discursive narratives of Fitness+, can be materialized through the possession and use of different Apple devices that allow the individual to be more (or less) integrated in the Apple ecosystem. The feature of the syncing between Apple devices with which the Mac iPhone, iPad, Pod and Apple Watch all transfer data and are reciprocally kept up to date can be considered extendible to their human wearers. In an assemblage, human and non–human actors are kept synchronized and aligned with Apple in an aesthetic lifestyle prescription system. In order to critically describe this process of agency co–creation, we have dared to create the expression Artificial Affects in order to refer to these "affective fabrics" (Kuntsman, 2012) of Apple lifestyle culture, where the "feeling" good supersedes the biometric "intelligent" quantified experience.

9. Conclusive notes

At the moment of writing, Apple has just announced the acquisition of AI Music, a start–up that uses artificial intelligence to generate personalized soundtracks and adaptive music. The implementation of this technology would generate dynamic soundtracks based for instance on the user's heartbeat, adjusting to workout intensity. In our view, this does nothing but amplify the "artificial affects" frame by further synchronizing the user "feeling" with the Apple aesthetical ecosystem.

This piece of work stems from the phenomenon of relocation of an entire sector of leisure such as fitness in the digital space, the gap of meaning that such a displacement has produced and how it has been filled by the AI technologies applied to digital fitness. In examining the Fitness+ "solution" in comparison with other AI based fitness apps, the article has attempted to describe the "place" of biometrics and that of affects at the heart of the Apple ecosystem. From the observation and analysis of device affordances, interface and visual discourse it seems clear that they should be comprehended in their combination with the user body and senses. Far from being exhaustive this paper's intention has been to sketch an approach through which to engage with the digital affects, aesthetics and lifestyles factory put in place by tech capitalism that has a long way to go.

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