

TEXTILE LEXICON FIELD GUIDE

A Diagnostic Manual for Decoding the Tactile Lexicon of Woven Identity

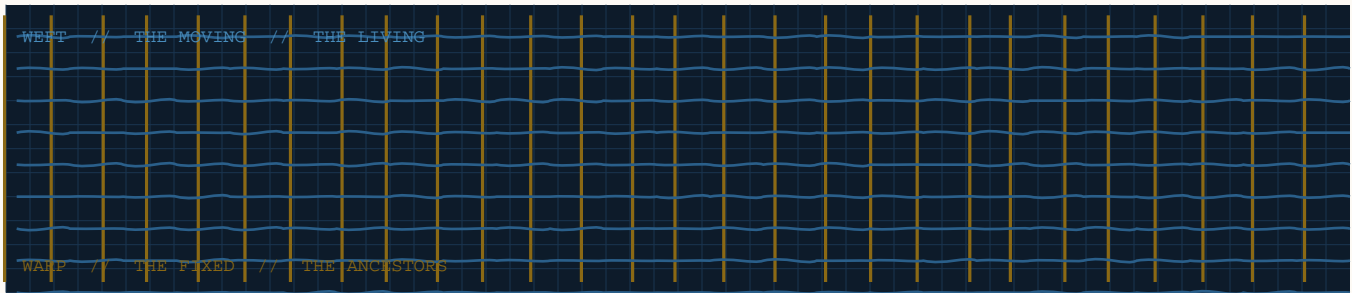
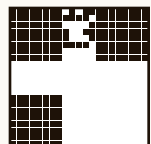


FIG.00 - THE BINARY GRID OF WOVEN IDENTITY /// EVERY CROSSING IS A MORPHEME

This document is a diagnostic tool, not a style guide. Every garment you own is a **data-bearing surface**. Some carry rich signal. Others are communicatively silent. This checklist forces a sensory interrogation — fiber grammar, geographic dye signature, wear history, thermal behaviour. The scored result measures **lexical depth**: the information density of a physical object.



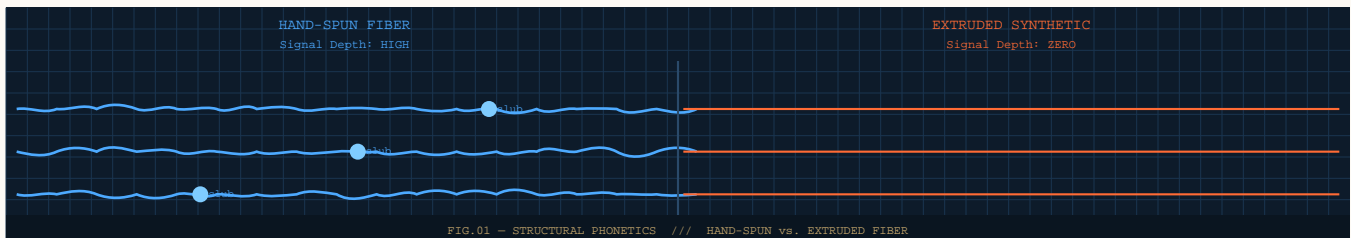
// GARMENT IDENTITY

Garment Name / Type: _____	Date of Audit: _____
Fiber Content (label): _____	Country of Origin: _____
Known History (thrifted / inherited / gifted / new purchase): _____	

SECTION 01 /// STRUCTURAL PHONETICS – The Grammar of the Weave

Woven cloth has structural phonetics: physical rules of construction that generate meaning at the level of individual threads. Slubs are not defects — they are signatures. Weave density is not aesthetic — it is communicative grammar.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Warp / Weft Visible <i>Can individual thread structure be seen?</i>	FIELD PROMPT // <i>Hold to direct light. Distinguish vertical warp (ancestors/fixes) from horizontal weft (living/variable). Note what you observe.</i> Observation: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slub or Fiber Irregularity <i>Natural thickness variation — signature of organic origin</i>	FIELD PROMPT // <i>Eyes closed. Drag fingertip slowly across the surface. Each catch or variation is a geographic marker — not a defect.</i> Observation: _____



<input type="checkbox"/>	Weave Density <i>Tight, open, or variable — the architectural grammar</i>	FIELD PROMPT // <i>Hold to a window. Describe density: close-woven permanence, or open seasonal porosity? Both are communicative choices.</i> Observation: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Selvage / Edge Finish <i>Handwork vs. industrial finish — investment signal</i>	FIELD PROMPT // <i>Examine seam allowances. Hand-finish = craft investment. Industrial overlock = disposable production intent.</i> Observation: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Surface Directionality <i>Does texture or sheen shift when rotated 90 degrees?</i>	FIELD PROMPT // <i>Rotate garment. Does the surface change? Directional weaves carry structural data invisible from a single angle.</i> Observation: _____

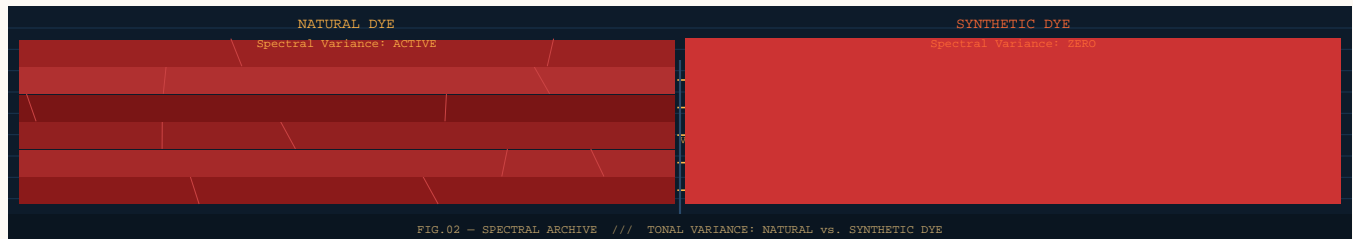
STRUCTURAL PHONETICS — WHAT UNIFORMITY CANNOT SAY

A hand-spun fiber shows visible thickness variation under magnification. An extruded synthetic is perfectly uniform. That uniformity is not precision — it is the absence of organic information. Signal depth is data density, not beauty.
 See also: *The Commensal Architecture of Shared Vessels — how physical objects organise human behaviour*

SECTION 02 /// SPECTRAL ARCHIVE — Dye as Geographic Data

A natural dye is a chemical record of a specific place — the mineral content of soil, the alkalinity of water, the climate of a growing season. Synthetic dyes carry none of this. They were made from petroleum. They have no address.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Dye Source Identified Natural (plant/mineral/insect), synthetic, or unknown</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Check label and provenance docs. Can you name the source? Indigo? Madder? Cochineal? Or: 'Synthetic — origin unknown.' Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Tonal Variance Colour shifts within a single hue — the spectral signature</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Look closely for tonal variation across a supposedly uniform area. Natural dye always varies. Synthetic never does. Observation: _____</p>



<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Crocking / Fading Pattern Has colour released at friction points? Dye recording movement.</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Examine cuffs, collar, elbows. Fading pattern = map of the wearer's daily motion and habits. Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Geographic Colour Trace Can you trace this colour to a place on earth?</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Indigo = dye vat + plant. Madder = root + soil pH. Cochineal = insect + region. Name the origin — or note: none. Observation: _____</p>

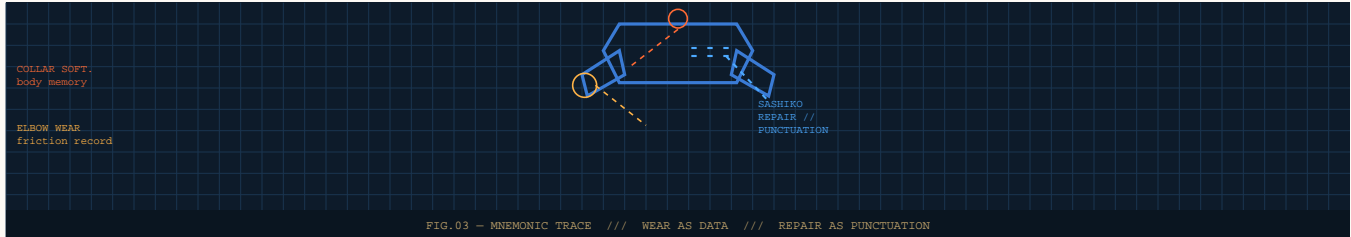
SECTION 03 /// MNEMONIC TRACE — Damage Is Not Damage. It Is Data.

The critical shift in forensic textile reading: wear patterns, patina, and repair are the physical autobiography of the object. A garment without any trace of use is a blank document.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Wear Pattern Present Evidence of use at high-friction points</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Look at elbows, cuffs, collar, hem. Where has fiber softened, thinned, or changed texture? Map this body's daily movement. Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Body Memory Has the garment shaped itself to a specific body?</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Do shoulders hold a set? Does the collar sit habitually? A garment molded to a body carries embodied memory. Observation: _____</p>

// SECTION 03 CONTINUED /// MNEMONIC TRACE

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Repair Present Evidence of Sashiko, darning, patching, or reweaving</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Locate any repairs. Visible repair = punctuation in the textile sentence — a comma, not a full stop. Describe the method. Observation: _____</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Scent or Residue Trace Sensory data of storage, use, or material origin</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Cedar, must, lanolin, natural dye, smoke, salt — all are data. What does this garment's scent communicate? Observation: _____</p>
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MNEMONIC TRACE — REPAIR AS PUNCTUATION

In Sashiko and European darning traditions, the repair is made to be seen. This encodes one message: this object is worth the time it takes to restore. A visible repair is not confession of damage — it is evidence of a relationship that extends over time. That relationship is the most valuable data the garment carries.
See also: Ritual Mechanics — How Groups Sync. on repair, procedural memory, and collective practice

SECTION 04 /// HAPTIC SIGNAL — The Blind-Touch Assessment

Perform this section with your eyes closed. The visual system dominates sensory judgment when active. A fast-fashion garment can be made to look like quality. It cannot be made to feel like it.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Surface Friction Does the fabric grip your fingertip or slide away?</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Eyes closed. Drag fingertip slowly. Rate: 0 = frictionless / haptically silent. 5 = rich tactile resistance. Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Thermal Signature Warming (wool/silk), cooling (linen/cotton), or neutral (synthetic)</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Press to inner wrist for 10 seconds. Active = natural fiber. Thermally neutral = synthetic. Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Thermal Persistence * How long does the fabric retain body heat after contact ends?</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Hold to inner wrist 30 sec, then remove. Quality wool: warmth lingers 8–12 sec. Synthetic: returns to room temp in 1–2 sec. Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Weight and Permanence Signal Does this garment communicate that it intends to last?</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Hold at arm's length and release. Does it fall with authority, or drift? Weight is the primary carrier of permanence. Observation: _____</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Drape Intelligence How the garment moves when held freely from one corner</p>	<p>FIELD PROMPT // Hold by one corner. Does it fall with directional fluidity — weave structure expressing itself — or hang shapeless and limp? Observation: _____</p>

HAPTIC SIGNAL — THERMAL PERSISTENCE AS HARD DATA

Thermal persistence is measurable: quality Shetland or Harris Tweed holds warmth 8–12 seconds after skin contact ends. Polyester of equivalent thickness returns to room temperature in 1–2 seconds. This reflects fiber density, lanolin content, and structural complexity — objective physical differences, not subjective impressions.
See also: Restorative Hearth — The Science of Material Resonance, on thermal and textural data as biological signal

* Thermal Persistence: quality Shetland or Harris Tweed retains warmth 8–12 seconds post-contact. Polyester of equivalent thickness: 1–2 seconds. Reflects fiber density, lanolin, and structural complexity.

LEXICAL DEPTH SCORE

Quantitative Result for a Qualitative Reading

Score each dimension 0–5. Zero means the signal is absent. Five means fully operative. Be honest.

DIMENSION	SCORE // circle one
Structural Signal <i>Weave complexity, fiber character, slub presence</i>	0 • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5
Geographic Signal <i>Fiber origin, dye provenance, place-traceability</i>	0 • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5
Mnemonic Signal <i>Wear history, repair, patina, body memory</i>	0 • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5
Haptic Signal <i>Touch friction, thermal signature, drape intelligence</i>	0 • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5
Temporal Signal <i>Ageing, fading, thermal persistence, embodied time</i>	0 • 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5
TOTAL LEXICAL DEPTH SCORE (out of 25)	_____ / 25

0 – 8 SENSORY ANEMIA <i>Communicatively silent. No geographic data, no structural phonetics, no mnemonic potential.</i> Begin here: <i>Global Threads: A Field Guide to Woven Identity — rec</i>	9 – 17 PARTIAL RESONANCE <i>Some signals present. The garment is developing a voice, but the lexicon is incomplete.</i>	18 – 25 FULL LEXICAL DEPTH <i>High material resonance. This garment carries a living, physical history.</i>
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FIELD NOTES

Record anything the checklist did not capture — a known story, an unverifiable intuition, a question the garment left open.

Print Note: 300gsm minimum, heavyweight slightly textured recycled stock.

The medium is always part of the message.

Further reading at [Culture Mosaic](#) /// [The Tactile Lexicon of Woven Identity \(txtilezine\)](#)

