Developments of Style: Inside Fashion as an Institution and its Effects on our Consciousness

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Inside Fashion as an Institution and it’s Effects on our Consciousness

Senior Project submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

By

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2013
For those who are tired of beating themselves up about the way they look...

For those who want to understand where their negative and self-judging thoughts come from...

For those who want to avoid societal pressures impacting their psyche...

For those ready to embark on a new journey...
Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank my mother for being my biggest supporter and constantly reminding me the importance of an education. Thank you for letting me pick my own path and for supporting me. I am the strong, independent, and educated woman I am today because of your unconditional love. I love you very much and I am so honored to call you my mother and best friend.

Thank you to my family for supporting me and being there for me. Thank you to all of my previous teachers who have pushed me to be a better person and student. To all of my Chappaqua moms’ thank you for understanding my dreams and helping me achieve them.

A big thank you to my academic supporters Ariana Stokas, Rafael Rodriquez, and Kelly Thompson. Ariana, thank you for inspiring me to follow my true passion and helping me find my voice. Thank you Raf for the intense SPROJ sessions and weekly meetings. Also, thank you for the ginger tea; it got me through a lot of late nights. Kelly you are the best and my hand of reason. Thank you for always being supportive! Without your comments and constant engagement with my topic, I would not have been able to push my thoughts. I appreciate the guidance and recommendations from my board members Garry Hagberg and Julia Rosenbaum. A special thank you to Daniel Berthold for allowing me to develop such a creative project. I appreciate you supporting my topic and helping me develop new ways to prove my thesis.

I want to thank my suitemates Amy, Rosemary, and Christiane for having my back and understanding my workload and mood swings =). Special thanks to Amy for making me many late night dinners and feeding me when I was too stressed to get food. Thanks Rosey for teaching me how to make the perfect chai tea “con” milk and honey. Christiane, thank you for introducing me to new music, doing my hair, and understanding my love of Ebay. Thank you Kyle for helping me in my early stages of tackling Foucault and the Panopticon! Thanks to all of my other friends for keeping me smiling and laughing!

To my Muffin: Thank you for listening to me ramble on and on about my ideas and frustrations. You have been my backbone throughout this whole experience and I am so grateful to have you in my life. I love you so much!

Finally, thank you to all of my dancers on the Bard Hip Hop dance team. Your constant dedication and love of dance/choreography made my senior year that much more rewarding. Thank you for working hard and being the best team I could ever ask for. Shout out to the Latin Dance, Bollywood, Caribbean, and Afro-Pulse. Your dance groups kept me sane and cheerful on days of SPROJ overload.
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Part 1

Pattern Making 101:
Getting to Know the Self
Introduction:

The alarm clock rings. Michelle steps out of bed, slips into her favorite hello kitty slippers, and walks to the mirror. She looks at herself. She scrunches her hair, looks side to side, and wishes she saw a different person in the mirror. She moves to her closet and picks out an outfit. Michelle walks to the full-length mirror and does a twirl or two. There are voices in her head saying, “You look fat. You are not tall enough. Change.” She walks back to the closet and picks out another outfit. The voices get louder “this is outfit is worst then the last. Who are you trying to fool? Are you joking?” For the next 20 minutes, Michelle repeats this process of putting on and taking off clothes. Michelle eventually settles on an outfit, but she does not feel comfortable or happy. Michelle likes fashion as an art form. When she thinks of fashion she sees clothing that is meant to inspire. She considers clothing to be walking pieces of art. She admires the craftsmanship in the designs of couture designers like Valentino, Alexander McQueen, and Oscar de la Renta. This interest in fashion, in terms of design, has lead Michelle to want to participate in fashion. Socially she see’s her self-being a part of fashion the community.

The above scenario is one that resonates with women who are unhappy with the way that they look or how clothing fits them. Women are hard on themselves and create impossible standards. At some point, women get tired of having negative conversations with themselves. They get tired of hearing the little voices in their head saying, “You can’t wear those shoes or that top.” Eventually they want a way out of the negativity. However, is there a way out? Can Michelle continue to be a member of fashion while escaping its negative effects on her? Does Michelle’s negative view of
herself stem from an external source? How does Michelle’s participation in fashion as a community effect her actions and opinions of herself? Furthermore, what role does fashion, clothing, and style play in her life? This project will attempt to answer these questions by exploring how fashion functions as an industry, a social institution, a tool for self-regulation, and its impact on those who participate in its community. Furthermore, I will discuss the components of society that denote confidence and self-awareness as well as suggest new ways to re-claim creative control over the development and presentation of self.

When one speaks of fashion, many phrases come to mind: self-absorbed, frivolous, vain, art, design, and useless. Depending on what person you talk to all of these phrases may be true. In this project, I speak of fashion in two ways: as art and as an institution or community. Designers in a sense are artists. Instead of creating masterpieces out of canvas or wood, designers create art out of fabric and textiles. Designers use technique, design, and creativity to create clothing that will become fashion. Fashion as an institution refers to fashion as an industry that markets trends and clothing for profit. Fashion is also the result of a collective group of people creating and designing clothing that is created out of creative and expressive means rather than purely practical means. I will begin by focusing primarily on the fashion industry as an institution. I will then explore the difference between fashion and style as well as what the word style means to those involved in the institution of fashion. I will explore the effects of the fashion industry on people who are involved in it. I am focusing on the fashion industry from the 20th century to now, with a focus on American consumers and American culture.
Chapter 1 explores the many components of the fashion industry as well as how the industry operates structurally. One of the primary components of the fashion industry is a trend. I will clarify what a trend is as well as introduce the different types of trends that are present in the fashion industry. The purpose of trends in fashion is to place groups of people in different categories. Alternatively, trends are a way for the fashion industry to capitalize on the collections that show at New York, Paris, Milan, and London fashion weeks. Veteran design houses such as Valentino, Chanel, Prada, and Balmain create extravagant pieces of clothing to present at their closest fashion week. Fashion week is a time where designers come together to display their collections for the upcoming season. These designs are complex and cannot be sold to the masses. The designs are not profitable because they are not practical and are often times one of a kind. Chapter 1 will explore this concept further and show how the creation of trends often times directly correlates with designer collections as a way for everyday people to participate in the community of fashion. Chapter 1 will also discuss the connection between designers, magazines, and consumers. I will introduce the trender, a person who follows trends as a way to conform to internal and external standards. After exploring where trends come from and their role in the fashion industry, chapter 2 will discuss the way trends impact it’s participants.

The second chapter introduces philosopher Michel Foucault and his analysis of the Panopticon in his text *Discipline and Punish.* I will use Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* to investigate the structure of the Panopticon as well as how it affects the consciousness of those in its presence. The Panopticon is reminiscent of a prison and as a result has psychological effects on members of its institution. I am using the
Panopticon as a lens to look at the fashion industry conceptually and structurally as an institution. I believe the fashion industry to be a similar institution with similar psychological effects. Furthermore, I will delve into the psyche of the trendler as well as how the fashion industry facilities the trendlers urge to trend. I will investigate how the trendler functions in the fashion industry as well as how media and magazines influence her decision to self-fashion in the form of trending. I will discuss the role editors and other employees of the fashion industry have on the trendler’s inclination to trend. The ideology of the fashion industry becomes a major part of the trendler’s identity. With the help of Professor Sandra Bartky, I will discuss the industry’s constant emphasis on the “fashionable,” “trendy,” and “beautiful.” What is it to be fashionable? Why is it important for the trendler to meet this standard? Furthermore, How does the fashion industry’s ideology affect the trendler’s psyche, ultimately leading her into a state of unhappiness and self-surveillance?

The fashion industry uses the Panopticon as a tool to condition trendlers to continue to participate in trends as well as internalize standards as their own. Aside from being conditioned to trend, the trendler may also have a natural tendency toward trending or imitation, which I will explore in chapter 3 using the work of sociologist Georg Simmel. Georg Simmel’s essay on “Fashion” will help discuss characteristics of the trendler’s personality. This chapter discusses the types of traits a person with a tendency toward imitation would have. Furthermore, I will explain how the use of demarcation within different social classes in the fashion industry allows for an increase in trendlers. Simmel believes the participation in fashion to be a form of imitation. However, I want to draw a distinction between the fashion industry and
fashion as an artistic form of expression. While certain individuals have a tendency to trend, this does not mean they want to continue trending for a lifetime. Chapter 3 will introduce the person who is tired of trending and is frustrated with their relationship with themselves and their clothing. This person seeks a new form of bodily expression that allows them to have more creativity and control over their image and use of clothing. This is what I call the aspiring self-styler.

Following chapter 3, I will introduce the aspiring self-styler. The aspiring self-styler is the trender who no longer wants to trend. She is the person who wants to establish a new connection with her clothing as well as re-structure her position in the fashion industry. I will show how the trender becomes the aspiring self-styler as well as explore the initial steps that allow them to resist the urge to imitate. Chapter 4 introduces a new bodily practice that allows the former trender to function as a member of the fashion industry while developing creativity and imagination. It explores fashion beyond an industry. The participation in self-styling is the only way for the trender to re-establish herself within the fashion industry. The aspiring self-styler will want to resist certain aspects of the fashion industry and its use of the Panopticon. Chapter 4 will explore how she would go about that resistance. Furthermore, the aspiring self-styler will want to create new standards for herself, to re-define what clothing means to her, as well as to re-internalize a new ideology that focuses on positivity. She will embark on a journey that, she hopes, will enable her to develop a new identity.

Chapter 5 deals with the development of this new identity along with the development of personal style and how it will allow the trender turned aspiring self-
styler to reclaim her role not only in fashion as an institution, but in society as a whole. I use professors Hardiman and Jackson’s social development model to help develop ways for different social groups to develop positive social identities in communities that are otherwise oppressive. In this chapter, I will explore four stages: acceptance, resistance, re-definition, and internalization. These stages are necessary for the aspiring self-styler to pass in and out of in order for her to begin to develop a new identity. I will go into more detail as to how these stages work in Chapter 5 as well as how this connects to clothing and style more specifically.

Finally, Chapter 6 aims at clearing up the difference between fashion and style. Chapter 6 features commentary from TV host and stylist Stacy London as well as Editor-in-chief and writer Nina Garcia, as a way to establish the current opinions on the difference between fashion and style, within the industry. Following their accounts of what fashion and style is, I will further discuss what style means in a philosophical context with the support of the aesthetic philosophy of Richard Shusterman. I will use Shusterman’s text *Somatic Style* as a foundational piece in defining style conceptually. I will discuss what style consists of artistically as well as how it applies to the fashion industry. Chapter 6 establishes a distinction between two types of self-styling, one that is pre-expressive and the other that is expressive. Moreover, I will explain how the development of a new social identity as a way to re-define the self within the fashion industry, will allow the aspiring self-styler to become an expressive self-styler. The ultimate goal of the self-styler is to become more confident and self-aware of her actions and place in society.
Chapter 1
The Domino Effect: Trending from A to Z

The goal of this chapter is to establish what a trend is as well as how it is used in the fashion industry. Trends are essential to the fashion industry because they bring profit to the industry. Within the fashion industry, there are groups of people who rely on the development and production of trends called trenders. In this Chapter, I will introduce the concept of a trender as well as examine the parts of the industry that influence trenders to continue trending. A trend is something that is popular among a group of people. In terms of fashion, it is often associated with the term “fad” which indicates a state of excitement that lasts for short periods. Trends are a set of items or ideals in fashion that are emphasized season after season.

A trend is inspired by components of everyday life. A trend can be anything from a color to a person. Trends take on many forms in fashion. Trends are produced spontaneously in a community or group of people. A spontaneous trend happens when one person wears an item that sparks the interest of another person or group of people. Some trends may start out spontaneously, but then they turn into a means of profit for the fashion industry.

Livianna lives in a remote town in Sicily. She walks down the street wearing a pair of red flats featuring studs and polka dots (lets call them RSP flats). Another young lady walking down the street sees Livianna and looks at her interesting flats. The young lady decides she definitely wants those flats; she looks around and finds a similar pair at her local store. The next day, another women encounters a pair of RSP flats and wants to get a pair as well. This continues for about a month. A domino effect happens and suddenly
at any given moment, RSP inspired flats are appearing all around town. At this moment, red flats with studs and polka dots have become a full-blown trend, not because the residents of the Sicilian town read about the flats in a magazine, but because they saw other people wearing different variations of it and wanted to imitate. Livianna would be considered a “trendsetter” to the fashion industry. A trendsetter is a person who dresses in an unconventional way. Those who follow her are what I call “trenders.” When it comes to imitation and trending, they are one in the same. I will speak on what imitation is and how it relates to the tender in an upcoming chapter. Aside from spontaneous trends, there are also trends that are mass-produced for economic growth and purposes.

Spontaneous trends often times are scouted and capitalized on by the fashion industry. This is done with the use of trend forecasting agencies. Some designers and retail companies rely heavily on agencies that specialize in trend forecasting. These specialized agencies and various retail markets utilize forecasting services to predict trends, i.e. what colors, fabrics, and trends will be of importance in the fashion industry (“Fashion Forecasting and Trend Resources”). The “predication” of trends is not something that comes about by sitting around a table rubbing a crystal ball. Forecasters or trend casters are assigned different countries and are expected to visit and study those areas for emerging designers and interesting street style. Street style is a term used in fashion that refers to the clothing style of people who self-fashion themselves in a non-traditional way. Trend casters look for people who are wearing interesting patterns and eclectic color combinations.
A trend caster visits a remote town in Sicily. She comes across Livianna and looks at her ensemble: a pair of black slacks, black tee, black leather jacket, and a pair of RPS flats. The trend caster then sees other girls wearing similar flats. The trend caster takes note and returns to her agency's office. When she returns to her office, she realizes the RSP flat can be translated in three different trends: The color red, studs, and polka dots. Every season trend forecasting agencies put together trend reports for designers and other employees of the fashion industry. The package highlights different colors, patterns, and accessories that they “predict” will be popular in upcoming seasons. Essentially, the trend forecasting agency’s job is to help develop and monetize trends. Some designers will hire forecasters to determine what patterns and colors will be in for the season. They will then design their collections keeping those “predictions” in mind. Designers often come out with collections that feature the same colors or use similar patterns and textures. Designers do not get together to sit around and discuss what colors and patterns they will be using for the season. They are not sipping on Starbucks and having chats about their inspiration. What makes the collections of Paris, New York, London, and Milan fashion week cohesive is the information provided to them by trend forecasting agencies. This does not apply to every designer or collection. The use of forecasting agencies are not limited to just designers but also major retail companies such as H&M, Forever21, and Zara. Some designers like, Nanette Lepore, respect what the trend casters do but would never use them. The joy in creating clothing that becomes fashion is that it is creative (“Forecasting Fashion Trends” 2003). Nevertheless, the use of a trend forecasting agencies is necessary, in some form, when it comes to producing and selling clothing to consumers. After a
trend is created it then becomes mass produced and sold to consumers with the help and support of the media and magazines.

Magazines expose the trend to the consumer in hopes of gaining publicity and economic growth in the fashion industry. One person in charge of this exposure is the editor-in-chief. The editor-in-chief oversees every component of a publication. They dictate what articles are published, what clothing and designers will be featured, as well what is trending for the season. Magazines are the middle ground between designers, retail companies, and consumers. It is the magazine’s job to push specific colors and products on the consumers. Moreover, it is their job to encourage their readers to participate in the commercial trend. There are two types of magazines: the magazine that develops the commercial trends and the magazine that reinforces those trends for the public.

Magazines like Vogue and W develop trends that almost always directly correlate with collections put out by multiple designers at one of the four big fashion shows: Those in New York, Paris, London, and Milan. Other magazines like Teen Vogue and Seventeen tend to feature trends that are more accessible to the average public. These trends are often associated with retail companies such as H&M and Forever21 rather than one particular designer. They tend to be “watered down” versions of the original trend reports created by the bigger magazines like Vogue or W. When a trend is watered down, it is comparable to the original but does not have the same technical features; it is really a replica. For instance, W may feature a leather motorcycle jacket with tweed panels on the side created by Balmain. Seventeen will feature a similar style jacket from H&M or Forever21. Their jacket may be made of artificial leather with
rayon panels on the side, while the original Balmain jacket is made of Italian leather with wool panels. Designers, season after season, show collections that are then presented to buyers, editors, and the rest of the industry.

The trend is someone who follows trends presented to them either directly by the fashion industry or indirectly by a person who is endorsed by the industry. Bloggers, spokesmen, and editor-in-chiefs are groups of people endorsed by the industry. The fashion industry and those endorsed by them have two things in common: power and control. They do not have the physical or verbal power of telling people what to wear or how to wear it. The fashion industry has an unconscious effect on the trend and uses their power to remind consumers of their inability to be autonomous or in control of their own image and self. This power is utilized and can be understood through Jeremy Bentham’s model of the Panopticon and Michel Foucault’s analysis of it in terms of institutions that use the design of the Panopticon as a mechanism to establish discipline, suppress individuality, and enforce passive bodies.
Chapter 2
Foucault’s Panopticon in Fashion

Michel Foucault speaks of the creation of “docile bodies” through fear in the text *Discipline and Punish*. According to Foucault, a body is docile when it is subjected, used, and transformed as well as improved (Foucault 136). When the body is used as an object and target of power, it is manipulated, shaped, trained, and obeys. Understanding both the design of Bentham's Panopticon and Foucault's interpretation of it is crucial in understanding how bodies become docile or passive. The border of the Panopticon is circular and at the center, there is a tower with wide windows, which opens onto the inner side of the ring. The structure on the edge is divided into cells, each with two windows. One facing the windows of the tower, and the other facing the outside, allowing an effect of backlighting to make any figure visible within the cell (Bartky 241).

The basic idea of the Panopticon is that it is an institutionalized building, that allows for a single person in the center of the tower to watch all inmates at once. At any given time, an inmate is seen (see figure 1). The inmates are alone and cut off from their peers and are only thought to know of one person other than himself or herself, the watch-guard. The watch-guard is a person who keeps an eye on those in the prison or Panopticon. The inmates are aware that the watch-guard is watching them. However, they can only see the tower and not the physical body of the watch-guard. Foucault felt power should be visible and unverifiable for Bentham’s design of the Panopticon to work (Foucault 201). The visible part consists of the prisoner or person having the ability to see the outline of the central tower where the watch-guard stays.
However, what is of most importance for Foucault is the unverifiable part, which consists of the inmate’s inability to know whether they are being looked at in any one moment. Even with this uncertainty, there is a sense of someone watching them without them actually seeing anyone. Foucault asserts further, with regards to the watch-guard, that he has visibility and verifiability, allowing him to see all, know all, and to exert control on his own terms (Foucault 202).

(Figure 1- interpretation of Bentham's Panopticon design.)

The setting of the Panopticon changes the way people view themselves within the institution as well as how they act outside of the institution. The fear and lack of control will still be present upon release from a panoptic institution, because the isolation and memory of someone watching are permanently internalized within the
mind of the inmate, thus keeping them in a state of passivity and self-imprisonment. Something is “internalized” when it is incorporated into the structure of self, states Professor Sandra Bartky in “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power” (Bartky 251). Moreover, this internalization is conditioned into the human mind. The scenario is as follows: you start to watch yourself and you begin to question your actions, because you are expecting someone to be watching you and judging your every move. According to Bartky, “the structure and effects of the Panopticon resonate throughout society” (Bartky 241). This is something that is closely related to the trender who seeks to fit in.

The watch-guard in the tower is a symbol. It is something that does not necessarily appear in reality, but internally within the mind of the trender. Furthermore, the trender is dealing with an oppression that is internalized. In relation to the Panopticon, the inmates understand that the watch-guard is watching and policing their every move. This leads the inmates to police themselves in the absence of the watch-guard in the tower. The oppressor is not only in reality, but also within her mind, making her a watch-guard to herself. What makes the Foucauldian watch-guard or fashion industry so important is what it stands for as a symbol. It is a reminder to the inmate, to the trender, that they cannot escape because disciple will always be internalized.

Sandra Bartky believes that there is an emergence of a new and unprecedented discipline directed against the body (Bartky 240). Bartky uses the word “discipline” to refer to a movement or institution that has unverifiable control over a subject. According to Bartky, more is required of the body now than ever, primarily because
this discipline invades the body and controls its operations as well as the person’s actions (Bartky 240). This discipline seeks to regulate the body. The aim of the discipline is to increase the efficiency and productivity of the body (Bartky 240). Ideally, structure and discipline allows a person to do more and function more efficiently in society. Furthermore, Foucault states, “the Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power” (Foucault 202). Institutions of education, the military, hospitals, and prisons have taken the design of the Panopticon to create disciplined and harmonized societies within them. The fashion industry is not only a system that produces tangible items for economic growth, but it is also an institution. Like a school or a prison, the fashion industry acts as another institution that uses the Panopticon as a machine to homogenize power.

A person involved in the fashion industry will eventually develop the same self-surveillance as the inmate in the prison. What makes the fashion industry even more interesting as an institution driving the Panopticon, is the fact that the tower of the Panopticon in fashion it is not a physical building, like a prison or school. An inmate of the fashion industry does not have one tower or one school building to gaze on. It has multiple buildings and multiple outlets that act as towers. The trender upon waking up and looking outside is instantly reminded of the watch-guard’s presence in the tower of the Panopticon simply by picking up a magazine, watching an episode of Sex and the City, walking to a restaurant, or seeing a group of well dressed women. The trender is a primary example of person who is trapped within the confines of the panoptic institution that is the fashion industry.
Connecting the Dots

In the case of the trender, everything is smoke and mirrors. Trenders may appear to look put together, well dressed, “fashionable,” and so on. However, what is important is the intent behind why they fashion themselves. Trenders are not the kind of people who will typically oppose the fashion industry; they tend to think that the fashion industry is something beautiful and infallible. Meaning they hang onto every word and trend presented to them. They embrace the media and magazines because they seek guidelines and insights on what is “hot” and “popular.” Magazines become the Holy Grail of fashion when it comes to trenders, because without them they are unable to self-fashion. Trenders are unable to think for themselves as to what types or styles of clothing they will wear. For example, someone reading a September issue might come across a color or pattern. Let’s say this pattern features the color eggplant with yellow daises. Vogue, Harpers Bazaar, and W will have a page on the eggplant and yellow daisy pattern for the fall season, reading “fall’s hottest new prints: where to buy and how to pull it off.” This is a suggestion set by the fashion industry for people to follow and take part in. Those who seek to fit into the mold of the fashion industry will rip out that page and save it for their next shopping trip. The next time this person goes shopping, they will take out that ripped page from Vogue and actively seek out anything eggplant with yellow daisies.

This is the ideal description of the trender. A trender will always have the colors or items that they are speaking about or wearing pre-approved. Trenders are often caught saying expressions like “oh look it’s leopard. Leopard is so hot right now” and “I need to get more red in my life, red is the new fall color.” These kinds of
expressions are common in the language of the trender. On the surface, reading magazines, picking different colors, and buying fabrics that are intriguing to you is not a crime and may seem harmless, followed by quotes such as “what’s the big deal, it’s just a magazine.” Yes, it is a just a magazine, but it is a big deal. Magazines create harsh standards for the consumers and promote an impossible ideal of perfection. Flipping through the pages of a fashion magazine could be harmless, if you are the person who followed your own rules and were 100% confident with yourself inside and out. However, following Foucault, that person does not exist because self-regulation and discipline is something that is embedded within human behavior.

Once the industry decides on colors and prints for a season, it is the mission of the endorsed to carry out that information and those guidelines. It is not enough for Vogue to just to put out a report on the eggplant daisy trend. What gives it importance is the endorsement of its editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour. This is a key feature in every fashion publication. The editor-in-chief writes a personal letter to the customer that is published on the fourth or fifth page, which will usually summarize what features are in the magazine (see image 1). The editor will drop hints as to the kinds of celebrities and trends that will be making a splash this season. Finally, the editor signs it. Aside from advertisements, the masthead (see image 2), and the table of contents, the editor’s letter is one of the first pieces of writing you see in the magazine. It sets the precedent and lets you know from that page on that everything in the magazine was approved and endorsed by the editor-in-chief. For the trender, the editor, especially someone like Anna Wintour, is the top dog. If she says everyone needs to buy two copies of Vogue with a side of Starbucks, then the trender will gladly carry out that
request. Furthermore, the mission of the magazine is to get you to buy it, read it, take some notes, and finally get out there and buy something related to the trends. This type of mentality is already within the tender. She already polices herself to believe that she should follow magazines. However, once she attains a physical copy of the magazine, it acts as an aid in keeping her disciplined, reminding her of her place in society.

For Foucault, power is unverifiable and has its principle not in one person. Power for Foucault is not selective or meticulous; it is dispersed within society. It allows for different types of people and institutions to operate the panoptic tower. Like the tower, bloggers, editors-in-chief, and the media can carry out the operation of the fashion industry. They are the type of people who would take position in the tower. Those endorsed by the fashion industry become designated watch-guards. They operate on a shift basis, taking turns watching over the consumers and prisoners of fashion. Trenders trend in hopes of being accepted not only by the industry or watch-guards, but also by themselves because the oppression of the Panopticon is internalized. When it comes to the fashion industry trying to mold or shape the public, the magazines hold the cards especially for trenders. Without the guidelines or trend reports set by magazines, it would be harder for trenders to stay within the confines of the fashion industry’s panoptic gaze as well as their own self-regulating mind. In this self-surveillance, the tender is constantly trying to comply with a standard set by the industry, thus becoming a prisoner to fashion.

During the 20th century, there was an emphasis put on being a specific body type in fashion. Women were expected to appear “dolled up,” “put together,” and
perfect. Not only was it important to appear “in fashion” or “fashionable,” but also, it was also ideal to have a thin physique (Kendall 1991). Bartky states that “the body of fashion is taut, small-breasted, narrow hipped, and of a slimness bordering on emaciation” (Bartky 242). While this article was written in 1995, Bartky’s analysis still applies. She sees fashion as something that confines the individual; it acts as a shackle, which directs what the body looks like and how a person interprets it. Longing to look like a pre-pubescent girl is not a sign of individualism, nor is it a healthy way of promoting it. Styles of the female figure have changed over time, which reflects cultural traditions and obsessions.

Bartky speaks of the makeup industry and how it instills a requirement to spend time “dolling” the face, in order to appear beautiful by a standard created by the beauty and fashion industry. The properly made up face is at least a badge of acceptability in all components of everyday life, Bartky asserts (247). The idea of being accepted and fitting into a particular mold is what drives people into participating in the fashion and beauty industries; this is also an account of imitation, which I will address on in the following chapter. According to Bartky, the “art” of makeup is an art of disguise. To be “made up” presupposes that a women’s face is unpainted, and thus defective. In the case of the trender, clothing and the participation in fashion can appear as an art of disguise as well. To be “fashionable” is to subject oneself to the disciplinary power of the fashion industry (Bartky 254). The trender wakes up and changes multiple times worrying about whether or not her skirt fits her properly. She constantly feels ugly and as a result buys multiple copies of Allure and Cosmopolitan in hopes of finding a way to overcome “ugliness.” This is most definitely a victim of self-
surveillance and, according to Bartky, an inmate of the Panopticon. She is a self-policing subject who is committed to self-surveillance (Bartky 254).

_The trender is unhappy and feels frumpy and lonely. She feels that she is incapable of being beautiful. She has created this alternate reality in her head. She turns to Allure’s beauty section in hopes of finding tips on how to feel beautiful. The article, “How to Look Awesome when You Feel Like Total Garbage” (see image 3), catches her attention and she starts to take notes. She believes this article will actually make her “look awesome” and change her view of herself. She is convinced that without a change she will not be beautiful. While, on the surface, the magazine acts as a “helping hand,” beneath the surface it acts as a manipulator. The magazine is affirming all of her doubts and insecurities. Everyday, It reminds her of her inability to be accepted. This type of inner dialogue is what keeps the trender under the gaze of the fashion industry. Without an outside source reminding the trender of the constant struggle to fit into society, it would be harder for her to constantly self-regulate._

Aside from an environment that controls the bodily actions of a person, there is another component to the trender’s tendency to trend, and that is the impulse to imitate. Philosopher and Sociologist Georg Simmel wrote an article titled _Fashion_ in order to explain how and why people participate in it. Although Fashion was written in 1957, it is still very relevant. Not all who participate in fashion are trenders. However, the fashion industry makes room for the increase in trenders due to its panoptic gaze. A person does not trend because they have nothing better to do, but because it is in their nature to imitate.
Chapter 3
The Copy Cat Syndrome

In Georg Simmel’s *Fashion*, he states that there is a psychological tendency towards imitation (Simmel 542). Behind imitation is a test of power that requires no personal or creative presentation, because its content is already created and determined for the imitator (Simmel 542). Imitation gives individuals the satisfaction of not having to stand alone in their actions. It can be viewed as a mechanism for the lazy and weak (Simmel 542). When people imitate they demand a level of creativity from those whom they are imitating (Simmel 543). Imitation is a short cut really. Simmel interestingly goes on to say that the tendency towards imitation illustrates a stage of development where the desire for quicker personal decisions and activities are present (Simmel 543). Meaning, people want to have decisions and actions made for them consistently and swiftly. Possessing the drive and individually to establish personal decisions and activities without the help of another is absent (Simmel 543). This implies that the imitator is capable of acting and thinking for the self, but is missing the component of creativity and expression. Not only is this person showing lazy tendencies, but they are also giving up their personal identity to that which they are imitating. According to Simmel, the imitator is the passive individual who believes that socially there should be a universal similarity and accordingly adapts to that society (Simmel 544). The imitator and the trend are one in the same, seeing how they both seek social adaptation.

Fashion is a form of imitation and satisfies the desire for social adaptation (Simmel 544). One of the classic issues with fashion, as an industry and form of
imitation, is that fashion thrives on inequality. If social acceptance and homogeneity in social forms of fashion is what the trender or imitator seek, then this is an impossible achievement. Class distinctions are products of fashion, which promote conformity within particular groups (Simmel 544). Fashion promotes the consistency of trends in different groups, but also promotes the exclusion of those who do not fit in those particular groups. In terms of fashion, there are groups based on age, race, economic standing, nationality, and education. The fashion industry has a group or community for just about everyone involved. Those who are endorsed by the industry hold the different groups together. Different age groups have targeted brands and companies. Those whom do not fit in precise age groups are then excluded from that category and are looked down upon for trying to fit into a group or category that was not set for them by the industry. The most noticeable division in fashion is between the upper and lower classes. The upper class has its own group of designers and magazines that cater to that class, just as the lower class does.

Social forms and aesthetic judgments are transformed by fashion constantly (Simmel 545). According to Simmel, those with a tendency to imitate tend to be people from lower classes of fashion (Simmel 545). This is in part due to the structure of the industry. For Simmel, the lower class, naturally, strives towards the upper class (545). Simmel is suggesting those from the upper class are less likely to imitate or trend because of their place in society. However, people from the upper class can trend and often times will trend harder because they have means to purchase more clothing. There are high-end trends and low-end trends. When it comes to the fashion industry as a panoptic institution no one is excluded. For people who can afford 10,000 dollar
dresses and jackets there are trends that suit them. These trends may be a bit pricier and the materials used in making the clothing maybe of better quality, but that does not change the fact they are still marketed garments created for profit. If Vogue features the trend silk and lace and then features designs by Dolce and Gabbana, Versace, and Louis Vuitton, then the people with the money who can afford those designers can go out and purchase them. They would have the same mentally and reason for trending as a person from the lower class. This in part is why there are different magazines and department stores featuring a range of trends and clothing to satisfy various groups in fashion. Ultimately, there are many types of trenders with different social and economic status.

The trender finds ways to imitate popular designs by reading magazines or other forms of media. One trender can picks up a copy of W from her local newsstand and finds a trend report on pink tweed featuring the latest Chanel collection. She can afford to purchase this jacket so she does. However, another trender may see the same trend report and realize she cannot afford the jacket. She picks up a copy of Self that features the same trend, but offers an “affordable look alike” as well as where to get that affordable version of the popular trend in H&M for forty dollars. Both examples feature trenders, with different economic backgrounds, who want to be “fashionable” and “trendy.” It is this mind set and constant flux in fashion that keeps it going. There are hundreds of new trends and with them are a hundred more ways for trenders and imitators to keep up. Simmel sees imitation as an important factor in the fashion industry, but so is the element of demarcation. The fashion industry thrives on the inequality of social groups. With demarcation, the industry can market different
products to all types of people. Furthermore, they can create and market trends that will allow people to believe and feel like they fit into a particular genre. The fashion industry needs the separation of the higher and lower class in order for them to market both lifestyles to each other. This goes back to the foundations of Bentham's Panopticon. Without the element of separation and the feeling of loneliness, the fashion industry would cease to have the ability to manipulate the trender. The need for community and the need of isolation are both essential social tendencies of fashion (Simmel 546). Those from the lower class have each other to form a community of peers. However, they also need the isolation from the higher class in order to imitate and vise versa. It is the rejection of another group and the internalization of that rejection that allows trends to be successful. Should one of these social tendencies vanish, the structure of the fashion industry would fall apart. Isolation leads an individual to become weak or docile with a lack of individuality. Isolation also establishes a drive for validation, for the trender, which comes from feelings of inadequacy. Following Simmel's logic the trender steers clear from individualization because to be an individual is not to be in a community.

According to Simmel, fashion changes quickly when members of the lower class attempt to catch up with the upper class (Simmel 547). In terms of social class, the upper class becomes nervous due the constant adaption of their fashions by the lower class. In an attempt to remain “different,” the upper class changes the standard of fashion again, another example of separation and isolation. Simmel states, “as soon as anything that was originally done only by a few has really come to be practiced by all-we no longer speak of fashion” (Simmel 547). However, individuals gain satisfaction in
knowing that participating in fashion still represents their success in becoming a part of a group (Simmel 547). A person can look at a group of fashionable people with feelings of approval and envy. Approval comes from them seeing themselves as members of a popular group, which are accepted by society. People observing the fashionable are envious because they want what the fashionable represent, thus leading to imitation. Those who oppose the fashion industry are another group of people who imitate. According to Simmel, “if obedience to fashion consists in imitation...conscious neglect of fashion represents similar imitation” (Simmel 549). The person who makes an effort to be anti-fashion will accept its existence and form, but accepts it in the form of resistance (Simmel 550). However, in modern times, it has become quite fashionable to be anti-fashion or opposed to the fashion industry.

It is often impossible to tell whether wanting to depart from the standards of the fashion industry is something that comes from personal strength or weakness. Opposition to the standards of fashion can come from a desire not to adhere to the masses or delicate sensibility (Simmel 550). Those in opposition to imitating or trending are opposing in fear of losing their individuality by participating in the trends and ideology of the industry. However, this fear does not necessarily translate into a weakness. For Simmel, a weak person is someone who steers clear from individualization and dependence on the self (Simmel 550). The person who is anti-fashion out of fear seeks out individualization and wants more control over their identity and self-expression. I would not consider this person to be a follower of anti-fashion but a person who is trying to resist and eliminate the gaze of the fashion industry. The imitator or trendor has chosen the institution of fashion as their social
An indifferent person may not be interested in fashion and may call it trivial, but will indirectly comply with its customs. Fashion may not be their chosen social community. However, without them knowing it they are participating in it. An indifferent person may find the fashion industry to be superficial, but will still comply with its rules and standards socially at a wedding, funeral, and or job interview. Furthermore, even the person who opposes imitation, trending, and the fashion industry to some degree is involved in the larger umbrella of fashion. However, what is important to note is that there is more to fashion than imitation and trending. Fashion can also be considered an art form and its main medium is design in the form of clothing.

Both Sandra Bartky and I hope for a time when people like the imitators and trenders will re-envision their place in society. The tender who wants to continue to be a part of fashion as a community or social group is not comfortable with trending to a point where they are constantly regulating themselves and trying to fit a mold that is outside of them. At some point, the tender gets frustrated with imitating. Once that happens a new disciplinary practice emerges to re-define the self and its association with fashion as an institution.
Chapter 4
Re-Evaluating the Self: Where do we go from here?

In Chapter 2, we saw that Sandra Bartky was concerned with standards of beauty within the fashion industry and its effects on the female mind. According to Bartky, women cannot begin to re-envision their own bodies until they learn to read the cultural messages inscribed upon them daily (Bartky 256). *Michelle has been under the influence of the fashion industries panoptic gaze as well as the regime of her own self-disciple for years. She is uncomfortable with the idea that the clothing put on her body is controlled by an external source. She is tired of regulating herself to fit an impossible standard. Furthermore, she is tired of being a prisoner, an imitator, and a trendier.* She believes in fashion outside of its industry setting. She sees it as a form of art that created to inspire those who see merit in it. *Unfortunately, she is unable to separate fashion as an industry from fashion that allows her to be inspired.* The trendier must attempt to re-envision her own body in order to loosen the reigns of discipline within her mind. The trendier in turn must rethink her whole association with clothing and her role in the fashion industry.

Foucault would argue that the trendier would be unable to free herself from self-imprisonment as well as social regulation because it goes beyond the conscious and gets embedded into the sub-conscious. There are people who are unaware of the fact that they are self-regulators and members of a community that functions on a panoptic level. However, all that person needs is a trigger. A trigger is a single thought of resistance. *Michelle notices that she is hard on her self. She wonders if her dedication to the fashion industry can be more than just following trends. She wonders if she can make*
her own decisions as to what she will and will not wear for the day. There is a moment when the trender looks at herself and realizes she may be too hard on her self. This moment is her trigger. It may be true that the trender cannot permanently escape from the Panopticon within the fashion industry and within her mind. She cannot escape the prison of fashion because it is everywhere not only externally but also internally within her. What she can do is learn to regain parts of her identity within this community. If she can regulate the self to follow trends and comply with impossible standards, then can she not use that same discipline and regulation to re-define herself?

What I propose is an attempt to re-discipline, re-arrange, and re-define the self within the fashion industry. This attempt at re-discovering the self is not at all a way of completely abolishing internalization or discipline. It is, however, an attempt at self-liberation. The trender is looking to stay engaged in the fashion industry without it entirely dominating her actions. She is looking to develop a personal style and to transition into what I call an aspiring self-styler. If the trender is what Simmel would call the imitator, then the aspiring self-styler is a modern version of Simmel's “teleological individual.” The teleological individual, for Simmel, is a person who is experimenting and striving to challenge the self. She wants to rely on her own personal conviction (Simmel 543). The ability to rely on one's own personal beliefs can be difficult. It suggests that person has the ability to be autonomous within a social setting. However, complete autonomy is not a guaranteed end for the aspiring self-styler but a goal. Individual Autonomy is the capacity “to be one's own person and to make decisions and choices that are one's own and not the product or manipulation or
external forces (Christman). The aspiring self-styler hopes that one day she will have the ability to become a self-styler that has individual autonomy. However, As a result, she *aspires* to become a self-styler, a teleological individual, and an autonomous individual within the institution of fashion.

*The Aspiring Self-Styler*

An aspiring self-styler is someone who is involved in the larger community of fashion and seeks to use clothing as a medium to express her self. An aspiring self-styler participates in the practice of self-styling, which refers to the journey an aspiring self-styler must take in hopes of one day becoming a complete self-styler. Aspiring self-stylers attempt to use clothing as a way to re-define and re-shape their own perceptions of themselves. Ultimately, this practice seeks to re-regulate and re-structure the tender from being an imitator and inmate of the fashion industry to an ex-inmate who wants a new start. Investing in such a practice will give the tender a newfound awareness and knowledge of herself. This will enable her to walk into a store and buy a shirt not because *Vogue* suggested it to her, but because the shirt is something that speaks to her on a personal level. One major component in the aspiring self-styler’s philosophy is that she wants to become more aware of her decisions and attitude towards clothing.

Acceptability is not a driving force behind the aspiring self-styler. She would prefer to have as much control and awareness over her actions as possible. However, by being a member of the fashion industry, the aspiring self-styler is constantly reminded of her role in society. She falls back into her old habits of self-regulation and trending. Bartky and Foucault would suggest that the aspiring self-styler, without
knowing it, would still have the feeling or urge of wanting to be accepted, and by default would act according to those feelings because her body has been conditioned to believe so socially. This is something that the aspiring self-styler will constantly have to deal with on her journey. Nevertheless, she has to continue working on her self to resist the mentality of the Panopticon if she wants a chance at becoming a complete self-styler.

The practice of getting dressed in the morning is more than a mundane task required of social beings. Bartky criticizes makeup artists, alluding to them not being artist, and she would be opposed to calling the practice of getting dressed an art of self-styling. This brings up a whole discussion on whether or not we consider fashion an art form. I do not want to spend much time on this, but if we look at the bones of fashion, we have a garment that is made with fabric, inspiration, skill, and technique. The garment itself is a work of art like a newly painted portrait or newly composed piece of music. Some people may choose to exploit a garment or painting by creating a whole industry out of it. However, that does not discredit the original form itself. Furthermore, Bartky only wants to see fashion as a means of profit and dictatorship. This is problematic for the aspiring self-styler who is attempting to look past the standards of the industry, to see the bare bones of fashion.

Bartky’s concern is that of the watch-guard in the self whose power keeps the mind in a constant state of depression and the body in a constantly state of discipline. Bartky and the self-styler share the same concern. They both want to figure out the role of power in the adornment of the body and understand it better so that they can figure out a way to resist it and liberate themselves from it. If, in fact, Foucault’s
interpretation of the Panopticon is true, then do we not owe it to ourselves to develop ways to loosen the connection between the inner watch-guard, the endorsed watch-guards, and ourselves? If, in fact, understanding and becoming more aware of social and mental messages inscribed upon us daily brings us one step closer to re-envisioning the body, then the more visible our inner watch-guard becomes. The closer we are to accepting our chosen communities and the closer we are to learning how re-structure ourselves within those communities. As the trender learns more about her relation to clothing and why she has a tendency to imitate, she will be one step closer to loosening those bonds of control.

To know that all of our actions and expressions are truly a form of conformation to a power within us gives us one of two options. First, we can accept it and do nothing about it. We cannot do anything about the subconscious feeling of fear and lack of control brought upon us by an anonymous source. Second, we can resist the acceptance of any power that can take away our individuality or autonomy. The trender at first may not have the ability to question her actions, but when she experiences the trigger she will be able to question why she wears what she wears, or why she relies on the fashion industry for personal choices. More importantly, she has the ability to question herself as to why she sabotages herself in order to fit in socially. If the trender chooses not to question the industry, her designated watch-guards, or her self, then she will satisfy Foucault, Simmel, and Bartky's theories. However, if she chooses to question fashion as an institution, to question her role in that community, then she begins to open up her mind to all types of possibilities.
Understanding the self in terms of her actions and inspirations leads to an aspiring self-styler, because she aspires to educate her self on her actions, influences, and position within society so that she can begin to re-discipline and restructure herself. The developments of a more pro-self practice, i.e., self-styling, will not only promote resistance, but will bring about a newly defined social identity for those who choose to follow it.
Part 2
Pattern Making 102: Tailoring the Self
In part one, we learned that Foucault’s interpretation of the Panopticon as a tool to homogenize power can be applied to many social institutions. Following Foucault, being a member of a panoptic institution signifies your inability to be a true autonomous self. Under this system, you have limited control over your identity and actions. What you have is a well disciplined and regulated self. We know that breaking free from the Panopticon is not an option, according to Foucault, because self-regulation and internalization is something that everyone is victim to whether they are conscious of it our not. Getting rid of self-regulation and discipline is not the route one should take in an attempt to re-define the self, because it is impossible and because it can be useful. What needs to happen is a shift in how one goes about self-regulation. Trenders are victims of the fashion industry, because they are a group of people who have disciplined and have regulated the self to the standards of the fashion industry. As a result, they have internalized those standards to a point where they believe them to be theirs. Self-surveillance in the form of the negative is the component of the Panopticon that has to change for the aspiring self-styler. The aspiring self-styler wants to become aware of how she self-regulates, so that she can unpack it and develop a new relationship with herself that is positive.

The tender ultimately wants to transition from trending to self-styling in hope of one day having the ability to create a new identity. Chapter 4 introduced the aspiring self-styler who wants to develop a self that can stop trending. Eventually, she wants to stop relying on the fashion industry for external acceptance. The aspiring self-styler is
struggling with accepting her self. She believes the only way to begin to accept her self is to cut off as much internal and external negativity as possible. However, before understanding how an aspiring self-styler re-defines the self and acquires a social identity, I first want to go over the connection between the trender and aspiring self-styler.

Looking in the Mirror

The trender wants to fit the standard; she wants to be a part of fashion the institution. The trender wants acceptance, not only from external sources but also from within. She can remain a trender or push herself to something beyond the trender. This suggests that the trender and aspiring self-styler are some how connected. Correct. However, it’s beyond a connection; they share the same body. To become an aspiring self-styler is to be a trender who wants to develop a new identity beyond tending. She wants to dress herself with clothes that interest her and may not necessarily fulfill a standard.

Michelle is uncomfortable with the fact that she is short and curvy; she hates this trait about herself and constantly torments herself about it. Michelle picks up a copy of InStyle and sees the title “Rules for the Short-Curvy Girl.” These “rules” can get extensive. Nevertheless, she notices a few of them: never wear prints, as they will make you look larger and shorter. Never were skinny jeans, as they will accentuate your curves. Never wear boots with a dress because you will look shorter and more compact. Oh and always, wear Spanx! Michelle is already unhappy with herself on the inside. She has not owned up to herself. She has not accepted that she is in fact shorter and curvier than most. More importantly, she does not accept that being short and curvy is something that can be
positive. Concurrently, magazines, editors, and celebrities, have convinced Michelle that the only way she will love herself is if she changes her appearance and follows their guidelines. Furthermore, under this panoptic system, Michelle has internalized the standards put upon her by the industry. She believes them to be true and hers. In reality, she has been bamboozled. These standards are not hers and are a result of manipulation. Michelle believes these guidelines will make her look “trendy” and “fashionable.” If she believes she is trendy and fashionable, then she will accept herself.

There is a problem. Michelle walks into a store and pulls a few pairs of dark denim wide leg jeans, because of the article she read in InStyle. During this trip, she makes sure to stay away from prints and flats, even if she finds them intriguing, fabulous, and inspirational. She tries on the jeans. She looks in the mirror a few times and does a little twirl, but there is no smile on her face. The wide leg jeans make her look frumpy and more business than casual. Michelle looks around and sees more color and prints. She is attracted to color and prints, and wants to try them out, but does not because those voices in her head are saying, “That is aqua. You cannot pull off aqua. Remember you have defects. You are short and curvy. Bright colors will bring attention to you, and you do not want attention.” Michelle nods to herself and decides the voices are correct. She walks up to the cashier and purchases the wide leg pants and a black V-neck top. Michelle in that moment became the classic trendsetter, but disappointingly, she has lost a sense of herself. She denied her natural urges for print and color and opted to go with a less exciting option because someone one whom she’s never had a conversation with, through a magazine article, convinced her to. Michelle has become a trendsetter, but she is still unhappy. The new clothes do not speak to her urges, and while they may fit a
standard created by the fashion industry, they do not prove to make her any happier or confident about herself. She is torn and unsure of what to do. She thinks about her connection with clothes and realizes that she does not need a magazine to tell her what color dress or shirt to wear, but rather she will try on whatever catches her eye. Michelle has hit a point where she has to make a decision, to continue listening to opinions and trend reports, or to say enough is enough; this when Michelle transitions into the aspiring self-styler.

It is important when speaking of the aspiring self-styler that we think of the trender since they share a bond. The aspiring self-styler was the trender. She feels like enough is enough and it is time to throw out the rule books, the frumpy black dresses, and start defining the self, by the self, through clothing. The only thing that can turn a trender into a person who wants to self-style with control is to become aware of her actions, judgments, and place in the fashion industry as well as how it influences her emotions and views of herself. It is the hope for a stronger confident self that wakes the trender up. Michelle is the aspiring self-styler because she wants to figure out a way to be a part of fashion, while maintaining her own voice. She does this by going through stages that allow her to develop a new social identity that is driven by the aspiring self-styler and not the fashion industry.

The Road to Recovery

To form a new social identity beyond the trender, means that the aspiring self-styler must go through stages that help her resist the urge to trend. Instead of trying to escape or break free from the Panopticon, or the fashion industry, she wants to redefine her self, re-regulate, and ultimately re-internalize her newfound social
identity. In 1997, Professors Hardiman and Jackson came up with a model of social development in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Source book*, entitled “Jackson and Hardiman Model of Social Identity Development.” This model applies to the process members of varies social groups go through in order to accomplish a new definition of self. Hardiman and Jackson intended this model to explain social institutions such as race, gender, and class. However, they do mention its application can be applied to other social institutions (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). I am using four stages from their model to analyze the development of self-awareness for the aspiring self-styler. The stages in this model are not linear. A person is not expected to move directly from one stage to the next. In reality, one can experience several stages simultaneously (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). While Hardiman and Jackson uses the social identity model to understand student perspectives, I will use some of the stages as a way of understanding how the aspiring self-styler goes about becoming aware and capable of developing a new identity. The first stage in this model is the Acceptance stage.

In this stage, Acceptance represents an internalization of a dominant culture’s system (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). Referring back to chapter two, the trender has internalized the standards and expectations of her chosen community or institution. As a result, she is in the Acceptance stage. According to Hardiman and Jackson, this internalization can be conscious or unconscious (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). The trender in the Acceptance stage has accepted the standards and messages presented to her about the institution of fashion. At this point, she is aware of her position in that social group or institution. There are also cases where the trender is unaware of how
her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors reflect the ideology of the fashion industry. For Hardiman and Jackson, this means that the trender is operating with a passive acceptance consciousness. She unconsciously identifies with the ideas and values of the fashion industry. For example, a trender in the Acceptance stage with a passive consciousness would be unaware of the fact that she trends. She is the person who sees nothing wrong with reading articles about new flats for the season; she also sees no problem in purchasing those same flats featured in that particular magazine. She sees her involvement in the fashion industry as something she should be doing. The passive trender is not necessarily a negative person; rather she is unaware of that fact that she is internalizing the industry's standards and ideals. The passive trender is unaware of the fact that she is trending or an inmate of the Panopticon.

In the Acceptance stage, there is also an active acceptance consciousness, where a person would be operating with the intent to cooperate with the ideologies of their social group (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). Meaning, they are aware of their position within that community. The trender operating with an active acceptance consciousness is aware that she is a trender. She is aware of her tendencies to imitate. She accepts and complies with the industry's ideology. In both cases, the trender has internalized the ideologies of the industry and acts on them; passively or actively, she is still an inmate of the Panopticon. During the Acceptance stage, a trender may experience a moment where she questions her role in society, like in the example with Michelle. The moment when Michelle realized she wanted to pick her own clothes and wanted more color was the moment where she became aware of her role in the fashion industry and did not like it. However, even with that acknowledgement, or what I call the "trigger", Michelle
can still decide to continue to trend, because of the benefits of participating in the fashion industry.

The acceptance stage is a tricky stage for the trender who becomes aware of her internalization because she will constantly seek to move beyond this stage and the mind frame of the trender. To move past the Acceptance stage for Hardiman and Jackson is for the person to acknowledge the collusive and destructive effects of the fashion industry as well as their behavior in that institution (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). The acknowledgement can come from a personal experience, like with Michelle in the clothing store, or it can come from an outside source. The trigger leads to an increased awareness of the existence of internalization and its role within an institution, which leads to the Resistance stage.

Resistance begins with a person questioning the accepted truths about the way things are in their life or in their social group (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). For example, *Michelle, the aspiring self-styler, begins to question why she should just wear wide leg pants and black. Different phrases run through her head. "You are short. You are curvy you can’t wear skinny jeans. Well, that is for a smaller person." These various phrases are previous accepted truths for Michelle.* However, in the resistance stage, she realizes the lack of truth and validity in those statements and her previous experiences with them. During this stage, Michelle can participate in active or passive resistance. With active resistance, a person will typically adapt some sort of aggression or anger towards oppression, adopting a mentality of the “anti” (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). In this case, Michelle would adopt an anti-fashion mind frame out of anger and loss of respect for the fashion industry. She would want to disassociate with the institution. However,
referring back to Chapter 3, Simmel would be skeptical of anyone taking an anti-fashion position, because in the attempt to oppose one group they end up joining another group of people, putting them back into the category of imitating. Following Hardiman and Jackson, a person in active Resistance would be resisting strictly out of opposition to a larger institution (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). Nevertheless, Active Resistance is not a likely route for the aspiring self-styler because she does not seek to be anti-fashion. When someone is in Passive Resistance it means they have a fear of loosing some sort of benefit from an institution and as a result wants to stay in favor with the institution, while rejecting oppression (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). In this case, Michelle would not want to be anti-fashion because she can benefit from participating in fashion. Michelle enjoys fashion as art. She has chosen to use clothing as a medium of expression. Michelle seeks to continue to be a part of the fashion industry without having its standards perpetuate oppression.

According to Hardiman and Jackson, the primary task of those in resistance is to cleanse internalized oppressive beliefs and actions (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). Michelle becomes more self-aware and as a result shows some signs of empowerment. The power is shown in her intentions and actions in wanting to resist. Michelle, in the stage of resistance, often times will go back to that moment in the dressing room where she realized how harsh she was on herself. Prior to the resistance stage, there was a lot of time put into “what she is not.” Nevertheless, during the resistance stage the question of “who am I” will constantly come up. Ideally after the resistance is the re-definition stage. However, even when Michelle is in a stage of re-definition she is still resisting past temptations to trend and self-regulate. Re-definition aims to create an identity
that is not influenced predominantly by an oppressive system (Hardiman, Jackson 1997). Hardiman and Jackson state that “the search for social identity often involves reclaiming’s ones heritage, (Hardiman, Jackson 1997)” which comes about by revisiting or exploring ones culture and past experiences. Re-definition for Michelle is a stage where she seeks to reclaim her role in fashion, with clothing as a medium of creativity, to develop a personal style. This notion of style will become clearer in the following chapter.

According to Tom Leddy in "Dewey's Aesthetics," resistance generates curiosity and overcoming resistance leads to elation (Leddy 2013). Furthermore, he states “emotion is then converted into both interest and action through incorporating meanings from the past” (Leddy 2013). For the aspiring self-styler an incorporation of meanings from the past would be her using her experiences to shape her current and future actions. For Leddy, this re-creative act gains form and solidity and with that, old material is given a new life (Leddy 2013). What this means for the aspiring self-styler is that she can look back on her trend clothing to see if it inspires her or if they relate to a past memory. If so, she can re-use the garment and give it a new meaning. Michelle goes through her closet and finds a pair of red and orange moccasins; at some point moccasins was really trendy and fashionable. By creating a new memory or purpose for the moccasins, Michelle gave a new meaning to an old purchase. She looked back on a childhood memory of going to powwows and seeing her tribal colors and relatives wearing traditional moccasins. This memory alone gave a new perspective on her current moccasins. They are no longer a pair of shoes that remind her of standards or the fashion industry.
For Leddy, when old-material is given a new life it becomes a medium for creativity (Leddy 2013). Even when clothing is sold as a means of profit and homogenization, the aspiring self-styler has the ability to transform the item and give it meaning beyond its initial purpose. The Re-definition stage is ultimately a stage that promotes creativity. Through self-styling, Michelle has the opportunity to use the medium of clothing to express her self in a new and positive light.

The primary concern of those in the Re-definition stage is re-naming. They seek to form new social groups within their chosen institution. These groups would consist of other people who share the same ideology. For example, those who wish to no longer use harsh chemical in their and decide to “go natural,” want to surround themselves with experts and friends who are also going natural and understand their position as a group of people who want to reclaim their hair identity. The key to the re-definition stage is to integrate and internalize a new social identity within one’s social group. They want to become confident in themselves and their actions. The transition from re-defining to internalization is a tough one because the process of re-claiming an identity can be ongoing.

Aspiring self-stylers are likely to revisit or encounter situations that trigger their previous views as a trend. This is a result of the aspiring self-styler’s choice to continue to be apart of the fashion industry. Hardiman and Jackson point out that as long as a person continues to live in an oppressive society, they will continue to struggle between the acceptance and resistance stage, even if their predominant consciousness may be in either the re-definition or internalization stage. It is the hope of the aspiring self-styler in this stage to use the new aspects of their identity to shape
new behavior and actions that happen unconsciously without external control. If, as a
trender, Michelle internalized the fashion industry's harsh standards and held herself
accountable for not wearing the latest clothes for her body type as a render, then as an
aspiring self-styler entering the internalization stage she hopes to walk into a store and
not have to think about what she should wear and how to wear it. Her end goal is really
to be spontaneous when it comes to her style and wardrobe.

The internalization stage is where the journey ends for the aspiring self-styler
theoretical. Furthermore, once she has internalized her new identity she will become a
complete self-styler. This stage is untouchable for most people because it is common to
struggle between resisting and re-defining. It may take years or a whole lifetime of
resisting and re-defining before a person is capable of internalizing a new identity with
limited influences from an institution. However, just because this stage is difficult to
reach does not mean one should give up. Once a render finds her “trigger,” she will
have to decide whether she will continue to trend or aspire to move beyond the
render. The render turned aspiring self-styler does not have to enter these stages
sequentially. Even if render has decided to embark on the journey of the aspiring self-
styler, it does not mean that they will never trend or view themselves with negativity
again. It means that there will be a struggle to consistently resist. She has to keep
finding ways to reclaim and re-define the self.

The practice of self-styling is the process one takes in order to become a
stronger and confidant person within the fashion industry. The goal is not to
disconnect herself from fashion as an art form, but to separate the industry's ideology
from her own ideology. There will be days where Michelle will wake up, look in her
closet, put on an outfit, and feel like she looks frumpy and chunky. She will have thoughts of not being pretty or as thin as her friends or her favorite fashion bloggers. Nevertheless, this does not mean she is a failure or that she has given up on self-styling, what it means is that she is still struggling between the acceptance and resistance stages. She is still struggling with her role in the fashion industry and how to function as a separate individual while being a member of a whole.

Like any other practice, you have to dedicate time and patience to see results. A person who participates in yoga for the first time does not wake up one day after a session claiming to be the ultimate yogi. This person may fall in and out of attending yoga classes, as a result has slowed down their journey to yogi hood, and has prolonged the goal to becoming a yogi, but at the end of the day, the only way to continue forward is to pick the self-back up and try again. So, if today Michelle has a moment of relapse where she cries herself to sleep thinking of how much she will never fit in, she has tomorrow and the days after to try again and again until she has reached a point where she can get up and have a positive experience with her self and her clothes.

Clothing is a key component for the aspiring self-styler because she uses it as a medium in self-expression. Self-expression is when a person uses and external medium to some how represent or speak too inner ideals or emotions. Instead of using traditional mediums such as paint or musical instruments, she uses clothing as her medium and her body as the base for application. With clothing as a form of self-expression, she develops a personal style. She uses clothing as a way to self-style. Like personal style, self-styling is a practice in which a person uses the body as an artistic
base to convey one’s personality and identity. In the next chapter, I will be discussing the relationship between fashion and style as well as explore what style means and how to develop it.
Host of TLC’s *What Not to Wear* and stylist Stacy London writes in her book, *The Truth About Style*, about the difference between style and fashion as well as how the development of style can improve your experiences and opinions of yourself. Style, unlike fashion, is personal. It is purely for the individual and not for a group of people or the fashion industry (London 4). Style thrives when you thrive and flourish. Additionally, it succeeds when you are the best version of yourself, not a poor version of someone else’s ideas (London 4). When you believe in someone else’s opinions or ideals as if they were your own, you lose a sense of yourself; you become a lesser version of yourself.

In *the Little Black Book of Style*, Creative Director of Marie Claire, Nina Garcia states that “to have style is to know where you come from, who you are, as well as who you want to be in the world; it does not come from longing to be someone else, or wanting to be skinnier, taller, or wealthier” (Garcia 3). Style can be as strong a motivator as a diet or exercise and can implement positive change in your whole life, not only the way you look (London 5). However, this can only happen if you let style play that role in your life. Building confidence is the first and most important step to developing style. Confidence tells others that you respect yourself, and dress for the self and no one else (Garcia 3). It is important to be your own inspiration, because the evaluation of what you want and how you view yourself in the world is what contributes to building respect for yourself. Finding inspiration in yourself as well as becoming your own muse will shine through externally. Agreeing with Garcia, when
you style according to your inner muse you will project an aura of confidence and self-awareness that no one else can touch (Garcia 6). These two women see style as a way to represent personalities and identity traits, not as a form of conformity or self-discipline. The past chapters have been on the mind frame of a person who has chosen to be apart of the fashion industry. In the following section, I will talk about the concept of style and how it helps aid in the re-creation of a social identity.

**Identifying Style**

Style can mean a number of things. It is often used in a sense to praise someone for having it. It is also used as a description where someone is viewed as stylish. Style, according to philosopher Richard Shusterman in his essay *Somatic Style*, can be generic or personal (Shusterman 2011). Generic style refers to something that is done in the same taste as an original. In 1936, Gabrielle Chanel created her first tweed suit jacket. Since then, it has become an iconic piece (“The Chanel Jacket” 2003). In terms of clothing, a generic style can refer to a tweed jacket sold at Forever21 that shares commonality with a Chanel tweed jacket. In this example, the Forever21 jacket is in the “Chanel style.” Non-generic style refers to something that is not explicitly speaking to another style. However, this style can be inspired by fashion, art, history, and culture. With these inspirations, one can take bits and pieces from each subject to cultivate their own style. Sort of like an adaptation of experiences through clothing. Personal style has distinctive traits that separate it from generic styles. If Forever21 were to draw inspiration from the “Chanel style” jacket, creating a new version of the jacket, perhaps without sleeves or with leather panels, then it would no longer be generic but a new creation. According to Shusterman, in regards to painting, one can speak of a
Baroque style, and they can speak of the individual styles of particular baroque painters (Shusterman 2011). In terms of self-styling, whether a garment is generically produced or an original is not what matters. What is important is how the people further use the garment to express themselves. The job of the aspiring self-styler is to develop a personal style.

In the fashion industry, there are generic styles and the individual styles of particular designers. There are generic garments that are typically “inspired” by the garments of individual designers. Clothing produced by retail companies such as Zara, H&M, and Forever21, are “inspired” by the original designs of the Valentino, Chanel, and Dolce and Gabbana’s of the world. It is typical for an artist to have a variety of styles. It is common for a company or person to be inspired by other facets of life, but a signature style is what shapes the aspiring self-styler’s social identity. To be an aspiring self-styler does not mean you do not purchase or use clothing that is generically produced. Furthermore, one does not have to go out and purchase a Chanel jacket in order to develop a style. A common misconception in the development of personal style is that you have to have a lot of money to purchase “trendy” clothes. As stated before, to be “fashionable” or “trendy” is not the goal of the aspiring self-styler. It is not about products or quantity. It is about expression. If to self-style is to stylize the self with clothing, then there are two ways to self-style: explicit stylization and expressive stylization.

According to Shusterman, “many people devote considerable conscious thought and effort on stylizing themselves” (Shusterman 2011). Shusterman goes on to say that those who self-style explicitly, do so because they want to stand out distinctively as
well as fit in socially (Shusterman 2011). Those who explicitly style the self do so as a way to conform socially, within the fashion industry. They devote conscious thought to styling themselves because they have been conditioned and disciplined to do so in order to fit in socially. For the most part, they are not seeking ways to be distinctive; they are seeking ways to fit into a particular standard. Shusterman does not speak of the person who self-styles explicitly as a way to conform, i.e. the trender.

Expressive stylization refers to the trender turned aspiring self-styler who has reached a level of self-styling that allows her stylization to be expressive of her personality with little to no bearing on social conformity. Shusterman believes self-styling involves conforming in some way to the norms of social institutions, but it does not allow those conformities to prevent individual expression (Shusterman 2011). Furthermore, in order for the trender to transition into the aspiring self-styler, she must put some thought into her purchases and clothing, primarily because she needs to establish her connection with them. However, this does not mean she is trying to stand out or fit in socially, as explicit stylization suggests. What she is doing is re-defining what clothing means to her. Instead of calling it explicit stylization, I call it pre-expressive stylization. She is not able to impulsively pick out clothing or create a signature style. Nevertheless, she is beginning to take steps to reach that level of expressive stylization.

By deciding to be a part of the fashion industry, the aspiring self-styler has accepted her place in that institution. She is aware of the standards that follow a participation in fashion. Nevertheless, she wants to form new habits within this community, thus resulting in her wanting to re-define her self, as shown in Chapter 5.
According to Shusterman, style is a habit to perform or appear in a certain manner or set of ways (Shusterman 2011). Style appears to be short-lived because of a constant flux in trends and seasons. Expressive style requires habits that imply repetition over time. It, to some extent, should be durable and long lasting. A person may have a signature style that is constant or permanent. However, depending on different circumstances, she may also have variations of that style. For example, Livianna has chosen to wear a headscarf 365 days out of a year. She has different colors and textures for different days and moods. This becomes her signature style. Depending on the day or situation, she may need to change the color or use of her headscarf. If she is applying for a job, she may decide to tie the scarf around her bag instead of around her head. If she is attending a funeral, she may pick a black headscarf. She becomes flexible and her headscarf becomes versatile. These variations of style allow a person to participate within social institutions without having to compromise expression or creativity.

Style comes off as something that is superficial. However, Shusterman sees style not as superficial adornment, but as a core dimension of one’s personality, and as an expression of a particular spirit (Shusterman 2011). Style implies more than just general physical qualities. It has an intentionality that speaks to a person’s action, feeling, thoughts, and desires. According to Shusterman, it is an animating spirit that goes beyond a look, and it helps define a person’s character or personality (Shusterman 2011). To self-style is to feel a sense of control over one’s body and image. Clothing and accessories to a person who has cultivated a personal style are not just material items that simply cover the body. They are something that express their moods, their beliefs, and is intrinsically them. Furthermore, style and the self are
intimately related. The way to develop or create a style is through self-development or self-creation (Shusterman 2011). If style is an important part of one’s own being, then to change one’s style is to change one’s identity.

Shusterman is unable to come up with a way to create or improve one’s style; he finds the question too complex to address in his essay. However, he believes that to work on the self is an effort to gain self-knowledge, which includes an examination of our strengths, weakness, and actions (Shusterman 2011). What Shusterman leaves out is the long list of obstacles that stand in the way of the person who seeks to create a style and re-create the self. The obstacles, as made clear in part one, stem from the internalization of discipline and surveillance facilitated by the fashion industry. Furthermore, the only way for a person to develop a personal style as well as to create a new relationship with clothing that goes beyond an initial need to conform is to take part in developing a new social identity.

While Shusterman fails to produce a way for a person, more specifically the aspiring self-styler, to develop a personal style while in the social context of the fashion industry, there is still hope thanks to Hardiman and Jackson’s social identity model. Stages of acceptance, resistance, re-definition, and internalization give the aspiring self-styler a way to become aware of her surroundings and external forms of oppression. Hardiman and Jackson’s social identity model applies to different types of social institutions. However, what makes this model interesting for the aspiring self-styler is the additional component of style and expression. Style and expression is a result of an aspiring self-styler in the re-definition stage. Referring to chapter 5, re-definition often times will deal with the re-claiming of something that was lost after
participating in a specific social order. Someone dealing with the social context of race or gender, ideally in the re-definition stage, will attempt to re-claim what it is to be a male, female, or African American. An aspiring self-styler within the institution of fashion wants not only to re-claim her role as a creative agent, but ultimately wants to re-develop and re-claim what it means to self-style and reclaim. To re-define through style is to style the self according to one’s own likes and inspirations. Style for the aspiring self-styler is a way for her to give clothing a positive role in her life. Once she starts to associate new habits and positive views of herself with clothing, then her personal style becomes the accumulation of items that represent her new identity. Expressive self-styling is an external way to express and remind the aspiring self-styler of her new social identity.
**Conclusion**

Foucault’s interpretation of Bentham’s Panopticon gave a first hand account of how the structure of a prison can impact its inmates’ consciousness. With the inability to see other inmates or the watch-guard in the tower, the prisoner becomes paranoid and secluded. This translates into a person becoming insecure. The inmates are regulated and disciplined constantly. As a result, the regulation and surveillance experienced within the Panopticon becomes internalized. Not only does the concept of the Panopticon change the way people view themselves within an institution but it also influences their actions outside of it. The Panopticon as a model can be applied to multiple social institutions. However, I chose to use the fashion industry as the premier institution because it showed commonality in its structure to the Panopticon. The disciplinary regime of the fashion industry itself is unverifiable. It is not placed in a tower like the traditional concept of the Panopticon, but its presence is known among its participants. Since the fashion industry does not have a central station that can instill fear and paranoia, it makes the effects and source of power more difficult to pinpoint, which in turn makes it harder to break free from. Moreover, the fashion industry does not have one watch-guard, but several that allow for groups of people to fall under its panoptic gaze quicker, for longer periods at a time.

The trender is an inmate of the fashion industry. As a result, the trender has internalized its ideology. The fashion industry has conditioned its participants to purchase and engage with trends to a point where they are unable to function without them. The trender, universally, refers to anyone involved in the fashion industry that
has fallen into a state where they find themselves purchasing an item because it was either a standard set by the fashion industry or because it was popular at some point. Everyone has experienced a moment of trending and the purpose of Part 1 was to explore how a person enters a state of trending. The case of the trender speaks to a person who has been an inmate of fashion for many years. Nevertheless, whether it is a day or ten years, the industry’s panoptic gaze can affect anyone consciously and unconsciously. The fashion industry’s panoptic gaze goes beyond trending in the form of clothing. It also pertains to people who find them selves wanting to fit other social standards dealing with weight, height, skin complexion, hair textures, etc.

Fashion as an umbrella topic refers to many different categories. It was important to focus primarily on the clothing industry for a general discussion on its effects on particular people who purchase and wear clothing. Magazines, celebrities, and the media influence trends and the sale of clothing in the fashion industry. Simmel saw participation in fashion as a sign of imitation and urge for social adaptation. The pressure to fit into fashion’s society is what perpetuates the trender’s frustration herself and her clothing. To follow trends, be thin, and have straight hair are common standards of the fashion industry. These ideologies are advertised daily and people are reminded of them daily. It is this reminder that is internalized in the mind of the trender. The trender wants to be accepted and wants to comply with their standards not because they were forced on her, but because they have become her standards. This pressure creates a negative experience with clothing for the trender. Because the fashion industry’s standards are not exactly hers, she occasionally has moments of “whoa, what am I doing? Why am I wearing this? Why do I always beat myself up?”
These moments are what bring about change in the trender. She is aware that she wants to be a part of fashion as an institution and social group, but she also wants to establish a positive and more meaningful relationship in that group. My suggestion is to become the aspiring self-styler.

When a person wants to find inner peace and become more aware of their body and mind they may take up yoga or practice mediation. When a trender wants to develop an identity that goes beyond trending and creates more room for creativity and expression, she takes up self-styling. Self-styling is an awareness of one’s actions and inspirations. To aspire to self-style is to begin to re-structure and re-shape your social identity and relationship with clothing. Of course, there may be other ways of developing or expressing an identity, but I choose to use clothing as a medium because the trender’s involvement in fashion comes from an interest in clothing. It makes the most sense to use clothing as a key factor in the aspiring self-styler's new social identity. The re-association of clothing is what drives the trender to want to resist the fashion industry.

Chapter 5 gave a detailed account of the type of emotions a trender may encounter on a trip to a clothing store. Outlined in Michelle’s story, she did not like herself as a person. She felt she needed to fit a social standard within the fashion industry and as a result, became depressed. The pressure and negativity got to Michelle and helped her find her trigger. Michelle is the classic trender, and she became the aspiring self-styler. One cannot aspire to self-style without having experienced the industries panoptic gaze. How does the trender turned aspiring self-styler embark on a journey towards self-styling? She had to go through a series of stages that help her accept her
place in society as well as accept the role the industry play in it. Through her acceptance, she may want to move past the trender or oppose it, thus entering a stage of resistance. She resists as a way to eliminate the urge to trend or imitate. She is not resisting the industry or fashion, but her habitual role in it as a former trender. She resists by questioning her experiences within fashion. She goes over her thought patterns as well as the moment where she felt defeated. During this stage, there is a possibility of the trender wanting to not only eliminate trending, but also disconnect herself from fashion all together, adapting the “anti” mentality. However, Michelle is not that kind of trender. She wants to continue to be a part of fashion and as a result, participates in passive resistance as a way to maintain her social capital in the industry while still wanting to establish a better relationship between herself and her clothing.

It is the goal of resistance to cleanse the mind of oppressive beliefs, but as stated in chapter 5 this can be extremely difficult and in some cases unachievable because you cannot cleanse yourself from all oppressive beliefs. Once the trender experiences her trigger and decides she wants to move beyond the trender, she will continue to revisit her previous inmate mentality as a way to become aware of her actions and emotions. Resistance is an important stage for the trender because resistance produces curiosity and in turn produces creativity as shown through Tom Leddy’s article on “Dewey’s Aesthetics.” To be creative goes against imitation and thus is counter to the trender. Re-definition allows the aspiring self-styler to give new meaning to her old clothing. It allows her to give them new associations beyond the standards of the industry. Re-definition for the trender means she can be more than just the short curvy girl, the trender, and inmate of fashion. She can start to develop and experiment with new
ideals for herself. Re-definition requires a great sense of self-awareness and knowledge, so this stage is definitely not one that is easy to accomplish. These stages are not linear. At any moment, you can be in the re-definition and then have a moment when you relapse and resort to trending, which would then mean you would have to re-accept your role in society and thus resist again.

The internalization of a new social identity is the stage that every aspiring self-styler wants to reach. It is at the end of this stage where she becomes a complete self-styler, not falling back into previous stages or trending. In reality, this stage is impossible in terms of self-styling because there is no permanent escape from a panoptic gaze. Even if the aspiring self-styler reaches the internalization stage and is able to function within fashion as a complete self-styler, there will always be other social institutions and other forms of power that will effect and influence her actions. Nevertheless, the aspiring self-styler commits herself to this practice and does not give up. Yes, she can slip. There maybe a period where she stops resisting, then one day she may pick it up again. However, once the trender begins to resist there is no way to erase that knowledge. It will be something that will continue to crop up sub-consciously, even if she takes a break from it consciously. While the aspiring self-styler is developing a new social identity, she is also developing a signature or personal style, as seen in Chapter 6.

When one self-styles they feel a sense of control over their social identity. One self-styles as a way to express how they see themselves internally. Those who self-style use their bodies as a blank canvas and style themselves with items and pieces of clothing that they, with no hesitation, like and enjoy as well as see as something that
explains who they are. One who self-styles does not assume that by wearing an orange blouse with wide legs means a person will instantly know who they are. When one aspires to self-style, they aspire to wake up and not engage in degrading and self-criticizing conversations, as the one Michelle had with her self. Through personal style, one has an aesthetic choice to decide what they will wear and how they will wear it. This in turn gives a person more confidence within their own skin and a positive outlook on their place in society. A person develops personal style through a detailed evaluation of one’s interest, moods, likes, and dislikes. When we purchase items, we evaluate our likes, our inspirations, and our moods.

Pattern Making 103: Discovering New Methods

Some other questions that come up following Chapter 6 are questions about expression and more broadly, the difference between acts of expression and an expressive object. Beyond this project, it would be worth exploring more topics in aesthetics that not only talk about the development of expression through art, but also what constitutes something as art. Fashion is an interesting form because it is not studied traditionally in aesthetics as a form of art. Would there be a difference between fashion as an art form and fashion as a form of self-expression? It would be interesting to further expand on this notion of fashion, in terms of design, as an art form. Chapter 3 explored the concept of fashion having a social order that consists of a high and a low class. I would want to explore more, how clothing is categorized as high and low and who has the authority and power to make those decisions.

This speaks to standards and judgments of taste. What constitutes a garment as something tasteful for one group and not another? Judgments of taste typically come
about when groups of qualified people agree on a standard. In fashion, couture houses are considered the highest form of design agreed upon by a committee called the French Federation of Fashion. However, if we removed all fashion committees and couture houses and looked at clothing from two competing retail companies, such as H&M or Forever21, then who would be the authority on their clothing? For the trendor, a lot of emphasis is put into wanting to fit in socially within the fashion industry, but what gives the industry or the watch-guards so much authority. Is it just experience or expertise in the field? If so, does this expertise exclude watch-guards from being victims of the fashion industry themselves?
Appendix

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