From Collective Selection to Individual Style: A Symbolic Transfer in Fashion

从精品的选择到个人的风格：时尚中的象征转换

Håkan Preiholt¹⁾*

Abstract

The paper aims to uncover the reasons why fashion appears in terms of collective selection in a movement towards individual style in the way people dress. Here, fashion is viewed in terms of collective fashion trends and personal style. Thus, it is the clothes, dressing habits, and garments that are observed in the research. The paper shows how the theory of symbolic interactionism can be used as an analytical tool to bring transparency to the movement from collective selection towards individual style in the fashion industry. This theoretical approach, which is connected to social interaction helps avoid the classical research trap of making statements through the study of cause and effect. The analysis is made based on examples of meanings created around the garment through an observation of the process from the initial meaning the person gives to as a symbol in social interaction, to the final stage when it becomes an individual style. There are four such phases that together create the final picture of why fashion is heading towards individual style. All these phases have different sources, and naturally provide different answers to the initial research question in this paper. Once the garment is turned into an individual style and, as customers seek more details in garments, there then occur a collapse of the “total look” towards hyper individuality.

1. The same garment may have different meanings for us depending on social interaction and symbol. When observing the same garments around the globe, they appear to have a common reality but this is not the case as these garments have different meanings. This reality is depicted in earlier studies such as Sapir (1999) that concludes that the main difficulty in understanding fashion and its apparent extravagances is the lack of exact knowledge of the unconscious symbolism of forms, colours, materials, postures and other elements that express a given culture. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that some expressive elements tend to have different symbolic references in different contexts. It is interesting to note that current studies in fashion are in contradiction with such logic.

2. The same garment may have the same meaning depending on social interaction and symbol. When the same garment

has the same meaning, such as a police uniform, it is straightforward in communicating belongings, simply because the garment can be understood in exactly the same way by both parties. Lönnqvist (2008) is outspoken about power games in apparel communication with the assistance of garments. It is a matter of how one dresses and turns oneself out with different versions of clothing - from the warrior's fearsome armour to the sexy and suggestive underwear. Power can be manifested in different ways, and clothing is among its more visible indicators. Clothes can radiate dominance and dignity, but also a sense of ridicule and humiliation thereby destroying their initial purpose of meaning. The question that arises then is, when can those garments become fashion if by definition the latter is a matter of a desire to keep up with times and to express the tastes that are emerging in a changing world?

3. Different garments may have different meanings depending on social interaction and symbol. A communication problem arises when different garments have different meanings in fashion. This problem highlights the structure of fashion design as well as pricing in the world. There is perhaps no other business sector like fashion, in terms of the correlation between a certain design and garments with price. The price criterion cuts across market criteria in the structural segmentation of the fashion industry. According to Saviolo and Testa, (2002) there are five price categories: couture, ready-to-wear, diffusion, bridge, and mass. A garment designed on the upper level in terms of price might differ radically from the design of a garment on the mass production level.

4. Different garments may have the same meaning depending on social interaction and symbol. When different garments have the same meaning in terms of status, income levels, gender, etc. department stores and “shops-in-shop” are frequently used together with branding to introduce these different garments with the same meaning to target groups on the market. Department stores are consequently the appropriate venues created to enable the introduction of these particular garments and deal with the particular situation they engender. Miller (1981) studied such a case in detail, focusing on Le Bon Marché in Paris. The latter refers to a large fashion department store and its place in fashion history. By allowing interactions with the society in which it is situated, and reflecting the changes that occur in that society, the department store becomes the living mirror of that society. The department store thus achieves a communicative role by using the living environment as a legitimizing justification of their very existence. As such, the de-

1) * Corresponding author: Associate Professor, Stockholm University, School of Business, Kräftriket Building 2B, S-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden, Tel.: +46 8 16 15 41, C.P.: +46 73 04 73 837, E-mail: hp@fek.su.se

partment store as a display of fashion and witness of its historical change, typifies symbolic interactionism at work.

This conceptual banter anchored in a symbolic interactionism framework that underlies this study has revealed four significant aspects that arise out of the movement from collective selection towards individual style in fashion:

(1). When the same garment can have different meanings, it can create individualities depending on time, place and the role of the designer.

(2). When the same garment has the same meaning as in the case of uniforms, then it can be used as a manifest for power. In certain circumstances these garments can move from being a symbol of power to become a symbol to communicate fashion indicating changes in the society as whole.

(3). When different garments have different meanings, the price practice becomes a communication tool towards the consumers. The subsequent brand extension habits of fashion firms through stretching, collaborating, etc. confuses consumers who responsively become more individualistic in their choice of garments including mixing brands. This situation sometimes generates a hyper personalized fashion.

(4). Where different garments have the same meanings to the consumers, the place or the store achieves a significant role in the marketing communication of fashion.

Keywords: Fashion, Collective selection, Social interaction, Symbol, Individual style.

摘要

本文的目标是为了揭示为什么时尚在个人穿衣风格中精品选择的作用。在这里时尚被认为是精品风格和个人风格。所以，它是衣服，穿衣习惯，和在研究中出现的衣服。本论文展示了象征交互主义理论可以被用作分析工具来了解精品选择对于个人风格的作用。这个与社会交互的理论方法帮助我们避免传统营销描述的陷阱。此分析基于对围绕服装而创造的方法观察，认真了解从开始在社会交往中服装的象征作用到成为个人风格的过程。时尚引领个人风格的过程一般有四个阶段。所有这些过程都有不同的资源，并为本文的研究问题提供不同的答案。一旦时装成为了个人方式，当顾客寻找更多细节时，就会出现针对于超自我的个人整体形象坍塌。

1. 基于社会交流和象征性，相同的衣服有不同的意义

当对全球的相同时装进行观察会发现一个事实，这个事实不是这些服装有不同的意义。而是在理解时尚时存在一定的困难，对于其研究的过度是因为缺乏对于象征意义的理解，不论是颜色、材料、款式，还是其他要素在不同文化背景下的差异。这种难度的产生给予时尚种不同要素的象征意义差异明显。目前对于时尚的研究很有趣并且在逻辑上有一些冲突。

2. 基于社会交流和象征性，相同的服装可能有相同的意义

当相同的服装有着相同的意义，例如警察制服，它可以直接作为沟通方法，因为对于任何团体他们都可以被很容易理解。

Lönnqvist (2008)描述了一个基于服装沟通的权力游戏。当一个人穿一件衣服后换另一件衣服，从战士的武装护甲到性感的内衣。权利会从不同的方式解释，而衣服则是可以展现出来的。衣服可以展示出地位和尊严，也会带来嘲笑和耻辱感，从而破坏他们最初的目的和意义。可问题是，这些服装何时可以在改变的世界中变成时尚，而不单单是为了满足需求。

3. 基于社会交流和象征性，不同的服装会有不同的意义

当不同的服装有着不同的意义时，沟通的问题就会出现。这个问题强调了时尚设计的结构以及价格。在其他行业中，可能不会出现类似问题，因为设计和价格有着重要的联系。基于 Saviolo and Testa, (2002), 服装可基于价格被分为：高级定制服装，高级成衣，高端，中端，和大众服装。高级服装的设计和大众服装的设计会有巨大差异。

4. 基于社会交流和象征性，不同的服装会有相同的意义

当不同服装有着相同意义是是基于地位，收入，性别等因素。百货大楼和店中店被经常共同使用来介绍服装的品牌具有相同的意义以求定位相同的客户。百货大楼因此成为合适的地点来创造这种效果。Miller (1981) 对这一问题进行细节研究。他研究的对象是法国一家具有历史的百货商店。基于其自身与社会的交流，百货商店成为了社会的缩影。因此，百货商店展示着时尚并见证者历史，定义着象征交互的意义。

本文有四个重要意义：

(1). 当相同的衣服有着不同的意义时，它可以依靠时间、地点和设计师来创造个人。

(2). 当相同的衣服有着相同的意义时，他可以用来展示权利。

(3). 当不同的服装有着不同的意义时，价格就变成了沟通的工具。

(4). 当不同的衣服有着相同的意义时，地点和商店在沟通中起到主要作用。

关键词：时尚，精品选择，社会交流，象征，个人风格

1. Introduction

Fashion choices are usually made consciously, but this may not always be the case. It is reasonable to assume that most people participate in fashion trends about which they know very little, and people sometimes call the fashion that they adopt their individual style. These choices, whether conscious or unconscious, are connected to general interpretations of social changes. Currently, there is a movement from collective thinking about fashion toward personal style. This is particularly evident during fashion weeks and market shows. This situation leads to an obvious question: why does fashion appear to be moving from collective selection toward individual style in dressing habits? This paper examines fashion in terms of both collective dress and personal style. Thus, clothes, dressing norms, and garments are the units of analysis in this research.

2. Background

In the past, fashion was seen as originating from the leading fashion capitals, such as Paris, London, Milan and New York. Currently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify the sources of international fashion, in terms of both its global production and its consumption. A distinctive contemporary feature of fashion is that collective fashions are, to some extent, being replaced by individual choice. In other words, people increasingly mix styles rather than adhering to a single brand that dominates their outfits, as was previously the case. This phenomenon is evident in what Woodward (2009, p. 13) calls “the myth of street style.” Style itself is reduced to phrases such as “mix and match” or “being an individual,” and it is clear that the role of the designer has been dramatically impacted. In the past, designers were closely linked to specific fashion houses for the greater part of their professional careers. Today, their expertise is becoming a specialized asset that can be “transactionalized” between fashion houses. Thus, designers can come from different environments and different social classes, such that they seem to emerge out of nowhere. One consequence of this situation is the popularity of street wear and its resulting subcultures, which are ardently debated in the world of fashion.

Other causes underlying the increasing interest in fashion include a decline in relative clothing prices and an increase in the number of fashion courses offered at Western universities and specialized institutions. Fashion has even become an attractive field for venture capitalists, who increasingly invest in the fashion industry. This situation is further influenced by the growth of social media, as bloggers and Twitter users search for and influence fashion trends and styles on the Internet. The most remarkable example might be Scott Schuman, the creator of the popular fashion blog ‘The Sartorialist’. Schuman is well known for photographing what has been described as real people on the street, who confirm the existence of a current movement from collective fashion toward individual style, spearheaded, in this case, by social media.

It is clear that fashion increasingly affects various groups in the community while simultaneously playing a more significant role in peoples’ lives and constituting an important share of their finances. With this background, this paper studies fashion in terms of collective change linked to individual style choices.

3. Previous Studies on Fashion

In recent years, fashion content has exhibited increasing diversity. Consequently, fashion has become more difficult to identify in terms of its variety and performance. Fashion has been studied from many disciplinary perspectives and approaches, from the logical sciences to the humanities. Historically, fashion has been studied as a trickle-down social phenomenon (Spencer, 1885; Veblen, 1899; Simmel, 1904), with an upper social class that applied seasonal changes to

their dressing habits to take control of the contemporary dressing trends. Another type of research has focused on the structure underlying the development of fashion, as typified in the study by Levi-Strauss (1971) that attempts to identify similarities and unifying elements in the fashion system by comparing two collections side by side. Similarly, the system approach to fashion, popularized by Barthes (1983), primarily identifies different types of garments.

The rise of postmodernism in the mid -1980s radically changed fashion research and design. Baudrillard (1994) argued that in the fashion world, experience is a reflection of reality. This reflection, which is known as the ‘simulacrum’, is turned into value when the customer consumes fashion. Bourdieu (1984) focused on the role of social power and status relationships in fashion. The term of significance in his work is “habitus”, which is an individual pattern of behavior that is learned and that induces an individual to make specific choices that lead to the reproduction of power hierarchies. However, this concept only applies to fashion if people understand the inherent power and significance of what they wear. This is a noteworthy point from the postmodern perspective. Another postmodern approach to fashion suggests that fashion is addressed by discourses (Foucault, 2000). A discourse study is a general term for a number of approaches to the analysis and use of written, spoken or signed language. Fashion is thus interpreted on the basis of the conjunction of people, texts and images that helps to change people’s opinions about the different outfits that ultimately create fashion. The analysis mainly concerns language itself: these studies emphasize how people express themselves and say things. Derrida (1997), another French postmodern philosopher, is known for establishing deconstruction. From this perspective, the traditional system that was ideal for interpreting clothing has been replaced, to a large extent, by Japanese avant-garde and postmodern deconstruction designs, represented by fashion designers such as Ann Demeulemeester and Martin Margiela.

Featherstone (2007) emphasizes the concept of specific fashion: the individual’s consciousness about his or her appearance is considered to be the result of constantly measuring against and comparing oneself to idealized images of the body. Thus, the ability to interpret impressions from the outside world has become an important skill for the modern individual, such that fashion exposure becomes essential. Other authors have taken a relatively broad perspective in studying fashion. Kawamura (2007) is among those who have attempted to treat fashion as an academic discipline that is important for research and education. Her theories concern a system of cultural globalization that has replaced the Western ‘costume’ system. The cultural globalization system utilizes the production and consumption of fashion as well as institutions and individuals. This approach is highlighted in the collective dimensions of fashion along with the designer’s role in controlling fashion. In summary, there is currently significant interest in fashion studies and fashion writing that attempts to shed light on the ‘mystery’ of fashion.

4. Theory

The initial question in this study is why fashion appears to move from collective selection toward individual style in dressing habits. To address this issue, this study relies on observations of garments, which are classified into categories depending on the meaning consumers assign to them. The interpretation of these categories is facilitated by the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, as proposed by Blumer (1969). This theoretical approach is justified based on its connection to social interaction in an attempt to avoid the classical research trap of causal statements. Drawing upon a definition of fashion as a desire to remain current and to express the tastes that emerge in a changing world, the study of social roles and interactions through symbolic interactionism contribute to clarifying the notion of fashion.

Symbolic interactionism establishes three basic premises. In the first phase, human beings act toward garments and outfits things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things, which may correspond to desires such as, 'I would like to be in fashion'. In the second phase, the meaning of these things is derived from the social interactions that one has with others and society; for example, "I would like to be like a Lapo Elkann or an Alexa Chung," which are symbols in fashion that currently communicate style. Symbolic communication thus refers to meaningful gestures that are used consciously by an individual and that are essential in communicating a message so that it is perceived similarly by both the sender and receiver. Clothing becomes symbolic and becomes fashion when it refers to something beyond itself, such as when it indicates changes in society and in the environment. In the third and final phase, meaning and symbol become the individual style. This is the result of connotations that are processed in, and modified by, an interpretative process used by a person to address the elements they encounter. "I would like to have a fancy individual style," is a statement that corresponds to this third phase.

5. Analysis and Discussion

This paper examines fashion in terms of collective dress and personal style. The method used is qualitative; a garment has certain qualities of meaning for consumers. Thus, clothes, dressing, and garments are the conceptual units of analysis for this research. This paper uses the theory of symbolic interactionism to bring transparency to the movement from collective selection to individual style in fashion. Theoretically, there is a desire to create an individual style that begins with meaning, moves to social interaction, which creates symbols, emerges as perception and individual style. Thus, four categories, all of which have their source in symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), contribute to explaining why fashion is moving toward individual style.

5.1. The Same Garment May Have Different Meanings Depending on Social Interactions and Symbols.

The same garments appear to have a common reality around the globe, but this is not the case; these garments have different meanings. This reality has been demonstrated in previous studies, such as Sapir (1999), which concluded that the main difficulty in understanding fashion and its apparent extravagances is the lack of exact knowledge of the unconscious symbolism of forms, colors, materials, postures and other elements that express a given culture. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that some expressive elements tend to have different symbolic references in different contexts. It is interesting to note that current studies in fashion are in contradiction to such logic. Thus, the study by Eijkelboom (2009) of photographs of fashion garments reveals stunning similarities among garments in the three cities of Paris, New York and Shanghai. Globalization, combined with the desire of cities to achieve visually spectacular elements, leads to city centers in which the fashion and the people look the same.

The interpretation of these cities as the same simply because they look the same can be modified by symbolic interaction. In this sense, the meaning derived from dressing in a certain way in a certain place on the globe is accomplished through the symbols of social interaction, which ultimately is a matter of individual style. However, when considering the process of interaction over time, one must be careful when interpreting meaning in terms of individual style. Indeed, designs worldwide, including draping, asymmetry, coloring, etc., may have a local-oriented flavor, even if the garments have the same visual design. It is thus reasonable to argue that people extract different meanings due to different languages and symbols and provide their own interpretations of individual style in dressing habits even if they use the same garments. Historically, there have been opportunities to change this situation by changing contexts, as designers often do. For example, it is a well-known fact that Chanel gave women their freedom. Years later, Yves Saint Laurent brought them power. The initial significance of typically male clothes, such as jackets, shorts, tuxedos, and tails, came to symbolize freedom and power when worn by the female gender. This phenomenon is proof of a symbolic transfer from an initial meaning of dressing habits that ultimately results in an individual style, giving power to women through a certain way of dressing. Specific historical examples include Katharine Hepburn, Greta Garbo, and Marlene Dietrich. Today, we have nearly reached the end of this process of symbolic transfer, with the increasing use of unisex styles in garments. The implication is that the same garment can have different meanings depending on time, place and the role of the designer, thus creating individuality.

5.2. The Same Garment May Have The Same Meaning Depending on Social Interactions and Symbols.

When the same garment has the same meaning, such as a police uniform, it is straightforward in communicating belonging because the garment can be understood in exactly the same way by all parties. Lönnqvist (2008) is outspoken about the role of garments in apparel communication through power games, focusing on how one dresses and presents oneself with different versions of clothing, from the warrior's fearsome armor to sexy and suggestive underwear. Power can be manifested in different ways, and clothing is among its more visible indicators. Clothes can indicate dominance and dignity as well as ridicule and humiliation. The following question arises: how can these garments become fashion if, by definition, the latter is a matter of a desire to keep up with times and to express emerging tastes in a changing world? The answer can be found by observing garments over a period of timeperiod. As ideas change constantly over time, a recurrent redesign of the garment gives rise to symbol-creating fashion. This phenomenon is epitomized by the Burberry trench coat, which changed from a military uniform used by Humphrey Bogart's expatriate character in the legendary 1942 movie *Casablanca* to a unisex fashion and, finally, to its current status as art. Duffle coats and cardigans are other well-known examples. The initial meaning is created by celebrities who present an individual style to the collective, which then places the garment within a context of individual interpretation and expression. This process ultimately gives the consumer the choice, through personal interpretation, of an individual style.

5.3. Different Garments May Have Different Meanings Depending on Social Interactions and Symbols.

A communication problem arises when different garments have different meanings in fashion. This problem highlights the structure of fashion design and pricing. There is perhaps no business sector like fashion in terms of the correlation between a certain design or garment and price. The price criterion cuts across market criteria in the structural segmentation of the fashion industry. According to Saviolo and Testa (2002), there are five price categories: couture, ready-to-wear, diffusion, bridge, and mass. A garment designed at the upper level in terms of price might differ radically from the design of a garment on the mass production level.

How is the fashion industry able to maintain these segments for certain target groups in terms of fashion and price? From the symbolic interactionism approach, it is clear that each degree of fashion, from couture to mass production, has its own meaning and acts as a symbol that creates style and results in a perception about the garment from the individual customer's

perspective. Based on the applied theory, price becomes the best point of reference for meaning, thus providing the language to communicate thoughts about the garment. To some extent, this explains how price and segmentation are related in the fashion industry. However, the function of the brand, as a way to provide meaning to customers, is jeopardized by the demand economy itself and the behavior of actors in the fashion industry. For instance, there is frequent use of brand extension, allowing a brand to cover more than one price level. An example of this is Armani, where the same brand covers several target groups through sub-brands, including Giorgio Armani, Armani Collezioni, Emporio Armani, AJ Armani Jeans and A/X Armani Exchange. The same company also uses what is called brand stretching, which is the act of 'hunting' into other product fields using the same fashion brand. Thus, Armani Casa sells furniture instead of clothes. Many other firms and fashion retailers are following this concept of market extension. In this way, large fashion firms are increasingly presenting a split image of brands to enhance their public relations capacity, which is then expected to produce hype sales and new target groups. Another example is H & M, the Swedish clothing company known for its fashion clothing offers for women, men, teenagers and children. H & M has approximately 2,000 stores in 37 different countries and employs approximately 76,000 people. It also frequently creates publicity through short-period brand alliances, including successful collaborations with Karl Lagerfeld (2004), Stella McCartney (2005), Viktor & Rolf (2006), Madonna, Roberto Cavalli, Kylie Minogue (2007), Comme des Garçons, Matthew Williamson (2008), Jimmy Choo, Sonja Rykel (2009), and Lanvin (2010). However, H&M was not the first to make "frienemies" in the marketplace to extend a brand. In the mid-1990s, Debenhams launched "designers at Debenhams" with the English fashion designer Jasper Conran. Marks and Spencer was also an early adopter of brand extension, with a lingerie collaboration with the Australian designer Collette Dinnigan in 2001. Today, anyone with fame, including designers, artists, actors, and musicians, can build a relationship with a fashion brand and create good marketing opportunities for both parties that would otherwise be extremely costly.

This trend of cooperation among brands across (price) borders radically alters the relationship between producer and consumers. In line with the theory used in this study, consumers' ability to create meaning in their clothing becomes more intricate when the fashion houses mix brands and fashion levels. In addition to the demand economy of escalating choices and the schizophrenic brand market, there is a risk that consumers will become increasingly individualistic in their choices, mixing garments to create hyper-personalized fashion. Ian Phau and Lo Chang-Chin (2004) found that innovators had a unique self-image: they were excitable, indulgent, contemporary, liberal and colorful. In a more recent study, Bjurström and Hedemark (2010) found that innovators in fashion utilize the most widely used sources of information, such as friends, unique people, and social media, to keep up with

fashion. Additionally, fashion innovators do not copy a person's entire outfit; instead, the individual details of a style are of interest. Thus, there are increasing indications of a collapse of the "total look" (where one brand covers the whole outfit) in fashion. The "total look" is connected by one brand and one stable and solid price, and this combination projects a picture of the degree and quality of fashion. The tendency to embrace a variety of price structures in the marketing of garments confuses customers about their position and identity within their specific price level, thus accelerating the collapse of the "total look." The receding role of the "total look" as the guideline for the collective selection of garments highlights the increasing importance of the individual selection of garments. Occasionally, an implicit mixing of garments within this individual selection creates hyper-personalized fashion.

5.4. Different Garments May Have The Same Meaning Depending on Social Interactions and Symbols.

When different garments have the same meaning in terms of status, income levels, gender, and other aspects, department stores and "shops-in-shop" are frequently used in addition to branding to introduce these garments to target groups in the market. Department stores are appropriate venues for the introduction of these garments, and they manage the situations engendered by this introduction. Miller (1981) studied such a case in detail, focusing on Le Bon Marché in Paris, a large fashion department store, and its place in fashion history. By interacting with the society in which it is situated and reflecting the changes that occur in that society, the department store becomes a living mirror of society. The department store thus achieves a communicative role by using the living environment as a legitimizing justification of its very existence. As such, the department store, as a display of fashion and witness to its historical change, typifies symbolic interactionism. In short, the common social image of Le Bon Marché since 1852 has created a sense of change in clothing and has created a lifestyle and meeting place for fashion and consumption. Initially, department stores played an important role as gathering places for middle-class women, where they could move about without a male relative as a "chaperone". Today, this continues to be an important aspect of department stores, and the meaning of this role is derived from the social interaction with others in the department store. Consequently, the community spirit of fashion in individual choice and lifestyle is apparent in items from such a fashion house compared to the mass-produced garments on the market.

Department stores have become venues for fashion shows, fashion weeks and happenings. This process has given meaning to fashion as a result of the ongoing social interactions that occur in such a commercialized context. The more that consumers become involved in fashion interactions with department stores, where different garments have the same meaning,

the more likely these consumers will be to arrive at what is known as "personal styling." From this point of view, the department store, through its marketing communication of fashion, has a central role in the process of turning collective fashion into personal styling.

6. Conclusions

This conceptual project, anchored in a symbolic interactionism framework, has revealed four significant aspects of the movement from collective selection toward individual style in fashion.

1. When the same garment can have different meanings, it can contribute to individuality depending on time, place and the role of the designer.

2. When the same garment has the same meaning, as in the case of uniforms, it can be used as a symbol of power. In certain circumstances, these garments can change from being a symbol of power to a symbol of fashion, reflecting changes in the society as a whole.

3. When different garments have different meanings, the price practice becomes a tool for communicating with consumers. The subsequent brand extension habits of fashion firms, such as stretching or collaborating, confuse consumers. In response, these consumers become more individualistic in their choice of garments, including mixing brands. This situation sometimes generates hyper-personalized fashion.

4. When different garments have the same meanings to consumers, the store plays a significant role in the marketing communication of fashion.

7. Further Research

This study is conceptual in nature and has attempted to illuminate the role of interpretation and context in the movement from collective selection to individual style. The conclusions highlight the need for further research, which would necessarily be empirical in nature. Thus, one aspect of future research would be the entrance of new technologies as communication tools for fashion and their impacts on the interpretation of symbols and images by consumers. Remarkably, in the world of on-line shopping, the store becomes increasingly important for its ability to communicate meaning in terms of individuality.

Another route for future research would be the study of sectors and trades in the fashion domain, where the focus is on the business of beauty and its impact on individual styles. Furthermore, this study suggests the possibility of integrating a variety of methodological approaches and critical dialogues.

Thus, the need to contribute to the theoretical body of fashion studies in general suggests qualitative inquiries that require strong anchoring in methods such as grounded theory.

(Received: December 26, 2011)

(Revised: February 14, 2012)

(Accepted: February 21, 2012)

References

- Barthes, R. (1983). *The fashion system*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press.
- Blumer, H. (1986[1969]). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bjurström S., & Hedmark M. (2010). *Fashion Innovativeness and information seeking*, Master Thesis, Stockholm University, School of Business.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. [New ed.] London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. (1997). *Deconstruction in a nutshell: A conversation with Jacques Derrida*. New York: Fordham Un.
- Eijkelboom, H. (2009). *Paris, New York, Shanghai: En bok om världens före detta, nuvarande och (kanske) framtida huvudstad*. Stockholm: Max Ström.
- Featherstone, M. (2007). *Consumer culture and postmodernism*. 2nd ed. London: SAGE.
- Foucault, M. (2000). *Essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. Vol. 2, Aesthetics, method and epistemology. London: Penguin.
- Kawamura, Y. (2007). *Fashion-ology: An introduction to fashion studies*. Oxford.
- Lévi, S.C. (1971). *Det vilda tänkandet*. Stockholm: Bonnier.
- Lönnqvist, B. (2008). *Maktspel i kläder: om det osynligas kulturella anatomi*. [Helsingfors]: Schildt.
- Miller, M.B. (1981). *The bon marché: Bourgeois culture and the department store, 1869-1920*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U.P.
- Phau, I., & Lo, C.C. (2004) Profiling fashion innovators: A study of self-concept, impulse buying and Internet purchase intent, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, Vol. 8 Iss: 4, pp.399 – 411.
- Sapir, E. (1999). *The collected works of Edward Sapir*. 3, Culture. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Saviolo, S., & Testa, S. (2002). *Strategic management in the fashion companies*. Milano: ETAS.
- Simmel, G. (1904). Fashion, *International Quarterly* 10.
- Spencer, H. (1885). *The principles of sociology*. Vol. 1. 3., rev. and enlarged ed. London.
- Veblen, T. (1899). *The theory of the leisure class: An economic study in the evolution of institutions*. New York.
- Woodward, S. (2009). The myth of street style, Fashion theory: *The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Vol. 13 Issue: Number 1 pp 83-102, 20 p; (AN 18027529).