

**The Revolving Door of Fashion: Pace, Trend and Forecasting**

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## **The Revolving Door of Fashion: Pace, Trend and Forecasting**

### **Capstone/ Research Topic and Goals:**

The cyclical nature of fashion is one that I am exploring further through both creative and research-based analysis. Using a metaphor to illustrate my topic, I chose to represent this idea of continuous change and pace through a revolving door. These are entrances and exits into building that control movement, capacity, and speed.

What are the factors that contribute to this phenomenon of ever-changing styles? How does this process affect people (individually vs. the masses)? As a society with ever-advancing technology and demands how does our now global approach to fashion affect trends and forecasting?

I aspire to work in the fashion industry in a field where prediction is a necessity, either forecasting, or in a magazine where you would always be producing months in advance. By exploring this metaphor as it relates to fashion and its cycle I aim to define, explore, and pinpoint several reoccurring trends to use as specific examples of repetition and re-interpretation.

Hethorn, Janet, and Connie Ulasewicz. *Sustainable Fashion Why Now?*. New York: Fairchild Books, 2008.

Considering different trend options to delve into for my research I wondered why not sustainable fashion? 'Eco-chic' is a hot topic in the fashion world and obviously influenced by external factors. Sustainable in this context refers to three main areas; people processes, and the environment, all of these are discussed in further detail. With the addition of many contributors we see the varied points of view on why, how and what the trend reflects. Its development and how with the change in society, economy and politics, fashion changes to rebel or conform. Popular culture is an important factor – slap a pretty, famous face on an ad campaign for a cause (such as this) and in turn you get more attention from media and therefore the consumer.

McKelvey, Kathryn, and Janine Munslow. *Fashion Forecasting*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

This text is a history of when and why forecasting became a necessity to the Western world of fashion. Though virtual fashion resources have become a norm the world of fashion forecasting these authors still maintain the importance of the tactile when predicting and interpreting for their stylebooks. Branding and its role

in fashion, trend, and forecasting is also discussed, the publicity and media attention, which is formed by the branding machine of a company, is also another factor affecting what trends become widespread. This and other aspects of consumer behaviour are discussed, with the end goal of harnessing this knowledge into predicting future trends, which is ultimately my goal.

This book also highlights certain trend forecasting companies such as WGSN. Where and how these groups accumulate information, how they display and promote their findings to others with a need. Also another important figure in the fashion world, and profiled in this text is the street style photographer who documents the everyday dress of the population. This is a great book that simply and concisely divulges the secrets of a fashionable life for the future.

Watson, Linda. *20<sup>th</sup> Century Fashion: 100 years of style by decade and designer*. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2003.

Watson immediately emphasized the importance of dressing and therefore style, likening it to a bodily function. Introduces certain Vogue designers and pinpoints their impact on fashion. Sees and indicates the transition from the designer being the ultimate tastemaker and decision taker. Designers are continuously thinking working and living in their own interpretation of what the future is.

Bombarded by television, Internet, and media the woman of the new millennium is more varied in dress, harder to peg down than the previous. Prediction and forecasting are paramount in the fashion industry, but we must learn from the past to understand the transitional nature of fashion and the factors which effect change. Divided into decades we see the important images of fashionable dress, Vogue covers and descriptions of the ideal female form and desired appearances of the time.

English, Bonnie. *A Cultural History of Fashion in the Twentieth Century: From the Catwalk to the Sidewalk*. Oxford, UK: Berg, 2007.

This source is relevant to my topic in that it helps set up a timeline on which to place trends, fads and important designers of the western world. The author also indicates the importance of social happenings on the impact of trend and dress. Beginning with Parisian couture and its tendency for copying or duplicating gowns for other price points or 'classes' we see how the latest style is desired by all. Copied styles caused a need for new cuts and fabrics and techniques to be used, this cycle of reproduction ultimately led to the demise of the couture business as it was. English writes about the importance of understanding the past and its cultural context (she specifically relates fashion to art and its movements) before predicting future outcomes or styles, stating in fashion timing is everything.

The Global nature of the fashion industry is reflected through the widespread use of cultural dress as an inspiration for elsewhere in the world. This type of inspiration is greatly facilitated by developing technologies that increase virtual exploration and physical travel.

Lindroth, Linda and Deborah Newell Tornello. *Virtual Vintage*. New York: Random House, 2002. 75-134.

The aspirational nature of fashion is touched upon in the introduction to this book, where we see the author as a daughter with the goal of discovering the inner workings of her fashionable mother's closet. From this jumping off point the book branches out into different avenues about buying and selling vintage online. Taking this relatively new technology and using it to reach a multitude of people, taking consumer purchasing patterns and manipulating your presentation to best suit this medium. This book also identifies the vast audience that could ultimately be captured by this phenomenon, a how to for both buyers and sellers.

This particular text interests me for my topic as a resource for the resurgence of vintage clothing as a popular option the wardrobe of the masses. Also it speaks about technology's affect on trends and ultimately fashion as a commodity.

Tinkler, Penny and Cheryl Krasnick Warsh. "Feminine Modernity in Interwar Britain and North America." *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 20 No. 3 (2008): 219-223. Web. 8 Nov. 2009.

During a time of great social change between World War I and II fashion also changed, especially women's dress, which we see analyzed in this article. Cycles and trends are created in the goal of striving for a modern look. This phenomenon is often documented in print media such as magazines. This medium is heavily referenced in this articles particularly *Vogue*. The ideas of always searching for the 'new' is represented in this era by cars, corsets, and cigarettes. These were the images used in advertising that conveyed modernity and ultimately fashion as a commodity. This article is an interesting read into these three symbols and how they reflect society, gender roles and fashions that played out in the Interwar years.

Hall, Dennis. "Delight in Disorder: A reading of Diaphany and Liquefaction in Contemporary Women's Clothing." *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 20 No. 3 (Spring 2001): 65-75. Web. 6 Nov. 2009.

In the latter part of the twentieth century there were some drastic changes, notably in the cultural and social developments of women. These actions forced change and broadened women's horizons, an in turn their clothing choices. This articles looks into how the sexuality of women's dress changed allowing for both very

modest and revealing clothing choices. Hall discusses and argues the idea that in recent history (the 1990's on) women's fashions have evolved from a singular 'it' look to be documented onto a large variety. This argument lends itself to my research in researching the Trickle-up versus Trickle-down theories and also the influence of street style.

Stewart, Jude. "History Repeats Itself." *Print Magazine* Vol. 63 No. 3 (June 2009): 72-19.  
Web. 6 Nov. 2009.

This article begs the question, as many do, how do trends become trendy? This particular article discusses this phenomenon by using the basis of patterns, not only repeating within themselves but over time. Often these recurring patterns are traced back to a public figure (be it a royal or celebrity) who had traveled or experienced some type of other culture (as most of these pattern originated in a certain part of the world). Also touched on is the emotional response to certain patterns and their perceptions within a certain society. An example used would be polka dots. They are interpreted as energetic often seen at joyous events or on fun garments such as hot pants. Giving a quick glance into the evolution reappearing patterns provides another template for interpretation of another type of trend and tracking its pace over time.

Ludot, Didier. *The Little Black Dress Vintage Treasure*. New York: Assouline, 2001.  
Print.

The text explores the tried and true, essential piece of a woman's wardrobe – the little black dress (LBD). It is a good example of fashion that seems to be ever-present and modified only slightly according to the styles of the time (body conscious, minimalist, fashion futuristic). This book establishes vintage as an article from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, then taken and modified to suit the wearer. The item easily adapted from this time frame is the LBD, a staple at any age, price point, time of year, or for any occasion. Ready-to-wear to couture the LBD has been worn by any important figures in fashion, and interpreted by many important designers reflecting the time they were designed. This book contains a visual timeline of the Western, female draped in black by best. This chronological representation through visuals is exactly what I was hoping for to better understand the initial discussion.

Steele, Valerie. *The Black Dress*. New York: Harper Collins, 2007. Print.

Brings the idea to its reader if there were only one option for a garment to own that a black dress would be an appropriate choice. This book also goes through the history of the black dress and its necessity, but it digs more into the reasons why and the varied interpretations of black as a colour and how these connotations translate into a choice of garment, not just a dress. Before the time of photography black was not always celebrated in painting art which displayed clothes if the era, black was seen in the West as a mourning colour and not

appropriate for portraiture. Though now black can be seen everywhere for day, night, casual and fancy dress. This book also discussed the silhouette of the female form created by the black dress and those who made it popular (Royalty to Chanel to Schiaparelli to movie stars like Garbo)

This exploration allowed for many jumping off points from people to places to subcultures who embrace black dresses, it also contains important imagery and quotations from notable designers.

Diane, Tracy and Tom Cassidy. *Colour Forecasting*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Print. 1-155.

This text answers a lot of my questions about colour forecasting such as, what is it and how is it done successfully? What forces influence colour forecasts? The book begins with a short history section to put everything into perspective, followed by some methodologies and tools to be used in forecasting. This text explores social and economic avenues and relays the information in a business sense. This book gives a background in order for the reader to get a basic understanding and explore the world of forecasting from there.