

q. dress well, stand tall, speak clear: clothing and its influence on class and the mind

Written by: Patrick Glavee (1702691)

Lecturer: Julia Burston

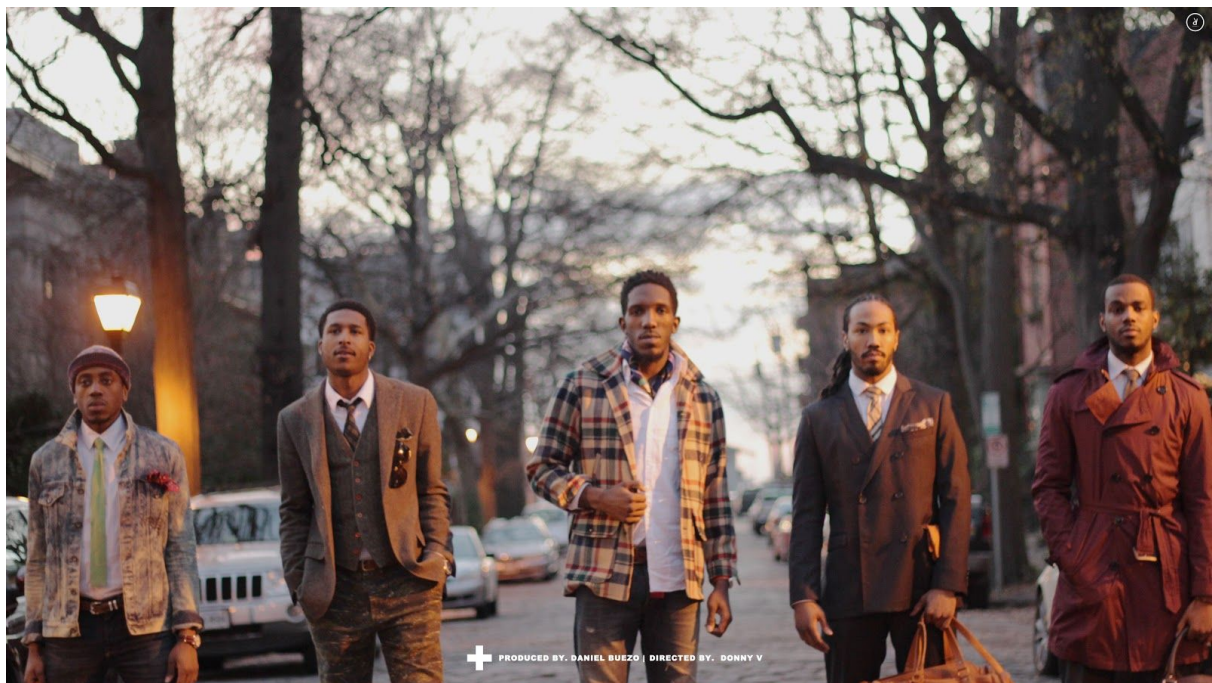
keywords.

mentality

perceivance

class

key images.





key thinkers.

Lucia Ruggerone

Pierre Bourdieu

(still being researched)

short context.

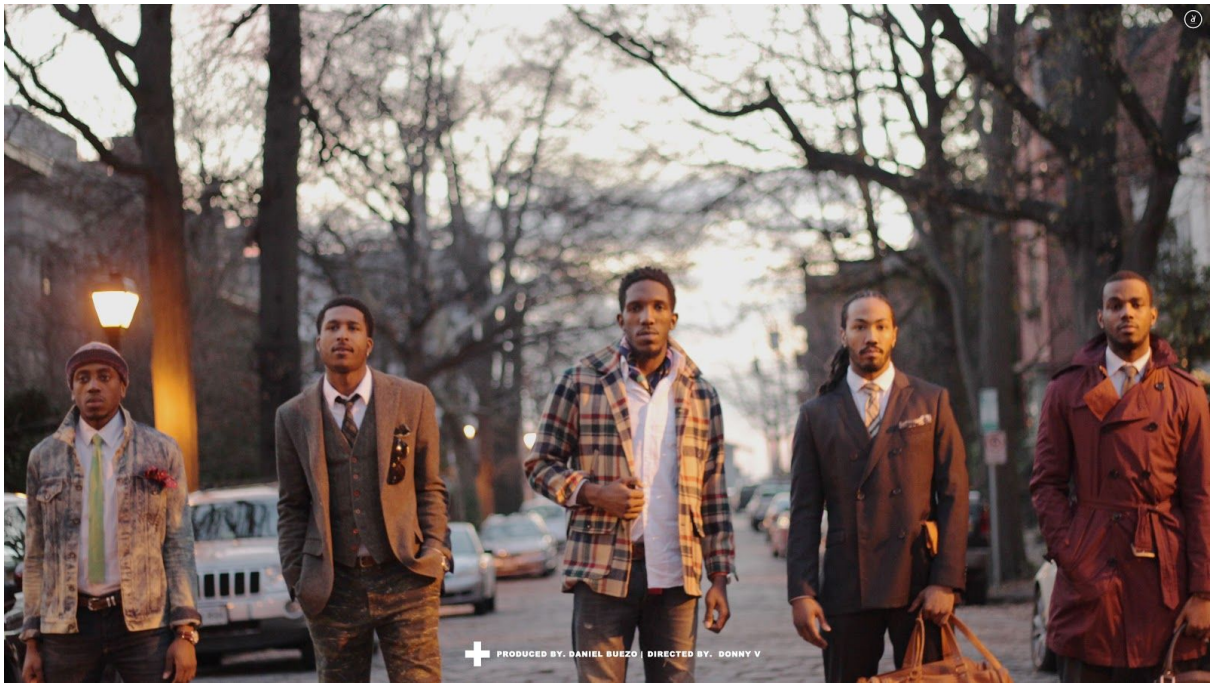
My parents throughout my childhood instilled in me the fundamentals of a gentleman, not necessarily a man who is overly gentle, but a man who is respectable, approachable, well-spoken and confident in his mannerisms. The one thing they constantly refer back to is presentation. Clothing is one of the first things people notice about you, the clothing you wear defines your personality and approachability, often before a person is in range to read your facial expressions, smell you or notice the smaller details. Clothing has a direct effect on a person's personal outlook and mentality. Perception plays a prominent role in an individual's future, perceived class plays an as important role, as it can create new opportunities previously unavailable at a perceived lower social classification.

first keyword. (mentality)

Fashion today has been elevated to the level of a high-culture art form, the spectacle of often bewildering runway shows serves to distinguish fashion as an expressive art, one which makes use of design elements in reference to a somewhat misaligned point, disjointed cause or to highlight a mainstream political angle. Mental health has taken a prominent position in talking points around the world, with many people only just becoming educated of its existence and importance. It relates directly to fashion, "the feelings we experience about and in our clothes when we are dressed" (Lucia R., 2016) are paramount to our behaviour and personal outlook, which then has a direct correlation to public perceivance, that consecutively has an unmediated effect on the wearer's mental health. The keyword "mentality" creates scope for a broad spectrum of topics in relation to clothing, ranging from an individual's mentality towards clothing as a whole, to particular emotions and mental state when a certain calibre of clothing is

worn. I will be discussing in relation to the latter, the change in mental state in accordance with the calibre/style of clothing being worn. It is a fundamental distinguisher of class, along with mannerisms, vocabulary and body language, clothing remains the sole immediate identifier of any one person's class. Regardless of accuracy in its identification, it is undeniable that clothing has an influential role in public perspective. Where does 'mentality' fit into all this? Mentality influenced by the clothing a person wears can often lead to a change in basic mannerisms such as posture and vocabulary, and a change in behaviour, either a sense of superiority or inferiority, with numerous emotional states in between. A person's mental state is often unconsciously projected through their presentation. Today's society is in a constant subconscious battle against subjective entrapment through either subliminal advertising or direct influence from personalities and popular individuals. The culmination of subjective influence on a person's life drives them towards objective truth, only to subconsciously make them yearn the authenticity of their subjective lives. "When the subjective culture or subjective spirit is overcome by objectivity, the individual longs for her authenticity, tries to find a form of life that provides occasion to attain distinction" (Ruggerone, 2016). Fashion is shaped through an unconscious need for an emotional outlet, personal style and subjective opinion of clothing is an often unintentional result of this.

The aforementioned was a quick acknowledgement of the relevance of the calibre of clothing and its effect on the wearer's mentality. Quite obviously, a person's mood is displayed in their presentation, unsurprisingly the scruffier someone looks, is associated with harder times. However, the converse of that is debatable, that certain items/brands and styles of clothing, play a factor tantamount to one's emotion on their style choice.



Preppy fashion, a style reserved for the higher echelon of society; The style is associated with premium education, grammar schools, and elevated vocabulary. Dressing in such a way builds up one's repertoire, painting an elite perspective of them, while opening doors closed prior. This also serves to develop and strengthen one's self-esteem. On the other spectrum, 'everyday' clothing, that of which can be found in general clothing retailers (eg. Zara, Marks & Spencer, Primark, Topshop), provides a large range of styling options, however, because of their ease of accessibility, low price point and generic marketing approach, the value of their clothing is often instantly lessened. This has a direct effect on the wearer's perspective of the garments when worn.

second keyword. (perceivance)

Perception is an amalgamation of information from our senses blended with a series of presumptions and assumptions in order to create subjective reality. Until confirmed perception is nothing but subjective speculation, with underlying foundations based on information from our senses. The 3 stages of perception are selection/stimulation,

organisation and interpretation. Selection/stimulation; when presented with an image of someone, there are numerous minuscule details that can be developed into subjective realities based on how your brain ranks each detail in terms of importance. In reality, your brain cannot process every little detail that may help to paint a more accurate mental picture of the object/person being perceived. Your brain gets around this limitation by selecting stimuli, often done unconsciously, it could be something as fickle as what catches your eye. In terms of fashion, this is where presentation comes into play, the first thing people are likely to see is clothing since it covers the largest area on the body.

Our brains all process the same information differently, based on personal circumstance and upbringing, for instance, seeing someone in high-end clothing could spur either jealousy or respect for their fashion sense. 'Organisation' is the second stage of perception, where our brain collates all the information gathered from our active senses, in order to create an image of the 'to be perceived'. Before your brain finalises that image, it organises the information in order to create what is known as 'precepts'. With the culmination of numerous pieces of information received from our senses, our brain creates multiple precepts.

The final stage is one that is constantly happening, throughout the day, your brain derives a perception from a combination of sometimes singular precepts, it does this by comparing and contrasting each precept against personal experience and subjective opinion. What does this mean in relation to clothing? Your brain can create precepts from, one to all senses, clothing covers the largest area on your body and often is the first thing perceived. Sight can operate at a larger range than smell and touch, while

hearing does not necessarily apply to clothing. Hence the importance of clothing being visually appealing.

However, now that all of this is known, why does the calibre and style of clothing have such a definitive effect on the wearer's mentality and behaviour? Or are there individuals with mannerisms and behavioural habits so set in stone, that regardless of the price tag, they remain the same? I understand that it is all down to how the individual perceives themselves as well as in how high of regard they hold themselves. Clothing itself is designed to evoke a particular feeling and emotion. Designers are often aware of this and use clothing to directly relate with customers/the public. The effect a garment has on the individual is often determined by precepts created by each individual, because of these precepts and personal perception, garments subsequently gain the power to directly influence the wearer's mental health, and mannerisms. The effect clothing has to the wearer's mentality is directly proportional to the strength of the precepts. Value and perception are synonymous when it comes to discussing clothing, the level at which the wearer values a garment will determine its effect on the drasticness of their mental change when said garment is worn. This change is similar to the effects of perception hence the reasoning that value and perception are synonymous.



Everyday clothing. The value of which one perceives an object is entirely subjective and reliant on opinion which is determined by past experiences. These experiences serve to shape the development of new precepts. This is relevant even in a political landscape, comparable to something as drastic as brainwashing, perception has immense power.

third keyword. (class)

“The first question... is, ‘Are classes a scientific construct or do they exist in reality?’ This question is itself a euphemism for the more direct and more directly political question” (Bourdieu P, 1987). Social classification, although seemingly less prominent than the distinct divisions of yore, actually remains quite prominent in today’s day and age. In order to be related to my chosen topic, social classification has to be discussed with reference to perceivance, and human’s innate need for validation. In order to appeal to our materialistic lifestyles of today, we subconsciously strive towards higher social classes, while consciously chasing money to achieve our respective dreams. Class is interwoven into every aspect of our lives, regardless of current attempts to move past social classification, it will be a while until we as humans will be developed enough to do so, I see this to be a limitation of our own mentalities and a result our how we perceive higher social classes which has consequently created an innate motivation to strive for more. “Class, as an analytical construct founded in reality, is nothing other than the set of occupants of the same position in a space” (Bourdieu P, 1987), essentially social classification is worthless and arguably pointless, however, the financial and political gain from class divisions makes the separation important for those who are perceived to be of a higher social classification. Class and perception go hand in hand, today our lifestyles are majorly materialistic, and such a descriptor has become the formula used to quantify the class of a respective individual. Money is a sub-standard medium below the blanket term of materialism, often luxury is defined by excessive pricing and exclusivity, these parameters serve to heighten the feeling of elitism. However, if an object seemingly unattainable belonging to a higher class is obtained, it possesses the power to drastically elevate the perceived value and rating of any particular individual, while potentially influencing their mental state and mannerisms.

Social classification is often divided into 6 sections: upper class, new money, middle class, working class, working poor, poverty level. Each classification has a corresponding perception, one that can quite easily be visually altered by conventional means, namely clothing. Clothing is often an accurate identifier of class, however, it is not the sole surface level identifier. Social standing is often ingrained into an individual resulting in corresponding behaviour and appropriate vocabulary, however, the human race is one that is consistently striving towards improvement, hence the constant quest to attain the unattainable.



Sinclair K, (unknown), Getty Images

Luxury, the most identifiable distinguisher of class. Jackson (2004) defined luxury fashion as “characterized by exclusivity, premium price, image and status, which combine to make them desirable for reasons other than function”. Exclusivity is a decisive factor when it comes to measuring the perceived value of an object, this device is used extensively in the higher spectrum of the fashion world. Class is an intensely

divisive element of today and has led to the development of numerous high-profile disagreements. Modern-day constructs of social classification are visible in virtually every aspect of everyday life, one easily acknowledgeable fact is that the higher one rises in the ranks of social class, the stronger the synonymity with exclusivity becomes. However, the value attributed to exclusivity is entirely subjective and dependent on the perceivance of the individual in question.

contextualise in relation to question.

‘Dress well, stand tall, speak clear: clothing and its influence on class and the mind’. My dissertation aims to analyse: the effects clothing can cause on a person’s mental state, its ability to directly influence perceived class and the mental changes caused by a garment when worn depending on the wearer’s perception of it. Each keyword provides insight into the core topics behind the question as well as providing an interesting angle for discussion outside of the realm of clothing’s influence on the mind. Mentality and the mind’s health is a topic consistently growing in importance, an avenue that isn’t spoken about is the effect of a person’s perspective on their own mental health, it is paramount that, in this new age of curiosity and experimentation, we make strides to redefine ideologies our forefathers set in stone. Perceivance as a keyword creates an interesting topic for discussion, the way we perceive the world, essentially rules our lives, perception is tantamount to the oxygen we breathe and is synonymous with human behaviour. Prior to this paragraph, I contextualised class in relation to my topic.

conclusion

In conclusion, this topic is one I am undoubtedly excited to begin further research and analytical efforts on. I am extremely interested in each sub-topic derived from my question.

research question.

Dress well, stand tall, speak clear: clothing and its influence on class and the mind.

sub-questions.

What influence does clothing have on class?

What influence does clothing have on the mind?

bibliography.

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