**Introduction**

Each day is an occasion to reinvent ourselves.

–Ralph Lauren

I believe fashion to be an integral part of identity. The way an individual presents themselves is a visual representation of a personality shaped by years’ worth of experiences. Likewise, writing is a culmination of every valuable skill learned in school and molded by personal interactions. My English 131 portfolio is my wardrobe; the summation of my progress throughout the past eleven weeks. Every rhetorical device is a new pair of denim, every revision technique is a fresh pair of sneakers. As a first year UW student studying biochemistry, English is a fundamental class for my academic career. My hopes of becoming a doctor or researcher carry numerous opportunities to showcase my writing skills: graduate school essays, research papers, and lab reports. Therefore, learning effective writing skills and developing an eye for rhetoric throughout everyday life is vital to success. I am grateful for everything this class taught me, and I know the skills I acquired will aid me for the rest of my life.

This portfolio showcases my proudest work throughout the quarter and demonstrates my ability to incorporate the course outcomes into the writing process.

Outcome 1 asks the writer to analyze their intended audience and understand how their message will be interpreted. By manipulating writing style and employing appropriate rhetorical devices, an argument can be strengthened, and the message will be conveyed more effectively. I used “Short Assignment 4” because as a genre translation, understanding the difference between multiple audiences allows me to manipulate the message in each writing.

Outcome 2 is about using complex information to generate inquiry and postulate a claim. “Short Assignment 5,” an annotated bibliography, is a great example of my ability to research and find sources relevant to my claim. In each annotation, I reflect on the context of each source, identify bias, and describe how it aided me in my final product. The citations also demonstrate my ability to follow formatting rules as defined by MLA.

Outcome 3 involves generating persuasive, inquiry-driven arguments. Incorporating multiple sources and using them in conversation with each other is essential to formulating a strong argument. “Major Paper 2” uses multiple sources to justify why consumers spend so much money on clothing.

Outcome 4 is the final step in the writing process, revision. Opening up to the possibility that sections of your paper are irrelevant is challenging and time-consuming, which makes it often overlooked. However, “Short Assignment 1” demonstrates my ability to identify mistakes and incorporate feedback that results in a better product.

This curated medley of essays includes personal reflections, research papers, and annotated bibliographies. As you read through the portfolio, you will notice elements from each outcome appear in my writing. In the last couple months, I have honed many old writing skills and learned a number of new ones. I am excited to use my knowledge of these outcomes in future classes and opportunities!

**Outcome 1 "Desert"**

Top of Form

*I'll say things that are serious and put them in a joke form so people can enjoy them. We laugh to keep from crying.*

–Kanye West

Bottom of Form

The person or group you write to is important because it determines the content that will appear in your writing. **Outcome 1 is about recognizing the substance of your audience and consciously making decisions about what information to include, how to arrange the information, and what supporting details are necessary for the reader to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject at hand. Composing for a range of audiences involves:**

* **Understanding the context of the rhetorical situation and identifying which elements are most important for the audience and for the composition**
* **Tailoring different aspects (including, but not limited to: genre, content, conventions, style, language, organization, appeals, media, timing, and design) to maximize the effect of the composition on the audience**
* **Justifying the rationale for compositional choices**

Outcome 1 asks the reader to manipulate and then justify compositional choices tailored to a certain audience. This is important because different audiences require different rhetorical choices. An appeal to a professional, for example, will differ in language and syntax from an appeal to a friend. Since style greatly impacts the way a piece of writing is perceived, recognizing the audience and planning accordingly is of utmost importance. Moreover, establishing a specific purpose for a writing style is advantageous as it allows the writer (and in some cases, the reader) to assess the effectiveness of the piece based on how successful the text is in achieving the purpose for that audience.

To supplement Outcome 1, I chose to include my “Short Assignment 4: Genre Translation.” The goal of this piece is to choose an advertisement and compose two letters conveying the same message to different audiences. The ad I selected is a picture of a Mercedes transport truck hauling BMW sedans with the caption, “Even a Mercedes can bring driving pleasure.” I enjoy this not only because of the context (a witty rivalry between two great German automakers), but also the visual rhetorical devices within the ad. For example, the BMW sedans are painted in vibrant colors, while the truck is a lackluster shade of black. I imagine BMW owners gain a sense of pride seeing their beautiful automobiles transported by a “plebian” Mercedes transport truck.

The first letter is sent to my auto-enthusiast friend, Petar, in which I describe an imaginary visit to our local BMW dealership following the announcement of the new lineup. Through jovial language and brief syntax, I describe my enthusiasm for a particular model, the BMW M3. To maximize the effectiveness of my writing, I begin by evaluating the audience, Petar. Like me, he finds great pleasure in driving and is fascinated by German engineering. His knowledge of automobiles is fairly extensive, so I don’t waste time explaining why the changes to the lineup are significant. I already know he understands why “the engine produces an incredible 333 hp with 262 lb/ft of torque” is important. With the details I provide, I appeal to his sense of materialistically-influenced joy when I explain the thrill of driving the M3. I also employ colloquial language throughout the letter with phrases such as “from a dig” and “the guy.” In fact, the first paragraph is largely conversational. I mention “It’s been a while since we last talked” and asked about his current car, as if we are having a face-to-face conversation following a hiatus. The tone and manner in which I write reflects the way we talk in real life, and thus I feel comfortable writing to him the same way.

My second letter is addressed to the CFO of ReachNow, a local carsharing company. By drawing attention to the BMW 3 and 5 series’ array of features, I hope to convince him to adopt the vehicles for use in Seattle. Contrary to my previous letter, which is an informal piece, this writing is intended for a professional audience. Since the CFO is an important figure at a large company, my job as an advertiser is to form a professional relationship with the him before introducing my product. I acknowledge the CFO likely has other responsibilities to tend to, so my letter must be concise. I begin by commending the company, noting that the concept “is a convenient and intuitive idea,” and I suggest “an idea to improve your blooming business.” Within the first paragraph, I already praise the CFO’s work and introduce my goal. The rest of the letter employs a consistently formal, but upbeat tone. Word choice such as “intuitive” and “proposition” reinforce the formal tone that matches the atmosphere of the exchange. Most of the syntax is informational and elongated as to include as much information possible about the new models. In the sentence, “The smooth suspension makes sure your customers never feel the harsh conditions of I5, and the beefy V8 makes sure there will always be enough power to get up to speed,” I not only praise the automobile’s suspension, but also its powerful engine. By recognizing the audience and molding my writing to fit the CFO’s expectations, I am able to convey my message in a concise but effective manner

“Short Assignment 4” was far from perfect at the first submission. After reading comments on the paper, I realize I made the mistake of writing from the advertiser’s point of view in both letter. I revised the first letter and assumed the role of Petar’s friend, not a salesman trying to sell a car. Paying attention to Outcome 1 and recognizing the audience helped me write a more effective letter for the first recipient.

## Outcome 2 "Earth"

Top of Form

*Don’t be into trends. Don’t make fashion own you, but you decide what you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way you live.*

–Gianni Versace

Bottom of Form

If a writer is already an expert on a topic, why waste time gathering more information? Personal experience provides a vast source of anecdotes and insights about a topic, but an individual’s opinion holds far less weight than a fact supported by evidence. **Outcome 2 asks the reader to generate inquiry and postulate a claim using complex information. Gathering evidence involves:**

* **Analyzing and categorizing a variety of texts and understanding the context of each source**
* **Crafting a research question and formulating a claim that can be argued**
* **Gathering and balancing primary and secondary resources that are appropriate for the writing goals, audience, genre, and context.**
* **Citing appropriately**

Outcome 2 is vital when conducting an inquiry, research, or study. Relying on opinions and expertise alone does not provide enough substance to carry a writer through their research paper. Therefore, seeking out information pertaining to the claim is important for a couple reasons. First, research allows the writer to gain a comprehensive interpretation of the subject. Finding primary and secondary sources can introduce new viewpoints that the author has not previously considered, and by refuting opposing claims, the author actually strengthens their argument. Second, instead of relying on generalizations or common sense, utilizing factual information boosts credibility with the audience. The reader is far more likely to accept a claim backed by evidence and supported by experts than one based on personal experiences alone.

I demonstrate my ability to work strategically with complex information in “Short Assignment 5: Annotated Bibliography.” As a prerequisite for Major Paper 2 (in which we develop a research question relating to identity and support our claim), this assignment asks the writer to compile a list of sources and analyze their role in writing the paper. My research question asks what compels young adults to spend so much money on apparel. The topic appeals to me because I believe fashion is an important part of identity, hence all the time and money I spend obsessing over clothing brands. I reflect on my familiarity with the topic and realize that celebrities significantly influence the way I dress, so I chose to analyze the effects of Kanye West’s emergence into the world of fashion.

I begin my research at the Suzzallo library, where I discover the most significant source for my essay, “Enclothed Cognition.” This study published in the “Journal of Experimental Social Psychology” describes the research of Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky on the systematic influence clothes have on the wearer’s psychological and emotional processes. Adam and Galinsky’s research strives to understand the impact clothes have on the wearer, so their purpose parallels my research question. I am able to use the study’s experimental data to quantitatively support my claim that the driving force for consumers bifurcates into two motives: the symbolic meaning of the clothes as well as the physical experience of wearing them. After reading this source and understanding the results of the study, I aim to relate Kanye West’s influence on fashion to the way consumers perceive themselves.

Perusing the internet in search of Kanye’s involvement with fashion led me to a journal article published by Jon Caramanica in “The New York Times.” Aptly named “The Agony and Ecstasy of Kanye West,” this article follows the rap superstar’s expansion into the unfamiliar world of fashion. In my annotated bibliography, I note how Caramanica’s eloquent writing and use of quotes help me understand “how celebrities can permeate the fashion world and the struggles they deal with on the way.” While the source was written from an outside perspective, criticism from fashion designers and journalists, as well as quotes and dialogue from Kanye, gave me an idea of both sides of the story.

After reading Caramanica’s article, I realize I lacked a primary source relating Kanye West to the world of high fashion. The track “Facts” in Kanye’s most recent album himself bridged the gap. I didn’t consider using media for my essay until I listened to the song several times and analyzed the lyrics. Lines such as “Now we hottest in the streets, it ain’t no discussion” and “Yeezy, Yeezy, Yeezy, they line up for days” described the popularity of the Yeezy fashion line from Kanye’s point of view. I was able to it as a primary source, and it was fun learning to cite a song in MLA format.

In my revision, I tweaked my annotations to ensure they met the MLA standards. Furthermore, paid attention to the feedback and added detail to the first annotation for Adam and Galinsky’s research paper.

In retrospect, this outcome made me more familiar with the concept of intertextuality. I observed the term in different pieces of writing, but never employed it until Major Paper 2. The annotated bibliography helped me analyze the similarities between sources, and I am able to use the source’s arguments to support each other’s. For example, I used Kanye’s success in Caramanica’s article to validate Adam and Galinsky’s claim that clothing influences the wearer’s mental processes. Learning about Outcome 2 has changed my perspective on how to approach researching a topic and has allowed me to advance my strategies in writing persuasive arguments. Citing sources adds to the credibility of any argument.

## Outcome 3 "Distress"

Top of Form

*The detail is as important as the essential is. When it is inadequate, it destroys the whole outfit.*

–Christian Dior

Bottom of Form

While I don’t remember where exactly I read this, the words still ring true. The aim of any argument should not be victory, but progress. As such, **Outcome 3 aims to generate persuasive, inquiry-driven arguments by:**

* **“Considering, incorporating, and responding to different points of view while developing one’s own position**
* **Engaging in analysis ­­– the close scrutiny and examination of evidence, claims, and assumptions – to explore and support a line of inquiry**
* **Understanding and accounting for the stakes and consequences of various arguments for diverse audiences and within ongoing conversations and contexts**
* **Designing/organizing with respect to the demands of the genre, situation, audience, and purpose” (Murray)**

The word “argument” has a nasty connotation, suggesting rude and abrasive behavior. We get into arguments all the time with peers, siblings, and parents. However, the difference between menial disputes about “whose turn it is to use the television” and inquiry-driven argument is the basis. The purpose of argumentative writing is employing evidence and logic to persuade an audience that your claims are valid. Argument isn’t about closure, but rather opening doors to new ideas.

I demonstrate my ability to create an inquiry-driven argument in “Major Paper 2.” This essay, perhaps my favorite writing in this class, responds to my own question: “What compels customers to spend so much time, effort, and money on clothing?” I consider a number of reasons. Perhaps some people buy expensive clothing simply to flaunt wealth. After extensive research, I was unable to find many reliable sources to back up my claim, so I got rid of that. Then, I during the day we spent class time researching, I found an article called “Enclothed Cognition.”  Researchers Adam and Galinsky propose that clothing has a systematically observable effect on the wearer’s psychological processes. This research kick-started the development of ideas, and I came up with an effective structure for my paper.

I examined the research with great scrutiny. After reading through the results of the study, as well as the researchers’ conclusion, I understood that clothing has a physical and mental effect on the wearer. The mental effect was the one I focused on primarily, and I decided to bring in more evidence. Towards the end of my essay, I introduce Kanye West, a celebrity renowned for his influence on the music and fashion industry. His clothing line, retailing at high prices and selling at equally high volumes, supports my claim that customers purchase expensive clothing to associate with celebrities. I use Jon Caramanica’s “The Agony and Ecstasy of Kanye West,” article written from an outside source, as well as a track from Kanye’s album, a primary source. Both of these sources help me justify my claim that celebrities acknowledge the effects of clothing on the wearer and use it to boost sales.

The problem with using Kanye West’s own song, “Facts,” is the inherent bias. Kanye is known for his sense of conceit and egotism, so a song about his success would obviously have lyrics that boost his reputation. I was careful to note that the lines don’t justify his success, but rather convey his perceptionof his success.

I changed Major Paper 2 significantly after receiving and incorporating teacher feedback. The original essay was a jumble of ideas that intended to analyze which of the two factors was most important. According to the feedback, my essay did not come to a conclusion about this, “nor even performed enough analysis to reasonably do so.” I used the revision techniques I learned in Outcome 4 to rework my entire paper. I spent the last several paragraphs articulating how the two factors (physical and psychological effect) worked together in my selected case study (Kanye West’s involvement in the fashion world). My revised essay is more cohesive, and that helps develop the inquiry driven argument by building on warrants and supporting my claim effectively.

Overall, the importance of Outcome 3 stretches beyond writing persuasive papers. Following an inquiry process to collect data and generate claims will inevitably make arguments stronger. Learning to seek information and knowledge is an important goal that will add credibility and defensibility to any argument.

## Outcome 4 "Minimal"

Top of Form

*If you learn from your mistakes, then I’m a f\*\*king genius.*

–Kanye West

Bottom of Form

Revising is an ongoing, even constant process. Every time you press the delete button, every sentence you copy and paste, every time you exchange one word for another or remove a comma, you are revising. However, revision involves more than just making a couple changes here and there. Real revision requires opening up to the possibility that sections of your paper might need to be completely changed. **Outcome 4 promotes composition as a perpetual process. Developing flexible revision strategies consist of:**

* **Considering and employing the necessary revision techniques, such as rebrainstorming, redrafting, rereading, rewriting, rethinking, and editing**
* **Participating in peer review to provide and receive feedback**
* **Making sure the compositional and rhetorical choices are in line with the intended audience, paying close attention to genre and context**

Revision is a difficult process for writers to accept and employ for a couple reasons. First, you may be attached to the writing you have done. Replacing one word might seem tough, let alone two or three paragraphs. Moreover, it can be difficult to understand what exactly is wrong with your paper. Errors can be hard to spot when you spend hours working on the same document. Finally, time constraints don’t allow writers to change their work significantly. As college students, upcoming exams and other classwork often divert our attention from revision that doesn’t seem entirely necessary. But it is necessary. Revising your paper ultimately teaches better writing skills and makes you a more persuasive writer. By improving your reading and analytical skills, you learn to challenge your own ideas, thus deepening and strengthening your argument. Finding weaknesses within your own writing teaches you what to avoid in the future.

Finding the most effective example to demonstrate Outcome 4 was difficult because I spent time revising all my essays, but the most improved has to be “Short Assignment 1: Autobiography.” I chose this assignment because it is the first paper submitted, and therefore has the most room for improvement. The prompt gives the writer an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with language, and I used the essay to explain my experience growing up bilingual. However, I didn’t really achieve that.

*“Who wrote this?”*I asked myself after reading the essay for the first time in ten weeks.

First of all, the structure of the essay is analogous to a tennis ball bouncing erratically around a court. Instead of flowing through an expansion of ideas, the essay shifts from one idea to another without showing any connection between the two. In the second paragraph, I describe how fortunate I am to be bilingual, but several sentences later, I describe how I associate each language with a different identity. “Who wrote this?” I asked myself again. This is the most difficult part of revision because it involves reworking the entire essay. I have to accept that some ideas don’t belong in my paper, and that I must delete entire paragraphs. In my revision, I present a significantly more cohesive blend of ideas. I begin by describing the source of my parents’ authoritative attitude and how it became part of my life. Then, the second paragraph recounts growing up bilingual, placing emphasis on the role of both languages in my life. I associate Romanian with “authority and conformity,” while English “became my escape from the norm abiding ideas and consensus values of my parents.” By juxtaposing the two clashing identities, I convey my internal struggle of growing up bilingual. In the final paragraph, I reflect on a novel I read in fourth grade that changed my outlook. I describe how I came to terms with my identity, in effect concluding my reflection of language. The revision flows much smoother than the original, and the ideas are easy to follow.

Once I revise the organization, the next steps are easy. I shift my focus to the teacher-provided feedback, beginning with articulating the reasons for my positive feelings about growing up bilingual. In the third body paragraph, I expand on my change in mentality. “I learned to celebrate my heritage and started exploring more Romanian culture. Every bite of zacuscă I took, every Mihail Eminescu poem I read, and every story I heard from my parents increased my appreciation for my culture tenfold. As I came with terms with my identity, the role of language changed as well. I no longer associated Romanian with authority and English with nonchalance, but instead learned to integrate elements from each language into the other.” In this revision, I was careful to consider the genre and audience I am writing to. Including specific examples of Romanian culture adds credibility to my writing and demonstrates my pride in my identity.

I also removed the section where I briefly mentioned Anzaldua and tried to make a connection between my experience growing up and the linguistic oppression she dealt with. The idea might have worked if it was connected throughout my entire essay, but introducing her work in the last paragraph seemed unfair to her and to myself.

Comparing the original “Short Assignment 1” to the revised version demonstrates what I learned from Outcome 4. Peer review and feedback was valuable to my revision, but the most important thing was accepting that the essay needs to change.

STUDENT

English 131 R

SA4 Genre Translation Revised

12/7/17

**Part 1**

The advertisement I chose was one published by German auto manufacturer BMW in the early 2000s. A Mercedes Benz-branded transport truck hauls several BMW sedans, and the caption below reads “Auch ein Mercedes kann Fahrfreude bringen,” which translates to “Even a Mercedes can bring driving pleasure.” At the time, BMW’s slogan in the German market was akin to “bringing driving pleasure,” so this plays on the rivalry between the two German automakers. The objective of the ad is simple: persuade consumers that BMW is the superior German brand. By discrediting Mercedes’s automobiles and portraying the rival company as nothing more than a transporter for BMW’s vehicles, the company successfully boosts its reputation. The advertisement plays on the consumer’s sense of pride and entitlement, as if owning a BMW automobile is the only way to enjoy the thrill of driving. Moreover, the BMW sedans’ liveries are vivid in contrast with the Mercedes truck’s black and dreary paint, as if to suggest BMW owners enjoy a brighter and more vibrant lifestyle. The ad appeals to automobile enthusiasts and consumers, particularly those who enjoy driving cars that combine elements of luxury and sport. According to countless auto magazines and reviewers, BMW is known to combine these two seamlessly in their new 3 and 5 series cars, hence the “driving pleasure.” The ad was published at a time when both German automakers refined their flagship models and entered unprecedented levels of competition. BMW released their esteemed E46 3 series and E39 5 series, while Mercedes came out with the W203 C-Class, W210 E-Class, and a number of new AMG models. Both lines competed directly with one another, and this ad is one of the numerous back-and-forth blows between the two companies.

**Part 2**

• • •

LYDIA M. HEBERLING

[Type the sender company name]

Petuelring 130

80809 Munich, Germany

Petar Vrcelj Nikolic

10614 161st Ct NE

Redmond, WA 98052

Dear Petar,

It’s been a while since we last talked! I haven’t seen you since we hit the Everett racetracks in the beginning of the summer. How is the Merc treating you? Last time we drove together, you had just switched to a larger turbocharger and changed the calipers on your ride. I noticed your Facebook post with your upgraded rims and tires, so I assume you plan to enjoy driving during this winter’s harsh and gloomy weather.

Speaking of cars, I’m writing to ask you if you heard the news about the upgraded BMW 3 and 5 series! I saw an ad in a magazine the other day, and I immediately headed to the dealership to inquire about the new models. The salesman gave me a tour of the M3, and I potentially found my next car! It’s sportier than the 5 series, and the engine produces an incredible 333 hp with 262 lb/ft of torque. Those numbers are incredible for a coupe so lightweight! The guy assured me it would reach 60mph from a dig in under 5 seconds, which is faster than anything you or I have ever driven. Isn’t that incredible?

There is no way any manufacturer can come close to matching the M3’s ability to deliver such impressive performance at the price point. Carrying the BMW emblem also means the M3 encapsulates the idea of luxury. The interior is finished in a lush, hand-stitched leather that absorbs you as soon as you rest in the seat. It was almost impossible to get out of the seat when the test drive was over.

If you have a weekend with nothing planned, you should come with me to test drive one of these beasts! I know you’ve been behind the wheel of a BMW countless times, but I guarantee you’ve never driven something like this before.

**Best regards,**

NAME

• • •

NAME

[Type the sender company name]

Petuelring 130

80809 Munich, Germany

ReachNow.

2118 3rd Ave

Seattle, WA 98121

Dear ReachNow CFO,

Over here at BMW, we enjoy watching innovation change American society. The newest concept that caught our eye was ReachNow’s idea of a carsharing service. Using a mobile app for car reservations is a convenient and intuitive idea, and we have an idea to improve your blooming business.

Why do people use ReachNow to get around Seattle? Part of it is for convenience, but the other part involves the vehicle choice, right? See, the car provided to your customers can have a lasting effect on the way they perceive your app. Our proposition is to provide your company a fleet of our new 3 and 5 series sedans, both of which are flagships of the German car industry. We think your customers will greatly enjoy riding in a smooth, isolated experience offered by BMW.

The 3 series is a sporty, compact sedan that is easy to navigate around the city and into tight parking spots. The 3 is also very efficient on mileage, with 21 mpg in the city and up to 30 mpg on the highway. As a result, your company will save greatly on fuel costs for operating these cars.

On the other hand, the 5 series would be ideal for longer commutes and highway trips. The smooth suspension makes sure your customers never feel the harsh conditions of I5, and the beefy V8 makes sure there will always be enough power to get up to speed.

We welcome you to consider these options as we believe they will serve our mutual benefit. Should you have any questions about BMW’s proposition or want additional information about these new automobiles, please don’t hesitate to give us a call.

**Best regards,**

NAME

[Type the sender company name]

**Part 3**

In order to transfer the message of the advertisement into letter form, I had to consider several elements. The most important is audience – figuring out what group of people this ad appeals to. I figured the ad was directed mostly towards automotive enthusiasts, so I chose to write my friend Petar (who is passionate about German cars) as well as the CFO of ReachNow, a local carsharing company. Another element I considered was the purpose. The goal of any ad is to demonstrate that the product or service is the superior choice, and in this case BMW aims to convince the audience that their new models are the best in the market. No other manufacturer offers the same luxury and performance at the price point.

The difference between these two letters is mostly in diction and syntax. The one sent to Petar employed a casual and almost colloquial writing style since we are such close friends. Sentences were concise and personal, making the letter as warm and inviting as possible. The first paragraph is written as if it were a conversation; I ask him questions and mention that we haven’t spoken for a while. The letter to the corporate official, on the other hand, is more serious and business-like. I acknowledge the CFO’s busy schedule and attempt to get my point across as concisely as possible. Syntax is often long and varied, but short sentences are used to draw attention to the important details.

Despite the discrepancies in writing style, I feel like both letters are equally successful because they employ appropriate language to convey the same claim to specific audiences. By creating a comfortable atmosphere for the reader, I am able to deliver the messages with ease.



STUDENT

English 131

SA5 Annotated Bibliography Revised

12/9/17

Annotated Bibliography:

Adam, Hajo, and Adam D Galinsky. “Enclothed Cognition.” Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, vol. 48, no. 4, July 2012, pp. 918–925., doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2012.02.008.

Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky introduce a term called “enclothed cognition” which describes the systematic influence clothes have on the wearer’s psychological and emotional processes. In this academic report, the writers introduce outside research that captures the impact clothes can have on the wearer. Since the findings aren’t enough to understand why clothing affects us the way it does, Adam and Galinsky conduct a series of experiments, one where they compare a subject wearing a lab coat to one wearing ordinary clothes, and another where both subjects wear lab coats, but are told they are wearing different clothing. A test is administered to both groups, and by analyzing the sustained attention and performance of the subjects, Adam and Galinsky conclude that enclothed cognition involves the symbolic meaning of the clothes as well as the physical experience of wearing them. I intend to draw heavily from this source when describing how a person’s fashion choice influences not only the way they perceive themselves, but also society’s perception of them. The ideas presented in this source tie into the theme of identity because fashion can be seen as a form of expression, and therefore the way someone dresses has a larger, underlying motive. This source is intended for a broad audience, perhaps anyone interested in understanding the influence of clothes on the wearer’s psyche. However, the fact that it was published in Northwestern University’s *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* suggests that it might appeal more to those interested in psychological processes.

Caramanica, Jon. “The Agony and the Ecstasy of Kanye West.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 10 Apr. 2015, [www.nytimes.com/2015/04/10/t-magazine/kanye-west-adidas-yeezy-fashion-interview.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/10/t-magazine/kanye-west-adidas-yeezy-fashion-interview.html).

Jon Caramanica’s editorial follows rap superstar Kanye West’s expansion from the familiar music industry into the foreign world of fashion. Musicians have been crossing over for decades, but Caramanica conveys the unprecedented nature of Kanye’s transition. While critics argue his celebrity status provides an advantage due to wealth and name recognition, Kanye describes it as more of an obstacle. He deals with criticism at every turn, and a large part of the prejudice stems from Kanye’s perceived arrogance and lack of a filter. He has long been one of pop culture’s great disrupters, and the world is keen to see how he changes the fashion world with his ideas. Caramanica is successful in summarizing Kanye’s incredulous journey from his role as the king of hip-hop to one of the most humble contemporary designers. The article is written in a seamless, eloquent style that is easy to follow. Images of Kanye and various of his outfits supplement the writing and provide visual basis of the style Caramanica so articulately describes. The article is published in The New York Time’s “T Magazine,” which is plastered with articles about culture, celebrities, and contemporary art, therefore the audience is made up of creatively-driven artists, musicians, or fashion connoisseurs. I found the source to be helpful in understanding how celebrities can permeate the fashion world and the struggles they deal with on the way. Quotes and conversations from Kanye, as well as criticism from fashion designers and journalists, gave me an idea of both sides of the story.

West, Kanye. “Facts (Charlie Heat Version).” The Life of Pablo. By Kanye West, Cydel Young, Ernest Brown, Noah Goldstein, Joshua Luellen, Nicholas Smith, Aubrey Graham, Leland Wayne. 2016. MP3.

Part of his most recent album, “The Life of Pablo,” “Facts” celebrates Kanye’s Adidas sneaker line and denounces his affiliation with the rival Nike. The track alludes to significant moments throughout Kanye’s collaboration with Adidas, such as the moment his Yeezy 2 Platinum sneaker valued over $3000 on the resell market, Nike’s desperate attempt to keep their contract with Lebron James, and the unprecedented demand for Kanye’s Yeezy Boosts in 2015. Kanye has long dealt with the struggle to set up an infrastructure to support his ambitious fashion projects, and his Adidas deal finally gives him the freedom to expand his production. This song captures the essence of his success through its topical content and busy rhythm. While I enjoy listening to the song at my leisure or with friends, I actually found it to be quite helpful in developing ideas in my essay. Several verses throughout the song support my claim that people buy into celebrity endorsements. Lines such as “Now we hottest in the streets, it ain’t no discussion” and “Yeezy, Yeezy, Yeezy, they line up for days” show how popular the sneaker has become. “Facts” appeals to an audience comprised of Kanye fans and hip-hop/R&B listeners. In fact, the album was certified Platinum and debuted on the US Billboard 200 at number one, so it wouldn’t be a surprise that the audience stretched further. As a primary source, this song helped me grasp a better understanding of the effect of celebrity influence on identity from the perspective of an actual celebrity.

Wigley, Stephen M. (2015) An Examination of Contemporary Celebrity Endorsement in Fashion. International Journal of Costume and Fashion, 15 (2). pp. 1-17. ISSN 2288-7490

Stephen Wigley’s paper examines the relationship between contemporary fashion brands and celebrities through several examples of famous musicians and artists promoting brands, otherwise known as celebrity endorsement. The paper moves beyond the discussion of motives and effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, instead exploring different methods within the fashion sector. For example, Wigley examines several ways a celebrity may promote a brand: sponsorship, customer, placement, testimonial, or association with the company. The author concludes that celebrity endorsement is important in and to the fashion market, offering versatility and flexibility to brands. While the source was redundant and meandering at times, it contained information that aided me in writing my paper. I liked how Wigley defined each concept he used in the context of his writing ­– the classifications made it easier to understand the extent to which his claims applied. I intend to draw from this source when defining terms within my own essay, as well explaining the symbiotic relationship between celebrities and fashion. I also plan to use this source to describe the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand image.

STUDENT

English 131

SA5 Rough Draft

11/17/17

*What a strange power there is in clothing*

-Isaac Bashevis Singer

Thursday mornings are a ritual for many young adults interested in fashion. Wake up at 7:45, launch the Supreme web store, and wait for the week’s collection to become available at 8:00. Once the set of unique hoodies, tees, and accessories are live, customers have seconds to add a single item to their cart and check out. While the process sounds simple, most items sell out before the “checkout” button leads you to the next page. If you are not one of the fortunate few able to snag an item, your only alternative is turning to the horribly-inflated resale market and paying hundreds of dollars more. Clothing drops, especially Supreme’s Thursday mornings, are as much about reaction time as they are about patience. The process is often frustrating, rarely rewarding. What compels customers to spend so much time, effort, and money on clothing? The answer bifurcates into two motives: physical experience and psychological effect of wearing the clothing. Celebrities acknowledge the latter motive and use their influence to sell clothing at exorbitant prices. Due to a desire to be associated with renowned figures, celebrity endorsement is successful in driving customers to purchase expensive clothing.

An individual’s fashion choices heavily influence the manner in which they are perceived. Miuccia Prada, creator of the eponymous fashion brand, states “What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is instant language” (Galloni). A quick look through this decade’s bestselling books and popular shows, such as John T. Molloy’s *Dress for Success* and TLC’s series *What Not to Wear*, confirms the importance fashion choices in contemporary society. Studies demonstrate that clothes have a systematic influence on the wearer’s mental processes. In their academic paper published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* researchers Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky preface their study with a compilation of multiple findings capturing impact clothes have on the wearer. For example, high school students’ clothing styles influence “perceptions of academic prowess among peers and teachers.” On the other hand, teaching assistants who wear formal clothes are “perceived as more intelligent, but as less interesting than teaching assistants who wear less formal clothes.” In business environments, women who dress in a masculine fashion during interviews are more likely to be hired. “Clients are more likely to return to formally dressed therapists than to casually dressed therapists,” and “appropriately dressed customer service agents elicit stronger purchase intentions than inappropriately dressed ones” (Adam & Galinsky 1). The clothes we wear elicit a systematically observable response from the audience we present ourselves to.

The compiled findings fail to note that our outfits have power not only over those around us, but also power over ourselves. Research on the effect of clothing on behavior is scarce and unorganized, so Adam and Galinsky took it upon themselves to reach a clear conclusion. To begin their studies, they introduce the term *enclothed cognition*, defined as the “systematic influence of clothes on the wearer’s psychological processes and behavioral tendencies” (Adam & Galinsky 2). The researchers propose that enclothed cognition depends on two independent factors: the physical experience of wearing them, and the symbolic meaning of the clothes. This essay will expand on each factor and demonstrate how they work collectively to bring more value to a clothing brand.

The physical experience of wearing an article of clothing is an influential factor in the item’s value. The first things you observe when trying on a new shirt are sensory: how it looks and how it feels. The tangible perception is your first experience with that item of clothing, and your level satisfaction at that moment predetermines its value. To study the physical experience of wearing certain clothing, Adam and Galinsky randomly assigned fifty-eight undergraduates to two conditions: wearing a lab coat vs. not wearing one. The groups were then administered a Stroop task (a test that assesses the ability to inhibit cognitive interference, as when the word “red” appears in the color green), and their selective attention was measured. “Participants in the wearing-a-lab-coat condition made around half as many errors as participants in the not-wearing-a-lab-coat condition on incongruent trials” (Adam & Galinsky 3). Wearing a thick, heavy lab coat made subjects in the first group feel like they were playing an important role that required a higher level of attention. Conversely, the second group that wore casual street clothes paid the same amount of attention as they would for any other task, hence their lower performance. Wearing a certain outfit undoubtedly stimulates or amplifies certain behaviors, therefore an individual’s positive experience will lead to them placing higher value on the article of clothing. A hoodie made of 100% cotton, for example, will be much softer and more comfortable than one containing traces of polyester. If the price difference between the cotton and polyester hoodies isn’t too large, the customer is more inclined to purchase the pure cotton one. Price is often indicative of quality, and customers generally spend more money if it means higher quality because ultimately, they believe they will gain more satisfaction. What does this look like in the context of high fashion? In other words, what happens once clothing exceeds a certain price point? The durable materials and precise weave of a seventy-dollar Palace UK shirt will make it a more economical choice than a low quality, mass produced eight-dollar Gildan shirt. However, the difference in quality between that same Palace shirt and a two hundred fifty-dollar A.P.C. shirt is marginal, especially considering the price difference. There has to be another factor that influences people to spend hundreds of dollars on basic pieces.

The other factor not yet considered is the symbolic meaning of the clothes, or the psychological effect of wearing a certain item of clothing. In Adam and Galinsky’s first experiment, where one group wore lab coats and one didn’t, the role of the symbolic meaning of the lab coat was assumed rather than explicitly examined. Experiment 3 bridges the gap by randomly assigning ninety-nine undergraduate students to “one of three conditions: wearing a doctor's coat vs. wearing a painter's coat vs. identifying with a doctor's coat” (Adam & Galinsky 4). The subjects were given a test for sustained attention where they had little time to analyze two similar pictures and jot down the differences. Paralleling the results of the first experiment, wearing the doctor’s coat had heightened their attention to detail. On the other hand, those who wore the painter’s coat (which was identical to the doctor’s coat) in group 2 or were exposed to a room with the doctor’s coat inside in group 3 found significantly fewer differences in the test. In summarizing these findings, Galinsky concludes “clothes invade the body and brain, putting the wearer into a different psychological state” (Blakeslee). The identity of clothing has a profound impact on the mental processes of the wearer.

In response to the question posed in the introduction, people buy certain brands because they see others sporting the logo. If the saying “imitation is the best form of flattery” is true, rap artist Kanye West should be the most humbled character in the world. During a September concert in Chicago, Kanye wore a fifty-dollar Champion hoodie that almost doubled in price the next day. I remember visiting the Urban Outfitters page out of curiosity, and was shocked to see the hoodie was backordered until February. Remember the example of the expensive A.P.C. shirt? The French brand’s sales tripled when Kanye took a liking to their apparel in 2014. Until the past decade, he was esteemed for his disruptive effect on the music industry. In his article, “The Agony and Ecstasy of Kanye West,” Jon Caramanica describes the rap superstar’s legacy as “the rare artist respected as both a pop musician and experimenter, renowned as much for his creative endeavors as for his tabloid exploits. He has remade hip-hop’s sonic palette three, maybe four times. His musical legacy is peerless.” And yet, as accomplished as he is, Kanye now shifts his focus on the daunting and unfamiliar world of fashion. He has long dealt with the struggle to set up an infrastructure capable of supporting his ambitious fashion projects, and his Adidas deal finally gives him the freedom to expand his production. “Tell Adidas that we need a million in production. I done told you, all I needed was the infrastructure,” Kanye raps in “Facts,” part of his most recent album. His collaboration with Adidas increased sales by $2 billion in a single year. Adidas Originals, the subsection into which Kanye’s “Yeezy” collection is grouped, saw its sales shoot up 45% in the fourth quarter of 2016, coincidentally the same time as his latest Yeezy release (Adams). Kanye wants to be to fashion, what he is to music: “a mainstream innovator, a translator of tomorrow’s ideas for today” (Caramanica). His ambition makes Kanye an admired figure in the celebrity world, and many people want to be associated with him. For this reason, they bought the same hoodie he wore to a concert. For this reason, they spend $250 on a blank tee. For this reason, Kanye’s Yeezy sneakers sell out in seconds and people line up for days for the mere *chance* to purchase a pair. Clothes that Kanye designs, or even those he wears for a single day, have a symbolic meaning that customers long for. Combining the physical experience and psychological effect of wearing a certain article of clothing allows celebrities to sell high amounts of merchandise at high prices.

Could this be seen as a form of exploitation? I doubt it. Celebrities putting a $2000 price tag on a tattered sweater doesn’t force consumers to purchase it. It only provides the option for those who want to express themselves with more than what you can buy at the local mall or outlet. It all depends on the value an individual places on clothing.

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STUDENT

English 131

SA1 Autobiography Revised

12/10/17

My parents never let me forget they were raised in a soviet-controlled Romania during the turbulent 1970’s. Communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu called the shots, and systematic authority permeated every aspect of their lives. Dad was forced to wait hours in a seemingly infinite queue for a meager loaf of bread and something resembling soup. These rations were meant for his entire family, but they could barely feed a single person. Mom was all too familiar with the corporal punishment teachers were so fond of. Despite being top of the class and never speaking out during lecture, the teacher’s violent ruler still found a way to strike her innocent palms. My parents’ disciplined upbringing pervaded every moment of their teenage lives, even at home. Curfews, stern parents, and relentless propaganda stripped them of most freedoms and naturally, this authoritarian attitude carried over to my life. While I wasn’t subject to the inhumane conditions they suffered under communist rule, my parents placed heavy emphasis on values such as respect and integrity. Stepping out of line was met with strict, often physical punishment, and I quickly learned the consequences of my actions. My language around home was methodical, and I carefully avoided anything that could be interpreted as rude or impolite. Every request began with a please, “te rog,” and was followed by “mulțumesc.”

Akin to most first-generation citizens, I grew up learning two languages simultaneously. Whenever I joined a loosely-structured hybrid of soccer and rugby with friends, my remarks were spoken in English. I would yell, “I’m open, pass it to me!” or “Hey, can he do that?” But as the day ended and I headed home, I greeted my parents in Romanian. “Bună seara,” I would say humbly as I walked in late and sat at the dinner table with my family. I was fluent in both languages, but as I grew up, the differences between Romanian and English became apparent. Romanian was reserved for home, church, and conversations with my parents. We rarely had relaxed conversations, and most times we talked was to discuss my performance in school or scold me for my behavior. The rolled *r’*s and the accented letters developed a bad taste in my mouth, one I associated with authority and conformity. English, on the other hand, became my escape from the norm abiding ideas and consensus values of my parents. English was the language I used to communicate with my friends and colleagues, thus it was less monitored. I could finally speak my mind and let people know how I really felt, rather than just saying what my parents wanted to hear. The creative slang, vernacular idioms, the colloquial nature of English made it feel like a secret code, opening up an entirely new world for me. I kept it separate from Romanian like oil and water.

Being bilingual felt like I was living two lives, and I despised it. It wasn’t until fourth grade that I realized how fortunate I was to have this gift. Our teacher assigned Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian,* a first-person narrative following a Native American teenager through the turmoil of public school. The novel’s narrator, Junior, suffers tragedies related to alcohol abuse. Living on the reservation with little money for food and clothes meant his home life was far from pleasant, and attending a white high school isolated him from the rest of the students. The hardships Junior faces help him realize how much his friends and family matter, and he learns to accept himself as both Indian and American. Controversial as it is, this book opened my eyes to the unique nature of belonging to two cultures. I learned to celebrate my heritage and started exploring more Romanian culture. Every bite of zacuscă I took, every Mihail Eminescu poem I read, and every story I heard from my parents increased my appreciation for my culture tenfold. As I came with terms with my identity, the role of language changed as well. I no longer associated Romanian with authority and English with nonchalance, but instead learned to integrate elements from each language into the other.

Although I was fortunate to never face the same racial segregation Junior dealt with, I experienced self-inflicted discrimination. By associating each language with a unique identity, I didn’t allow English and Romanian to coincide. But once I learned to borrow values from one language and incorporate it into the other, I became a more whole person. My reverence shows up when I use formal phrases with my English peers, and I learned to be more relaxed at home when I talk to my parents. As I merged the two identities, I gained pride in my bilingualism and thus in myself.