

Creative Bodies: Hipsters, Clothing and Identity

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Abstract:

Hipsters are a contemporary postmodern subculture of young urbanites that have created their own visual identity through the clothing they wear. Since clothing is an important symbolic communicator that allows members of a subculture to identify individually and as a group, this essay will examine the material subtexts of three different Hipster subgroups found at Grenfell Campus through incorporating a contextual approach to the symbolic interaction perspective.

Introduction

“Creative Bodies: Hipsters, Clothing and Identity” examines how current students who are pursuing degrees (either undergraduate or graduate) at Grenfell Campus identify themselves as creatively unique through their clothing. Previous research has noted that those who actively participate in the Hipster subculture do not define themselves as Hipster: it is the active labeling by the out-group (mainstream) that defines them as a Hipster by their symbolic non-traditional clothing choices, particularly in the use of accessories and second-hand clothing.

The modern Hipster, like any subculture has evolved since its development in the early 2000s. The Hipster movement started from a working class antiestablishment movement in Williamsburg, a working class New York City borough which now extends

to a worldwide aesthetic movement with niche populations in almost every major city and university campus around the world.

Williamsburg, New York City, considered the original birthplace of the contemporary Hipster, is also home to three sub categories of the Hipster; modern bohemians, modern dandy, not to be confused with their historical counterpart the 19th century dandy, and the emerging lumbersexual (Crane 193).

Typically, modern Hipsters view themselves as connoisseurs of refined taste in eco-consumerism who prefer to shop local, purchase vintage clothing, particularly selections constructed of natural fibers. While the Hipster community at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University consists of many sub categories, this study focuses on three main subgroups; the sophisticated dandy, the urban male lumbersexual and the feminine modern bohemian.

Methodology

For a greater scholarly understanding of the Hipster, I researched previous research on Hipsters, youth subgroups and clothing and Identity through the Grenfell Campus library, online article searches via Google Scholar, JSTOR, Sage and Memorial University's Summon search engine. The main search words and phrases used for finding pertinent information were Hipsters, bohemians, subcultures, clothing and identity, contemporary subcultures and modern dandy.

This is a qualitative research project focused on how clothing and identity defines the modern Hipster on Grenfell Campus. The research is based on both primary and secondary data collected through various methods. Primary data was collected through

researching data on clothing and identity and postmodern subcultures and then compiling a list of interview questions.

It was Main Eriksson's (2006) study of Hipster consumption "Something you can't get anywhere else," Bjorn Schiermer's (2014) "Late Modern Hipsters: New Tendencies in Popular Culture" and Rebecca Hill's (2009) thesis "Generation K: Defining the beat brand on the road" that introduced me to the topic of Hipsters as a form of material culture and to the concept of subcultures as youth tribes with distinctive material identifiers. David Muggleton's (2000) *Inside Subculture: Postmodern meaning of style* helped me to visualize how subcultures play and transmit cultural identity while providing background into cultural commodities, subcultural allegiance and part timing as participation in material subcultures.

My research uncovered four main concepts that play an important role in deciphering the Grenfell Hipster community: Andrew Bennett's Neo Tribes (2003) and Michel Maffesoli's Tribus or Urban Tribes (1996) that look at cultural subgroups as communities bound by a self-created cultural identities, Diana Crane's "Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing" (2000) that provided insight into the material world of the Hipster Dandy and Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept of the modern *bricoleur* or tinkerer (one who creates new objects with what is on hand) which he introduced in his essay "The Savage Mind" (1962). Gilles Marion and Agnes Nairn's (2011) "We make the shoes, you make the story" offers a modern perspective on Levi-Strauss's *bricoleur* through the consumption patterns of teenagers. In addition, Susan Kaiser's (1997) "Psychology of The Social Clothing: Symbolic Appearances in Context" allowed for a contextual framework of the symbolic interaction perspective that explores

how cultural and social frameworks changed how we receive and react to the exchange of symbolic messages through displays of clothing. Olga Vainshtein's (2010) article "The Dandy" and Alice Cicolini's (2005) "The New English Dandy" gives good insight into how the more dapper and sophisticated Hipsters based their style on the British Dandy's of the nineteenth century while NJ Stevenson's (2012) "Fashion: A Visual History" gives an illustrated chronology of fashion history, fads and their social-cultural backgrounds, while Sanjukta Pookulangara and Arlesa Shephard's (2013) "Slow Fashion Movement: Understanding Consumer Perceptions-An exploratory Study" provides an example of current consumer consumption practices in North America. Lastly, David Muggleton's *Inside Subculture: Post-Modern Meaning of Style* introduced the definition of style surfing and the concept of fashion freedoms.

Using the above concepts as interpretive frameworks I observed groups of young students at two locations, the campus coffee shop *Brewed on Campus* and the Ferriss Hodgett Library at Grenfell Campus. Special attention was applied not only to their distinct clothing styles, accessories and branding, but also to the internal social dynamics of the group to understand what their clothing choices communicated to other members of their group. The objective was to discover how their clothing communicated to which subgroup of campus culture they belonged.

Two of my participants helped me identify which groups often gathered together and what stylistic indicators to look for while observing. The groups I observed tended to not be mutually exclusive as I observed that some groups at the library were less mixed (groups of lumbersexuals and dandy's were together but not mixing), while at the coffee

shop members of different groups would often stop by another subgroup member to chat indicating that they may be part of a larger social group.

Primary data were collected through an electronic questionnaire with accompanying photograph analysis and observations. Since the focus of this paper was to determine perceived identity through clothing choice, the questions ranged from those focusing on personal style to questions on what they would consider their ideal style. Preliminary interviews were held with potential participants before the questionnaire was emailed. During this pre-interview, I introduced my topic to a student who I believed had the visual identifiers of being a Hipster, then asked some introductory questions about personal style, such as where they found the pieces to their outfit and why they decided to wear that specific item. After they agreed to participate in my research project the questionnaire was emailed to gather more in-depth understanding of their personal style. In the questionnaire respondents were asked to describe their personal and ideal styles, to email three photographs of their favorite outfits and to write a blurb about why this outfit was their favorite. The participants were later questioned on their photographs to find out more information on why the individual pieces of each outfit were chosen to be put together/assembled.

Interviews were later held in a private location at one of the campus study rooms on the lower floor of the Arts and Science extension, which is a convenient location for both the respondent and the interviewer. These interviews, averaging about 30 minutes involved photo analysis that provided me with information not collected in the questionnaire.

Observation was my primary way to collect data on Hipster clothing styles. The peak times for observations at *Brewed on Campus* were from 12.30 to 1.30 pm, 3.00 to 4.00 pm and 5.00 to 8.00 pm at the library. At these locations I concentrated on both individuals and groups (of three or four) that visually corresponded to the data collected through my secondary research. I paid attention to what I considered key indicators of Hipster style, specific shoe styles, skinny jeans, accessories, and jackets and then focused on determining the specific brand worn (eg. Vans, Levis and Chuck Taylors). Branding is an important part of visual communication within a material subculture as it indicates whether you are a true Hipster or a “faux Hipster,” i.e. a person just jumping on the style or “fad” wagon for stylistic reasons doesn’t actually belong to the Hipster culture, instead they just surf between styles they believe are in at that moment (Muggleton 47).

Each participant is a student at Grenfell Campus and is part of a diverse group that includes students from the Arts, Nursing, Social Sciences and Visual Arts faculties. Participants are both educationally diverse and geographically diverse as some participants moved to Corner Brook from other provinces (e.g. rural British Columbia and Nova Scotia) to attend programs at Grenfell Campus. All of the participants are within the 19-23 age demographic, and have a keen interest in fashion.

Two of my male respondents and one female student are from my own social circle and were contacted through social media (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) to see if they were interested in participating in the study. Two male and female respondents were chosen at random and on location (*Brewed n Campus*) for their clothing and lifestyle choices. Two of the female respondents are from the Fine Arts department, while the other female student is a part-time nursing student and barista at *Brewed on Campus*. All

three my of the male respondents were from the division of Social Sciences, two of the male participants were from the Social/Cultural Studies program while the third student is a part-time student in the Environmental Studies program.

Neo Tribes and Urban Tribes

Andrew Bennett (2003) in his article “Subcultures or Neo-Tribes” argued that the term subculture is too broad to understand the inner workings of modern youth cultures. He suggests that Michel Maffesoli's (1996) concept of 'Tribus' or Urban tribes is a more appropriate term to use in describing youth activity as it allows for more fluid boundaries in the study of development of style-based youth cultures (Bennett 152-155).

Bennett used examples of British youth cultures from the 1960's such as the Mods, Teddy Boys and Skinheads to form constructs of Neo Tribes. Bennett argues that these groups were characterized by their dress, their behavior and their material possessions rather than their social and cultural origins. These Neo Tribes were clearly identifiable by their now iconic clothing choices and material possessions: Mods wore stylish haircuts and turtlenecks paired with jackets; Teddy boys donned wool suits with skinny ties and Skinheads identified with shaved heads, leather jackets and combat boots (Bennett 152-155). Each group self-identified with a different part of urban London as the contemporary Hipster identified with specific parts of the urban area they reside in.

Michel Maffesoli's concept of Urban Tribes is similar to Neo-Tribes as he sees these tribes as groups of people in urban areas who have some kind of close association based upon similar lifestyles or activities. Members of these urban tribes gather in small, fluid groups and share common interests that are perceived to be different from mainstream society (Maffesoli 139). They share the same aesthetic codes, symbols, rules,

language and music, commonalities that reflect what they love or hate and are formed from their own instincts (Maffesoli 76).

In The Time of the Tribes Maffesoli notes that Neo-Tribes are often a response or a solution to prevailing times, “Postmodern tribes are fragile things but are the object of strong emotional investment by the participants that later become part of the urban landscape” (Maffesoli 139). Rupa Huq suggest that these groups “become part of a postmodern spectacle that renders people unshockable” (28), meaning they no longer cause public outrage as public opinion has become more relaxed since the early 1990’s. It is important to note that while Maffesoli’s claims about youth culture are rather dated, referring more to the youth cultures (punks) of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s he does provide good insight on how youth subcultures interact with their social landscapes.

“As Neo-Tribes become part of the urban landscape they also become more uniform, not only in the way they interact with each other but in how they dress” (Maffesoli 50). Maffesoli used examples of Punks and Kiki-followers as Neo-Tribes that express uniformity and conformity through dress. According to Huq (2006) “Individuals in these groups strive to be unique but are often banded together in reference to relevant observable characteristics by those outside the group or in the media” (Huq 29). Hipsters are identified by outsiders (Grenfell peers) as a youth subculture through their “uniforms or conformity of style.” As Huq mentioned above, it is through the intentions of being unique that Hipsters are bound together.

Masters of Mixing and Matching: Hipster as a Bricoleur

According to Jake Kinzey (2012), both the Hipster and Bennett and Maffesoli’s postmodern (tribe) share a “penchant for jumbling together all manner of references to

past styles” (Kinzey 40), which can be compared to Claude Levi-Strauss’s concepts of the bricoleur and bricolage. Levi-Strauss’s “bricoleur” has its origin in the old French verb *bricolage*, which originally referred to extraneous movements in ball games, billiards, hunting, shooting and riding. Today Levi-Strauss’s *bricolage* refers more so to do-it-yourself building or repairing things with the tools and materials on hand. In comparison to the true craftsman, the *bricoleur* is adept at many tasks and at putting preexisting things together in new ways, adapting his project to a finite stock of materials and tools (Levi-Strauss 17). Lévi-Strauss explains that the universe of the *bricoleur* is closed, and s/he often is forced to make do with whatever is at hand, whereas the universe of the engineer is open in that he is able to create new tools (17-20).

Gilles Marion and Agnes Nairn (2011) explain that the process bricolage can be characterized by the following: it is a creative design process within which the meaning of each material item depends on the role it plays in the final combination and is one in which the *bricoleur* does not have a clear end in sight but a vaguely defined project whose characteristics will be determined by what is available and how it is assembled; engages in a dialogue with the collection to choose materials in order to create a combination and has access to a heterogeneous but finite store of existing materials that have been collected over time (Marion and Nairn 32).

Diana Crane (2000) would call the concept of *bricolage* “sophisticated poaching,” as both men and women now use poached ideas from other periods to use in their own daily styling (Crane 193). According to Crane street cultures use their clothing to make statements about themselves and their attitudes towards their social environment. “Borrowing from existing styles and combining them in new ways, they put possessions,

clothing and hairstyles together in such a way to define an identity that expresses the personal experiences and situation of a particular group” (Crane 187).

David Muggleton (2000) believes that post-modern sub cultures like that of Hipster, are a blend of cross cultural commodities “which forces consumers to become sartorial bricoleurs.” If we could frame the instantaneity, disposability and volatility of the Hipster’s ever evolving style we could see the paradox of Marshal McLuhan’s “global village,” that the ever fragmenting fashions of post-modern subcultures is due to their interest in contemporary media and multiple fashion identities (Muggleton 43).

Marion and Nairn refer to *dress* as a “kind of visual metaphor for identity” as it is through the “processes of appearance management” that people assert who they are (29). They believe that postmodern tribes produce *bricolage* through the consumer consumption of materials. Creating an outfit can be viewed as “creative reworking” because most people understand that constructing an outfit does not involve an official set of instructions. Marion and Nairn believe that consumers: (1) select, discard, reject and combine clothing; (2) can follow some style guides but do not conform to rules; (3) substitute archetypal pieces for desirable alternatives; and (4) adapt clothing to local conditions and introduce new styles (32).

Marion and Nairn maintain that the notion “creative combination” of bricolage as allowing a deeper understanding of how consumers (eg. Hipsters) make personal statements from available elements (32). They believe that the Hipsters are “sophisticated enough not only to receive dominate meanings but to also examine them and recreate their own” recreating a dialogue between their context-specific interests, goals and cultural meanings associated with fashion (32).

Clothing as Totems: A contextual framework of Symbolic Interaction Perspective

Symbolic interaction perspective is defined by Susan Kaiser (1990) as a perspective that pursues the study of social actions and social objects through the understanding of “lines of action” or social behaviors that fit together to help them understand the context of the situation they are in (Kaiser 40). A group of students meeting at a coffee shop for a group event often identify each other through their social connections or visual identifiers. Symbolic interaction perspective indicates that we follow the concept of self-indication, the defining of objects and people that make up their world (Kaiser 40). Kaiser believes that if both parties use self-indication then this will help you fit your lines of action together (Kaiser 40). Therefore most of the meanings behind what we wear are socially constructed.

Arguably, we create our world by creating our own reality and managing our appearance (Kaiser 41). The process of selecting clothing is often modified to meet a certain criteria such as presenting oneself as “artistic” or “unique” since symbolic meanings emerge from social interactions with others. In order for our appearance to meet “lines of action” we incorporate the use of symbols (specific clothing, signs or accessories) that help communicate who we are (Kaiser 41). Herbert Blumer notes that meanings are not just “passively received” but are formed through a learning process that is modified and manipulated through an interpretive process (Blumer 1969). Although this interpretive process is finalized it does not mean that the symbolic nature of the object is finished. Susan Kaiser notes there is often a “tentative nature to meaning” (Kaiser 44). Once arriving at an agreed upon meaning to a clothing symbol we are likely

to challenge or modify the meaning in future interactions (Kaiser 44). Much like fashion fads, socially-created clothing symbols are subject to change.

The contextual approach to symbolic interaction also looks at the cultural perspective of clothing symbols through a semiotic approach. Kaiser explains that when people share a similar culture they are exposed to a network of tangible products, therefore the buying, selling and wearing of clothing contribute to the signification or development of meaning associated with cultural objects (Kaiser 50). Signification is also produced via the visual communication of cultural products, as culture defines how we use, relate and perceive these objects (Kaiser 50).

The cultural perspective to symbolic interaction also considers the use of cultural codes to decipher the meanings of appearance codes (Kaiser 52). Kaiser also notes that appearance codes also function as rules that apply to which types of articles of clothing and accessories that can be worn together and allow for creativity in the terms of their interpretation by the other (52-56). In turn these codes allow for a linkage between social relations and appearance codes.

Contextualizing an interpretive framework that provides background to culture, social situations and historical contexts, allows for a broader understanding of how people manage and perceive appearances in everyday life. Providing a context uncovers the changes in the meaning of clothing as cultural and social contexts dissolve into one another through their interactions (Kaiser 58-59). Since contexts are created by people, the social and cultural meanings of clothing often change alongside with changes currently happening in society.

Malin Eriksson (2014) explains that the postmodern perspective on consumption is that through consuming, the consumer (eg. Hipster) produces symbols that then create a cultural meaning: she argues: “How people dress, live, eat, their interests are cultural codes and give meaning to the personal symbolic project. It creates a pattern which is communicated to other people, and they interpret these symbolic boundaries” (Eriksson 26). Eriksson refers to this effect as the “fairy tale effect” in which the story behind the garment has great meaning to the participant. That is, the memories and thoughts connected to their clothing have passionate meanings in which the story connected to the clothing was linked “to how they acquire the object and very often the story was connected to the person who made it, or how they changed the garment” (Eriksson 34). It is through the application of symbolic interaction perspective with my primary data I am able to recognize and categorize Hipster cultural codes created through public, private and interpersonal interactions on Grenfell Campus.

Social, Cultural Contexts for the Emergence of the Millennial Hipster

Rebecca Hill (2009) likens the birth of the Millennial Hipster to the “silent generation of the Beats” (2). Hill states that both groups developed in an age of sustained political terror. While “the Beats” came of age in the late 1940s and early 1950s in the post WWII era and the atomic bomb blast that reverberations across nations, the Hipster developed during the decade immediately following 9/11 (Hill 2). Hill cites that both subcultures “emerged during a time of intense social control and enforcements of traditions” and then reacted to the increased social control in ways considered subversive to more conservative members of society (Hill 3).

Malin Eriksson explains that the postmodern Hipster became identified as subversive due to their consumption practices of “buying local, secondhand, vintage, clothing swaps, upcycling and their focus on the authentic” (Eriksson 26-28), which differs from the current consumer consumption practices of (over) consuming fast fashion (Pookulangara and Shepard 200). Eriksson believes “You are what you wear”, which reflects the belief that “people’s things are part of what they are.” Therefore, many of the “props and settings consumers use to define their social roles in a sense becomes part of their selves” (Eriksson 25). Hipsters began to value uniqueness and quality over quantity and mass production (fast fashion).

British linguist David Dalby (2004) explains that the roots of the word “Hip” may come from the Wolof verb *hepi* (to see) or *hipi* (to open one’s eyes) (Leland 5). Therefore hip is a subversive intelligence that outsiders develop under the eyes of the insiders (Leland 5-6). Originally, the term Hipster was related to a form of decadent connoisseurship and over refinement of late jazz culture which can then be translated to the current situation as modern Hipsters are often considered collectors and connoisseurs of retro material culture objects including clothing, comic books and sundry items associated with previous eras (Schiermer 170). Bjorn Schiermer (2014) explains that the modern Hipster doesn’t just cultivate a specific cultural expression or genre (jazz); instead they are eclectic and broad minded with interests ranging from gourmet coffee and artisan beers to shoe-string adventure travel and eco-rights (Schiermer 170).

John Leland’s (2004) notion that the hip needs population density and enough diversity so that society’s misfits, dissidents and outcasts can find each other (Leland 345) perhaps also, so that they offer a significant contrast to what is perceived to be a cultural

norm and can be applied to Corner Brook's Grenfell Campus as it provides the necessary ingredients for a Hipster community.

In reference to David Muggleton's (2000) categorization of contemporary subcultures, Grenfell Hipsters emerge as a true post-modern tribe due to their fragmented identities (sub-categories of Hipsters), multiple stylistic identities, low degree of commitment to the subculture (part timers and poseurs), high rates of mobility and transition to different stylistic variations within their sub-culture, positive attitude towards social media (Instagram), a fascination with style and a celebration of the inauthentic (cultural misrepresentations through constant cycling of appropriated styles) (Muggleton 52).

The Hipster subculture on Grenfell Campus, Memorial University involves multiple representations of Hipster style. Here I will reflect on three Grenfell Campus subgroups with distinctive visual identifiers including those associated with the sophisticated dandy, the urban male lumbersexual and the feminine modern bohemian. Due to the semi-rural geographical location of Grenfell Campus, I will also mention a discovered phenomenon unique to Grenfell but not to subcultures in general; the part-timer or poseur, an individual who stylistically copies Hipster fashions as part of a fashion fad but does not hold any true allegiance to the subgroup ideologically (Muggleton 83).

Dandy, Lumbersexual and the Modern Bohemian

To gather sufficient data on the Hipster population at Grenfell Campus I attempted to gather a balanced sample from all three Hipster subgroups: the sophisticated Dandy, the Lumbersexual and the Modern Bohemian. Mark and Kevin¹ both students

from the Social/Cultural Studies program define themselves as purveyors of dandy fashion while Dennis², a second year Sustainable Resource Management student and David, a fourth year Visual Arts student both straddle the slight division between the dandy and lumbersexual subgroups. Dennis claims he doesn't have "one real personal style" but from observations and meetings with him, I observed that his clothing choices seem to reflect his mood and what and where he is going that day.

Sara³ and Karen are both fourth year Visual Arts students while my third female respondent, Mandy, is a part-time Nursing student and barrista at *Brewed on Campus*. All three claim to "buy what they want and not follow the trends," although their style also seems uniform as they all admit a love for leggings (in bright colors), ethnic printed or styled shirts and hand-made accessories. For them, it is the story behind where the clothes came that conveys a history from rather than just style, as they prefer clothing that conveys a history. Sara claims that she really enjoys buying hand made items "so that I can support artists and also have items with character" (personal communication).

All six respondents agreed that their clothing should reflect not only their own unique personal style, but should also reflect a sense of utility and purpose. Comfort and a sense of sophistication with a yearning for the past (idealizing a specific time period) ranked higher than conforming to certain material trends. Although two of the female respondents did agree that they would sometimes buy into a trend because "it's more economical to grab the typical things (clothes or accessories) of the time, and get more expensive (branded) out there accessories to match them and change them" (interview) Here the female students are referring to buying a specific expensive brand of clothing

such as shoes that have a longer performance time rather than buying cheap items that need to be replaced more often.

Embodying the Hipster

Grenfell Hipsters embody the concept of Bennett's and Maffesoli's urban tribes, as they are a post-modern collective of young adults who share educational, social and political backgrounds and views that are expressed in part through fashion sustainability, through their educational background, social background and political views. Grenfell Hipsters are visually recognizable via their clothing and their choice hangouts on campus; *Brewed on Campus* and the second floor lounge in the Visual Arts building. Grenfell Hipsters gather in these locations and are easily recognized by their clothing and accessory choices such as Chuck Taylor or, Van sneakers, "Buddy Holly" glasses and plaid flannel shirts. Hipster females are often recognized by their penchant for leggings, ballet flats and tunic tops.

Grenfell Hipster Kevin explains that piecing together second hand items with new or gifted items is a part of Hipster culture. Kevin explains that he shops at the Salvation Army Store for "the sake of individualistic variety" while combining hand-me-downs, gifted items and newly purchased clothing as part of his everyday clothing style. In true *bricolage* style Hipsters not only combine new and used clothing they also exchange clothing from recent and past decades and other cultures: Kevin, for example uses the British sitcom's doctor from *Dr. Who*⁴ as a style inspiration while Sara refers to 1980's British pop culture and steampunk⁵ as a style reference, fully incorporating Eriksson's fairy tale effect by recognizing that the story behind the garment (the inspiration) has great meaning to the participant.

Grenfell Hipsters have created their own cultural subtext through clothing with items such as campaign buttons placed on backpacks, plaid, Buddy Holly style glasses and Chuck Taylor sneakers becoming indicators of a specific cultural group. Through the concept of *bricolage* Hipsters have borrowed clothing from other groups and have transformed meanings to reflect their beliefs.

The Sophisticated Dandy

In eighteenth-century Britain the dandy was a fashionable male who had achieved social influence by “distinctive elegance in dress and sophisticated self-presentation” (Vainstein 329). The closest ancestor to today’s urban sophisticated dandy would be the nineteenth century British macaronies or peacock dandies who enjoyed vibrant colors and flashy styles (Vainstein 329). Alice Cicolini (2005) defines contemporary dandyism as a socio-political confrontation to mass consumption through fine dress: a true dandy is a revolutionary who defies society’s rules of conformity by becoming a self-ostracized outsider by purchasing items that are well made, vintage or designer (Cicolini 12).

Diane Crane explains in “Fashion and its Social Agendas” that the modern dandy should not be confused with the 19th century "peacock style" dandies. However male dandy’s pay homage to their predecessors by adopting colors that are considered feminine, such as pink or pale blue or buy choosing clothing with loud patterns while females often adopt clothing commonly associated with males such as button down shirts, sport jackets, ties and work boots (Crane 193- 195).

Cicolini identifies one subgroup of modern English dandies, the East End Flaneur whose style is similar to Crane’s modern dandy. East End Flaneur's reside in the

traditional working class East End of London, having been pushed out of Central London and other boroughs by the expanding upper middle class in the 1980s. These dandies are young creative's whom Cicolini defines as twenty-to-thirty somethings who have chosen to transmit their frustration with current branding and celebrity culture into a search for their own means of self-expression through clothing (Cicolini 65-66).

While the male modern Hipster does not adhere strictly to the dandy in appearance, they do still try to cater to the currently accepted hyper-masculine imagery including long beards and well-groomed mustaches, while abandoning the current mainstream obsession with brand and celebrity culture (Schiermer 174). In "Late Modern Hipsters" Bjorn Schiermer (2014) calls the modern dandy phenomena "a throwback to dad fashion" with plaid shirts, corduroy jackets, sweater vests and suspenders being *de rigueur* for men (Schiermer 174).

Both men and women in the 21st century are encouraged to adhere to socially-constructed definitions of gender and beauty, while men are supposed to convey a hyper masculine appearance and not adopt a "feminine approach" to clothing and women should be feminine (Crane 90). However dandyism does not adhere to strict gender roles as both men and women can adopt dandy style.

The dandy image, although marketed towards males, does have a female following. For instance, lesbians may follow the unwritten fashion rules of the dandy preferring to wear sports jackets, men's button up shirts, skinny ties and skinny jeans paired with boots over the female cut (Cerankowski 226). Karli Cerankowski (2013) explains that "dandyism may even be perceived as a queer style, one that resists

definition, blurs boundaries, and specifically plays with gender and its associations with sexuality (226).

Dandyism on Grenfell Campus is adopted by both females and males with most students belonging to the Social Cultural Studies program or Visual Arts. Typically, Grenfell Campus dandies can be identified by their clothing choices and grooming habits. Most dandies on campus opt for colorful button up shirts, skinny jeans in beige or black, sports jackets, "Chuck Taylor" sneakers or black or brown brogues. Accessories are important to dandies, since this helps them create their identity (interview). They often wear campaign buttons on their backpack or shoulder bag to identify which groups (on and off campus) they support. Thick framed plastic glasses (referred to a Buddy Holiday Style) with square or round frames are preferred instead of wire ones, and skinny ties or bow ties finish off the look. In the winter hand knit scarves, mittens and beanies are paired with wool pea coats and sturdy work boots; campaign buttons often make an appearance on their winter jackets.

Lumbersexual

The term lumbersexual was first coined in 2008 in an online submission to the popular online forum for urban culture and language "urban dictionary.com." According to its 2008 entry a lumbersexual is a metrosexual male with an affinity for the outdoors and a finely trimmed beard (urban dictionary, 2014). In late 2014, the term "lumbersexual" re-emerged online through popular internet memes as a response to the current emergence of city dwelling men wearing stocking caps, unkempt hair, plaid shirts and beards (GearJunkie, 2014).

Since being an eco-conscious inner city dweller is an important part of becoming a Hipster, the transition to lumbersexual fashion would be an ideal association. The hipster culture is more than just collecting and wearing vintage fashion, it's about developing a self-sustainable lifestyle that includes back yard gardening, chicken raising and supporting the "local" (GearJunkie, 2014). Activities for which durable clothing is required.

According to Sojin Jung and Byoungjo Jin's 2014 report on sustainable consumption amongst University students in North America, sustainable fashions hold a certain appeal to trend conscious consumers with 92% preferring to buy local and 85% responding positively to craftsmanship and quality (Jung and Jin 516). Although the concept of upcycling amongst Hipster subgroups seems to be lower with only 55% of Jung and Jin's respondents preferring to upcycle clothing. Like the dandy's lumbersexuals tend to go for authenticity, "quality over quantity" and purchase items made from ecologically friendly fabrics like cotton (Eriksson 26).

Pookulangara and Shepard (2013) mention that many youth subcultures like the lumbersexuals value the notion of social responsibility. Social responsibility is defined as "an orientation that is comprised of the environment, people and the value chain that is involved in the textile and apparel process. It is a philosophy that seeks balance between ethics and profitability and a desire for outcomes that have little negative impact on the people and societies involved (Pookulangara and Shepard 202). Therefore buying local, handmade and high quality clothing reduces their effect on the environment (interview).

Although the term lumbersexual is quite new to Hipster subculture, its identity has a connection to the rural environment of Corner Brook and its surrounding areas. The

lumbersexual has a strong following on Grenfell Campus with its followers wearing heavy, durable fabrics such as plaid and comfortable outdoor clothing such as down feather Puffer vests and sturdy leather work boots. Also, Grenfell lumbersexual Hipsters can be identified by which faculty or major they are registered in. Most lumbersexuals are Sustainable Resource Management majors or Visual Arts students who enjoy camping and other outdoor activities.

Lumbersexuals on Grenfell Campus are recognized by their rugged, yet clearly put together, appearance; the plaid flannel shirts, steel-toed work boots, beige or blue skinny jeans, quilted work shirts and snapback caps. Lumbersexuals pay less attention to accessories, although they may sport campaign buttons on their backpacks or toques but they do pay more attention on appearance. The Grenfell lumbersexuals have neat beards, long hair in ponytails or “man buns,” while their clothing always appears neat and wrinkle free. One of my male respondents replied, “I want to appear Lumberjack chic” while referring to the fact he would rather spend time inside than outside while another male respondent explained that lumbersexual would describe him as he prefers “comfortable and durable clothing” that can travel with him through classroom to the trails.

Modern Bohemians

Although most Hipsters can be considered to be “Modern Bohemians” through their anti-establishment lifestyle choices, the term modern bohemian itself refers to an overly romantic ascetic of soft colors and floral patterns, long flowing skirts, ethnic styled tunics and leggings worn as pants (Eriksson 8). Modern Bohemian style is also referred to as hippie chic and tends to be favored by young women in their 20s (Chang

2011). Modern Bohemians tend to use style muses to identify which styles to incorporate in their outfits. Florence Welch, Alexa Chung and Nicole Richie, are modern muses while other Bohemian followers enjoy older muses such as Stevie Nix (WWD 2008).

Before the terms Hippy Chic and Modern Bohemians were coined in the 1960s, there was a set of illustrations drawn by American artist Charles Gibson in the 1890s called the Gibson Girls who embodied what he called the “modern active woman.” Gibson’s illustrations with flowing dresses, flouncing sleeves and narrow waists encouraged newly emancipated women to embrace their freedom and femininity by rejecting contemporary, confining and elaborate styles by embracing the first Bohemian look (Stevenson 70-71).

As ladies’ fashions became more liberal, each decade had its own version of the modern Bohemian. The jazz era (1920s) had the flapper, the 1940s had factory girls and the late 1950-60s gave birth to the retro hippy chic style that modern Bohemians emulate today (Stevenson 70-71). Each of these fashion styles rejected the style norms of the day to reflect more personal freedoms.

Female Bohemian’s on Grenfell Campus refer to themselves as purveyors of “thrift store chic,” shopping at second-hand stores such as the Salvation Army Store or attending clothing swaps to find clothing. Some respondents did say that they would purchase new clothing at stores such “Reitmans” which had timeless and well-constructed clothing, but not as often as they would purchase second hand clothing. Purchasing unique and quality clothing at thrift stores like the Salvation Army was preferable to purchasing cheaply made mass-produced clothing at retail chains. Second

hand clothing, according to Karen allowed for more freedom to “edit and upcycle,” thus taking something commonplace and making it their own through bricolage.

The Part timer or Poseur

Through observations I became aware of the “post-modern persona” of style surfing: individuals who participate in some Hipster visual identifiers are engaging in what David Muggleton (2000) calls “style surfing” or “fad fashion following” which allows them to switch from one fad to another with a high degree of sartorial mobility (Muggleton 47). Style surfing allows individuals the opportunity to “try on many hats in different groups and settings” such as wearing faux horn rimmed glasses as an accessory or buying a new puffer vest due to its advertised hype (Muggleton 83). Style surfers do not look at authenticity nor do they have any commitment to the original form they are copying; to a style surfer “fashion is just a stylistic game with no rules” (Muggleton 47).

Karen Hansen (2004) notes that it is the consumers “widespread desire “to move with fashion” and to be “in style” directs our attention to the combination of garments that construct identity on the surface, and in so doing, objectifies it. Hansen explains this is how dress and consumption becomes implicated in our life projects (Hansen 387).

High Street stores often cash in on what retail insiders call “it fashion” or *mainstreaming of a trend*. For example, one can buy carbon copies of no name canvas Chuck Taylor high tops locally for about \$15-\$30 (Spring 2015) instead of the original \$60-\$95 (Converse 2015) so that it is easier and cheaper for the trendy fashionista to buy into it as a passing fad. Morwenna Ferrier (2014), style reporter for British newspaper, *The Guardian* states that “anyone can appear to be Hipster provided they buy the right kind of Jeans” (Guardian 2014), while Luke O’Neil (2013) a culture writer for the online

magazine *Slate*, calls such persons poseurs or “meta-hipsters,” persons who sidesteps the traditional requirements and just wants to skip ahead to the status associated with that particular clothing style (Slate 2013).

Style surfing allows people to experiment with fashion without making a commitment which many of my respondents reacted positively. Sara fully confirmed to the style surfing concept when she responded that, “I am a dork that errs on Hipster, I wear comfortable and shapeless clothing, but I make it fashionable with something Hipster.” Here she uses Hipster as a noun, a way of describing a group of “cool” items. When my male respondent Dennis was asked how to describe his personal style, he said he could not. “My style changes day to day, I don’t conform to just one style” which is a good example of Muggletons definition of style surfing, showcasing freedom to move amongst different styles.

Conclusion

When I started my research on Hipsters last October I was basing my initial hypothesis off of Main Eriksson’s 2006 study of Hipster consumption “Something you can’t get anywhere else” and Bjorn Schiermer’s 2014 study “Late Modern Hipsters: New Tendencies in Popular Culture” in which I focused on three visual subgroups within the larger Hipster community; dandies, Lumbersexuals and feminine Modern Bohemians. From my primary data collection, I have discovered that many of Grenfell’s Hipsters engage within style surfing or the freedom in which to pick and choose what style they wish to represent that day. Grenfell Hipsters dress for themselves, for how they feel. One day it may be sophisticated dandy and the other day more casual Lumbersexual, they *surf* in-between styles creating their own rules.

Grenfell Hipsters are unique to other Hipsters due to their geographic location and lack of available resources to keep up with the constant global cycling of the Hipster subculture, therefore allowing the use of style surfing and self-acknowledgment is essential to creating the Hipster Identity on Grenfell Campus. While other researchers like Eriksson, Hill and Schiermer agree that Hipsters are a subculture defined by the other, my findings concluded that Grenfell Campus Hipsters actively define their selves as Hipster through participation in campus activities, exposure to peer groups and through consuming fashion media.

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Appendix I

1.



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3.



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Appendix II

Informed Consent Form

Creative Bodies: Hipsters, Clothing and Identity

Michelle Gosse, Social Cultural Studies, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University.

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “Creative Bodies: Hipsters, Clothing and Identity”

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdrawal from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision.

This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the Michelle Gosse, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Michelle Gosse is a third year Social Cultural Studies major at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University and I am conducting my independent project under Dr. Angela Robinson.

Background of study

Hipsters are a contemporary subculture that emerged out of New York City in the early 2000s and are visually recognized as “Hipster” through their clothing choices, where they purchase their clothing and where they reside.

Purpose of study

Creative Bodies: Hipsters, Clothing and Identity will examine how current students who are pursuing degrees (both undergraduate and graduate) at Grenfell Campus identify themselves as creatively unique thought their clothing.

Length of time:

It should take at least 15 minutes to fill out and email the questionnaire.

Withdrawal from the study:

If you need to withdrawal from the study at any time please contact Ms. Gosse at mgosse@grenfell.mun.ca. Any data collected up to the date of withdrawal will be disposed of immediately. There are no negative consequences of withdrawal from the study.

Possible risks:

At this time there is minimal risk associated with participating in this study.

Confidentiality and Storage of Data:

Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Anonymity:

If you request anonymity your name will be replaced with a pseudonym.

Recording of Data:

The questionnaires will be printed out and destroyed at the end of the project.

Reporting of Results:

Results will be integrated into my independent project and shared with a committee of my peers.

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this project. If you would like more information about this study, please contact Andrea Alexander at or Michelle Gosse at mgosse@grenfell.mun.ca.

Appendix II

Questionnaire:

Informant data

Age:

Where are you from?

Where do you live in Corner Brook?

What are you studying?

What is your current occupation?

What do you do for fun?

Style Questions

Could you please describe your current outfit?

Why did you decide to wear this outfit today?

How would you describe your personal style?

List 5 or more adjectives or phrases which describe your current style.

List 5 or more adjectives or phrases which describe your ideal style.

Do you have a fashion icon, and if so, who is it?

Where do you normally buy clothes?

How often do you shop there?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it for you to follow current trends?