A Close Reading of Fashion Blogging: A Form of Postmodern
Communication

A Senior Project Presented to
The Faculty of the Communication Studies Department
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts

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Introduction

Imagine newspaper and magazine corporations being created at a rate of one hundred and seventy-five thousand per day. Imagine popular editorials being printed at the speed of twenty-six thousand new editorials per day. Imagine a total of one hundred thirteen million distinctive newspapers and magazines circulating throughout the world. Many would say this concept is unattainable and even unimaginable. But with the emergence of Web 2.0, or more specifically blogging, this impossibility has transformed from imagined to real (Technorati). Blogging is one of the most recently developed media that has reshaped the flow of information. It is a series of online journal entries generally devoted to a particular topic, arranged in a reverse chronological order, and updated often. Blogs are largely composed of non-mainstream or noncommercial content produced online (Armstrong and McAdams 113). They are commonly created by ordinary individuals, but can also be a form of collaboration. The first known weblog appeared in 1997. Early blogs resembled personal diaries, yet they have evolved into much more. Blogging slowly developed and by 1999 there were about fifty blogs (Kaye "Blog Use Motivations: An Exploratory Study 27). However, over a decade later eighty-two percent of internet users are now in the habit of using blogs (Pollster). Furthermore, the continual increase in popularity of blogging can be seen from Technorati's *State of the Blogsphere 2011* study which concludes, "Over half of respondents plan on blogging more frequently in the future and fifty-two percent plan on expanding the topics they blog about."

Although fashion may seen trivial in contrast to subjects such as politics and current affairs, fashion blogging has transformed a generation and the blogging world itself. In 2012 two

million blogs were listed representing the industry of fashion by *Blogger.com* (Blogger). With such substantial numbers, there is no reason fashion blogging should be diminished to insignificance. Furthermore, some may believe that fashion is not rhetoric. On the contrary, it is in fact the use of language that transforms conventional clothing into *fashion* (Moeran 35). Fashion blogs have established themselves as a credible and central medium for the creation, circulation, and communication of fashion related news. Fashion blogs differ from others in that they are highly pictorial. Images on a typical fashion blog range from personal photographs and professional photographs, to images taken from other websites, runway shows, and magazine shoots. More affluent blogs tend to photograph themselves in a way that gives the impression of professional work. These blogs are particularly personal with the author as the symbol of the blog. They generally feature their personal fashion, such as outfit choices, favorite pieces, suggestions and products they like.

Fashion blogs are primarily visual which creates an interesting element to rhetoric. It is the aesthetic component which make blogs popular. Many posts lead with visual images followed by text. Visual rhetoric, as discussed by Roland Barthes, describes how visual images communicate. Visual rhetoric is associated with the study of semiotics. Semiotics is the method of understanding meaning pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierce. The primary purpose of semiotics is to understand meaning through the structure of relationships and usually relies on binaries. It does so by analyzing the methodology of signs and sign systems (Berger 7). Unlike prior research of semiotics and advertising, blogs may not necessarily intend to sell products, but instead they are selling themselves as a brand to consumers. Essentially they have taken the traditional form of a tangible product and turned it virtual. In addition, fashion blogs have opened a new outlet for marketing. Successful fashion blogs work with brands to

successfully market products through personal recommendations or adapting brands into their daily looks. Being primarily visual, blogs fulfill the symbolic medium requirement of rhetoric outlined by Sonja Foss in her analysis of rhetoric in *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*. As a result, visual rhetoric takes a broader range.

The postmodern era established the idea that the audience is the author of the text or the audience interprets and adds meaning to the text. This concept can be best exemplified by the interactive components of blogging. Blogging's unique aspect of two-way communication makes it stand out from traditional informative websites. Comment boxes allow viewers to create their own truth, contradict what is being said, and allow interaction. This interaction allows one to feel their opinions are valued and encouraged. Weblogs take fragmented pieces, stories, photos, and wording, and puts it together to create a customized Universal Resource Locator (URL). A blog's credibility varies with its content or creator. Rarely is the content you are viewing copyrighted or even slimmer, is it academically peer reviewed. Credibility to a blog can vary and they don't offer you Truth always; the vast amount of information available at the click of one's finger is alluring. What's even more incredible is all this information is free. Its publications usually don't require a subscription and authors create these websites out of their own pure hobbies.

Fashion blogs can be divided into two categories. The first, independent blogs, are usually created and run by one individual and at times have a focus. The second is corporate blogs which can be run by a magazine, a brand, or a store. The former is also known as "personal style blogs" meaning blogs whose author is the focus of the blog and documents their style on a daily basis (Rocamora 409). Corporate blogs can transpire from a magazine, a brand, or a store. Corporate blogs have multiple authors who post multiple times per day. On the contrary many

personal blogs do not have the same luxury of having a staff, they normally post only a couple of times a week. Fashion communication has taken a turn with the emergence of blogs. Personal blogs are constantly arising and popular ones are taking the form of celebrity status. According to Mia Lovheim, "...recent research confirms that most blogs today concern the personal life of the blogger" (Lovheim 3). Up until recently lucky fashion bloggers were enticed to represent products and brands through free merchandise. However, popular bloggers have begun to make a profit for their hard work. According to *The New York Times*, "Fashion bloggers today can earn money by writing sponsored posts, selling ad space on their sites, working as brand ambassadors, making personal appearances and creating design collaborations," an avenue not available to other blog genres (Kurutz 2011). Young women have been able to make a living off of their personal blogs, and as a result have become the new competitor to corporate blogs. By doing a close reading on popular fashion blogs I will explore what rhetorical strategies generate popularity by paying attention to certain features that connect and differentiate corporate and personal blogs.

Literature Review

Much research pertaining to blogging focuses on the motivation for using that particular medium. Similar to earlier studies on uses and gratification, which examined motivation for television, radio, newspaper, and magazine consumption, recent research has begun to apply the same concepts to the internet and, more specifically, blogging (Armstrong and McAdams 113; Kaye 74). Prior research has investigated the motivations for bloggers to continuously post and update. By applying the expectancy theory, a common application used to determine individual motivation, past research has found that a blog is driven by intrinsic rather than extrinsic rewards

(Liao, Liu, and Pi 261). Intrinsic rewards are that of self achievement; the intangible. Extrinsic rewards are something physical and tangible given as a reward for recognition. Despite the fact that the module of two-way communication is a prominent feature of blogs, another study also confirmed bloggers do not expect or place much value on others' responses (Liao, Liu and Pi 261).

What makes blogging interesting to research is the two parties involved in the blogsphere; the bloggers and the consumers. Kaye researched those consumers interacting with blogs and why they continue to do so. She found:

> Interacting with Weblogs, or even merely reading them, gratifies excitement, entertainment, and relaxation needs. Weblogs provide a sense of belonging and being part of the larger blogsphere where bloggers and their followers are in the know and on top of the latest political and nonpolitical issues (90).

Much like past research done on television use Kaye revealed blogging offers similar gratifications.

An important element to blogs' success is that they are perceived as credible by consumers. Researchers have further applied communication theories to analyze the credibility component. Wei used the knowledge gap theory to compare content variation among filter blogs (which focus on political knowledge) and personal journals. His findings indicate, "...that bloggers with higher socioeconomic status contribute more filter blogs than lower-status segments" (532). In addition, Armstrong and McAdams looked at the trust level of traditional media to see if it fit the model of overall blog trust. The results indicated that the individuals who blog to see information are more likely to find the content trustworthy than those who use blogs leisurely (Armstrong and McAdams 120).

Other research examines the difference of males and females in the blogsphere. Lu and Hsiao found that content quality is the major explanation for what drives female readers to visit specific blogs, while "system quality" and "social influences" are the major anecdotes that influence males to return to specific blogs. Additionally, women's usage of blogs was found to be strongly influenced by self-expression, while men's intentions were strongly compelled by personal outcome expectations (Lu and Hsiao 152).

More specifically, research pertaining to fashion blogging has focused on females finding their identity via blogging. Rocamora refers to blogs as a "space of identity construction" (407). It is the common assumption that the blogsphere largely consists of wealthy white males whose hobbies amount to politics and business. However, recent studies suggest that nearly half the blogs emerging are created by teenagers (Huffaker & Calvert). If in fact so many teens are engaging in blogging as a new form of social media, this mode of expression must offer a valuable resource for the representation of their social identity.

What researchers have not done is thoroughly investigate corporate versus independent blogs to determine how their content differs in respect to their popularity. In order to understand the different genres of fashion blogging I am going to do a close reading of six different fashion blogs. By doing a close reading I will carefully examine specific components of fashion blogs in fine detail such as an individual post and the features the blog offers. In this essay I will analyze the characteristics of corporate and personal blogs, by doing a close reading on the top three popular blogs in each category, to discuss the relationship between the two.

Method

Close reading, a method described by Carl R. Burgchardt, "...studies the relationship between the inner workings of public discourse and its historical context in order to discover what makes a particular text function persuasive" (Burghchardt 563). This technique meticulously examines an artifact's rhetoric and images to help gain a better understanding of how the persuasion functions.

In the past, traditional close readings were done with documents and speeches. Like many other traditional close readings, Michael Leff and Gerald Mohrmann analyzed the campaign oration of Abraham Lincoln in their essay, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Text." By doing a close reading, Leff and Mohrmann explored Lincoln's pattern of organization through a method of chronology. They noted the speech can be divided into three parts; addressing people of New York, the south, and the Republican party. However, Leff and Mohrmann more specifically focus on the speech's central concern, ingratiation, a method, "to establish (oneself) in the favor or good graces of others, especially by deliberate effort" (Dictionary.com). Recognition of the purpose of the speech, ingratiation, unifies the elements of analysis and gives it a more precise focus. According to Leff and Mohrmann, "The political artistry and the rhetorical artistry are functions of each other, and an appreciation of this coalescence can only enhance our understanding of the Cooper Union Address" (Burgchardt 161). Thus, our understanding of political documents or speeches can be better understood by the rhetorical artistry of authors.

Stephen E. Lucas also used close reading to examine special documents, however, his approach differed from Leff and Mohrmann. In Lucas's essay, "The Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence," Lucas selected features in the Declaration of Independence that

illustrated a stylistic artistry of the whole document. The document was essential scrutinized

from the sentence structure down to the syllable in order to highlight the literary qualities and the

rhetorical power it gave the American colonies at the time (Burgchardt 569). Similar to Leff and

Mohrmann's analysis of Lincoln's address, Lucas notes that the document is divided into five

sections: the introduction, preamble, indictment of George III, denunciation of the British people,

and the conclusion. The layout is an essential element to the success of each document.

Close reading has since progressed from documents and speeches to mediated texts. Paul

Ehrenhaus applied close reading to a non-oratorical object, film (Burghchardt 563). In his essay,

"Why We Fought: Holocaust Memory in Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*," Ehrenhaus uses

visuals, dialogue, sound effects, and music to conclude that implications of the film were to re-

imagine what it means to be an American in war post Vietnam. The Vietnam syndrome

Ehrenhaus refers to was the loss of pride the American people felt. By doing a close reading

Ehrenhaus was able to identify the rhetorical effects of *Saving Private Ryan* by examining in

detail the film's "narrative structure, scenic composition, and character

development" (Burgchardt 587). In addition to the film itself Ehrenhaus examined criticisms of

the film which regard how the Holocaust was woven into the movie, and the "Americanization"

that comes out of the Holocaust (Burgchard 585).

Close reading has transcended from speeches and essays to mediated texts, and now I

intend to apply the traditional concepts to new media. Just as Leff argued that, "...time is not

merely a standard organizational device, but essential to the internal dynamics of the

speech," (Burgchardt 563) the importance of blog's standard organization of reverse chronology

is essential to the internal dynamics of blogs. By doing a close reading I will be able to clarify

the difference between corporate and personal blogs. Although it has been noted that finding the

effects of a close reading is hard to do, we are already aware of the popularity of these blogs as a general effect to their content.

Bloglovin' is a website that helps people discover and follow their favorite blogs. Today bloglovin' has over one and a half million members; seventy percent of them follow fashion blogs and over ninety percent of the members are female ("Bloglovin"). I selected the top blogs from bloglovin' as follows: 1) *Fashion Toast* (#1) 2) *Cupcakes and Cashmere* (#2) 3) *Fashion Squad* (#6). (I chose to exclude the top third through fifth blogs because they did not reach the criteria of fashion blogging I wish to discuss. The top third featured mens fashion, the top fourth featured just shoes, and the top fifth was a celebrity fashion blog.) These chosen blogs are highly personal and popular. The three corporate blogs are: 1) *College Fashion* 2) *The Budget Fashionista* and 3) *Fashionologie*. These three blogs are ranked within the top fifteen by factors that include but are not limited to: Rich Site Summary (RSS) membership, incoming links, Technorati ranking, and society site popularity, on a different sight, Blog Rank (Top 50 Fashion Blogs). Although *College Fashion* and *The Budget Fashionista* both started as personal blogs they have since flourished in the corporate world.

Independent Blogs

Fashion Toast

Fashion Toast, founded by Rumi Neely, ranked number one on bloglovin'. Neely is represented by Next Modeling Management in Los Angeles but also works with Les Pros Entertainment in Japan. According to Alexis Borges, director of Next Model Management, "We're treating bloggers as the next generation of people who will be used for advertising" (Kurutz). This being said, Neely, who began as a modest blogger, has infiltrated the modeling world with her new

representation. Even with Neely's recent success she has maintained the elements of a personal blog, by doing just that, keeping it personal, and as a result has managed to reign in over thirty-five thousand viewers per day back in 2009 (Peng).

Fashion Toast has a simple layout. Each entry is dated, with a creative title, followed by street style photos of Neely. Neely has essentially become a brand through her self-expression. Following the photos depicting Neely's outfit choice is a brief description of what she is wearing in italics as well as a paragraph length description with her personal interpretation for wearing the outfit as well as her daily activity that encouraged each outfit. Neely writes in a first person tone which also adds to the personal element. Following the brief description is a line marked "Categories," which can categorize the highlighted topics in each image. By creating categories *Fashion Toast* is able to archive each post. This in turn creates a never ending effect by allowing each post to link to archived posts. Lastly, each post ends with hypertext links to social media sights including: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest to share her post in the World Wide Web's intricate feature of linking site to site (see fig. 1). By using interactive forms Neely is able to create different outlets of self-expression. Neely's posts are highly personal which allows readers to connect with her. For example, on February 17, 2013, Neely posted a photo diary of her recent trip to Hong Kong. In her description that followed her photos Neely described the nostalgic experience of visiting Hong Kong, a city she lived in as a child for a year before her move to California. She expresses this excitement when she writes,

> There's such a familiarity and distance when it comes to places you "knew" as a child,
> the corner shops and absolutely unchanged star ferry made me yelp with the excitement
> of recognizing something but then when it came to logistics I was probably at least worse
> than any average tourist (*Fashion Toast*).

Neely's reverse chronological entries are embellished with far more pictures than words. In three consecutive posts Neely is featured in Northern California, followed by Hawaii, and then Hong Kong. Her documentation of her travels allows viewers to gain insight on her life, not just her outfit choice.

Advertisements are an easy way A-list bloggers are able to make money off of their creativity. Instead of being bombarded with ads, *Fashion Toast* has formatted it so its background represents one advertisement. Although this can confuse the reader because the background image is not directly linked with the blog, *Fashion Toast* appears to only allow advertisements pertaining to fashion. For example, Women's Wear Daily (WWD) is a popular, credible, apparel newspaper with online and print editions world wide. The ad is the background image, where as the content is in the foreground, and scrolls to reduce confusion (see fig. 2).

Cupcakes and Cashmere

Cupcakes and Cashmere created in 2008 focuses on independent blogger Emily Schuman. *Cupcakes and Cashmere* differs from a purely fashion blog in that it also contains elements of recipes, how to's, and decor. With the success of *Cupcakes and Cashmere* Shuman works full time on her blog with no staff. According to the frequently asked questions (FAQ) portion of *Cupcakes and Cashmere*, Shuman has been fortunate enough to partner with Coach, Forever 21, Juicy Couture, and currently Estee Lauder. Because *Cupcakes and Cashmere* ranks as the second top blog on bloglovin' Shuman is selective on the brands or companies she works with to ensure such offers align with her personal interests. This is crucial to the authenticity of her blog. She has also been granted the opportunity to publish her own book also called *Cupcakes and Cashmere* which was released in August 2012.

Cupcakes and Cashmere can be considered a personal interest blog with an emphasis on fashion, therefore the blog methodically divides up the sections (see fig 3). By clicking on the "outfits" tab, one is directed to a page of Schuman's looks organized by month and year posting back to September 2008. Thus, chronology can be used with a variety of layouts in blogging. The posts I will focus on are those pertaining to fashion. Schuman, like Neely, posts pictures of her street outfits. She does not have a standard way of arranging her photos and the description. For example, on February 4, 2013, Schuman posted a photo of her look, followed by a short description of the outfit, and a longer description of her personal day in the outfit. More photos follow the description but ultimately end with hypertext links to social media sights much like *Fashion Toast*.

Shuman's stylistic approach to writing is genuine and personal as if she was writing in a diary. The content emphasizes her personal life. For example, on February 7, 2013, Shuman commented, "I have a lot of playful items in my closet – sparkly shoes and cheeky prints. But I'm typically pretty traditional, even verging on conservative, when it comes to sweaters." The quote shows references to Schuman's personal life and frames her blogger identity. Although these popular blogs are viewed by thousands, they still make it essential to portray themselves as ordinary people.

Cupcakes and Cashmere is easy to navigate. In addition to the navigation bar at the top shown in figure 3, the blog also has an archive and top post section formatted to the right of the page (see fig 4&5). Although *Cupcakes and Cashmere* is a multi-interest blog, its top posts are all fashion oriented.

Fashion Squad

Fashion Squad, the third personal fashion blog, was developed by Carolina Engman in 2005. Unlike the previous two personal blogs, Engman offers an international perspective through her Swedish lifestyle. According to an interview Engman delivered by *Teen Vogue*, Engman expressed her beliefs on why bogs are such an important medium when she answered, "Blogs are the only medium capable of providing readers with a concise, instantaneous overview of today's facts and opinions" ("Blogger of the Moment").

 Fashion Squad has favored a particular layout. Each entry is signified by the title and the date. Underneath the title follows a single photo of Engman's street style with a description of her personal day in her outfit. The description of the entry is followed by a "continue reading" link above a series of small photos horizontally arranged to preview readers for a more extensive look into the post. Underneath the series of photos is another link with the number of comments that have been posted, and the ability to access the comments (see fig 6).

 Similar to *Fashion Toast*, *Fashion Squad* has categories to help archive her blog under each post. Unlike the previous two blogs, *Fashion Squad* does not provide multiple hyperlinks to further expand her page and followers, she only provides that of Facebook. Her simplistic layout is easy to navigate and it's content is not distracted by any ads on the page.

 Engman expresses her credibility as a fashion blogger with her presence at New York Fashion Week, modeling at photo shoots for brands such as Andemiu, attending galas such as the Elle Gala, hosting parties for Bloglovin', and showing of her trendy recent purchases. Through her descriptions she is able to personalize herself to her viewers by creating a first person narrative on her life.

Each independent fashion blog was filled with personal information, they were primarily

visual, and easy to navigate. Neely, Schuman, and Engman have become socialites of the

blogsphere with their widely viewed blogs. They are the leaders of independent fashion blogs

with multiple opportunities available to them such as advertising, product endorsement, book

deals, fashion shows, and red carpet events. As a result of their success each blogger is able to

devote their full time and attention to their blog. Although Engman offered a Swedish

perspective to fashion blogging, her format, style, and topics resembled the blogs of American

bloggers Neely and Schuman. Now that I've looked at independent blogs I will turn our attention

to corporate blogs.

Corporate Blogs

College Fashion

College Fashion, a popular fashion blog, started by Zephyr Basine in 2007 from her college

dorm room, turned into a corporate blog that employs college students across the United States.

College Fashion is a limited liability company (LLC), which means it has elements of a

corporate company and a partnership. Although by definition LLC is not a corporation, it is a

legal form of a company which allows it to fit under corporate blogs. *College Fashion* tailors

specifically to college aged females through its user friendly advice from hired college bloggers

around the country.

By having multiple bloggers working for *College Fashion*, the website has multiple

entries per day. There is always a constant flow of new information. Posts differ from stylistic

and visual approaches. For example, on February 9, 2013 Jenna from John Abbott College

posted an article, "Fashion Philosophy: Marie Antoinette," giving a brief history of Marie

Antoinette and giving examples how to incorporate a modern day whimsical appearance. A day earlier on February 8, 2013, Carina from Ohio University posted an article, "Class to Night Out: Geometric Print Dress," a weekly article which focuses on transforming your outfit from day to night. However, a commonality in the blog postings by different authors is when they end with the question, "What do you think?" This not only encourages feedback from viewers but also creates cohesiveness for *College Fashion*. Furthermore, with multiple bloggers it leaves the brand to be the title not the individual who is the author. *College Fashion* is the brand, not the individual bloggers.

  College Fashion has more of an extensive form for advertising on the page than the other personal blogs. Advertisements are featured on the top above the heading, in the right side column, at the bottom of the page, and in between posts. A tab at the top labeled "advertisement" also divulges deeper into an explanation of advertisement on *College Fashion* such as unique benefits of advertising and types of advertising they offer. *College Fashion* is confident in their success and as competitive outlet to display advertisements. They show their confidence by posting the monthly global page views (see fig. 7).

The Budget Fashionista

The Budget Fashionista started as a personal blog by Kathryn Finney in 2003. It has since evolved into a successful LLC and is an incredible influential fashion blog that attracts an audience of more than ten million visitors each year (Kathryn Finney). *The Budget Fashionista*'s personal niche is its ability to offer readers economically friendly fashion suggestions as well as keep them up to date on current trends. *The Budget Fashionista* tailors to a more mature audience; for example, instead of offering suggestion how to transform an outfit from school to

night, *The Budget Fashionista* offers suggestions on proper wedding attire in its post, "What to Wear for Evening Weddings: Wardrobe Suggestions for All Budgets."

Similar to *College Fashion*, *The Budget Fashionista* has multiple bloggers to ensure the website is constantly being updated. However, unlike *College Fashion*, *The Budget Fashionista* has days where there is only one update instead of four or five. The some individual bloggers of *The Budget Fashionista* have found a routine on what they post about. For example, Melissa C. does a series of "Blogger Roundup" and posts come from *The Budget Fashionista's* sister sight *MightyBeauty* in the series"Beauty Roundup." Melissa's "Blogger Roundup" series highlights personal style bloggers who portray the same trend. The "Beauty Icon" series pays tribute to beauty icons in fashion such as Billie Holiday. *The Budget Fashionista* is able to create a harmonious look for individual post by making them all look the same (see fig 8). Because *The Budget Fashionista* has a lot to offer, it organizes its topics by a navigation bar at the top of the page and is accompanied by a box to search the website (see fig 9). This organization can help viewers efficiently browse the blog without having to scroll through the archive of pages offered toward the bottom.

Like the other fashion blogs, *The Budget Fashionista* accepts advertisements that tailor to its readers. The ad space takes up the majority of the right hand side of the blog. It is not just one ad but four separate ad spots that contribute to the page. *The Budget Fashionista* notes its content partnerships with brands that include Lucky Magazine, AOL and Blogher. The information page on advertising also offers reasons why advertisers should partner with the *The Budget Fashionista*. For example, "Partnership with a multi-platform brand (web, tv, print, mobile) that consistently delivers positive consumer behavior necessary for a solid return on

investment" (*The Budget Fashionista*). Furthermore, the blog goes into detail on how much advertisement spots cost and quote a sponsor post at two thousand dollars.

Not only does Finney run a successful fashion blog, she also released her first book, *How to be a Budget Fashionista*. Her success as the CEO of one of the most popular fashion blogs has lead her to be featured and profiled in numerous media outlets such as, CNN, *The New York Times*, *InStyle*, and *The Wall Street Journal* (*The Budget Fashionista*).

Fashionologie

Fashionologie, created by Brian and Lisa Sugar, is not an LLC like the previous two corporate blogs; however, it is owned by Sugar Inc., an independent media brand composed of a network of blogs and e-commerce network sites tailored for women. *Fashionologie* is funded by Sequoia Capital and Institutional Ventura Partners (Popsugar).

At first the lay out can be confusing to readers because it is unclear if you are on the Popsugar webpage or *Fashionologie*. The heading of the website consists of Popsugar as the title with links above the title leading you to other interests on the Popsugar website such as "celebrities," "fitness," and "entertainment." Once scrolling down through *Fashionologie* the elements of a blog come to life. The date of each entry is posted on the right hand side of the post. On the left hand side of the post there is the entry title and the author. Because *Fashionologie* is a corporate blog, it employees multiple writers to keep a constant flow of information. *Fashionologie* tailors to a mature audience whose interest are high fashion. As a result, high end runway trends are a main focus. Bloggers at *Fashionologie* do at times post street style, a focal element in personal blogs. However, the street style are of random, chic women in major metropolitan cities such as New York and London (see fig 10). These posts on

street style are extensive. For example, a post done by Christina Perez on 14 February 2013, captured two hundred forty-seven photos of women outside of New York's Fashion Week.

Each link clicked on leads to an ad pop up, there are ads on the side, and options on the top that encouraging viewers to shop. The shop style link at the top leads viewers to the websites of certain brands. *Fashionologie* has linked blogging with e-commerce; they feature trends and offer links to websites to shop for the trends.

The corporate blogs each had their own niche pertaining to fashion. *The Budget Fashionista's* fashion frugality, *College Fashion's* young adult audience and university lifestyle, and *Fashionologies's* high end trends with additional links to e-commerce websites. They each had a unique page set up with an abundant amount of hyperlinks. Each of the three corporate blogs analyzed are all run by a brand. *College Fashion* and *The Budget Fashionista* are the brand in themselves whereas *Fashionologie* is run by the corporate brand Sugar after it's creators Brian and Lisa sugar.

Findings

Personal fashion bloggers are able to show their ethos through a variety of different measures. For example, showing opportunities in fashion offered to them, advertisements, brands they endorse, and events they attend enhances their expertise. Because the bloggers endorse products by wearing them in their street style photos, viewers see bloggers first hand experiences as trustworthy. Each of the creators of the personal blogs, Neely, Schuman, and Engman were simultaneously the authors for the personal blogs and, essentially, the brand. They are well known bloggers with a sense of leadership that can not be denied.

The personal blogs were simple and easy to navigate with few hyperlinks. The simplicity in their layout corresponded with the simplicity in their written posts. Neither personal blog wrote more than a paragraph in each post putting the emphasis on the photos in the post instead. The simplicity can also allude to the characteristic each blogger emphasized; a typical, ordinary, fashion-lover.

The corporate fashion blogs were able to display their ethos through their ability to staff multiple bloggers, the advertisements displayed on their pages, and even information in their "About" sections that emphasize their success. Each *College Fashionista*, *The Budget Fashionista*, and *Fashionologie* had their own speciality which can help their persuasiveness and information trustworthiness. Corporate blogs possess the ability to have staff which in turn creates more content and more frequent postings which is essential in the blogsphere. The corporate blogs created a brand out of their domain name unlike personal blogs that created brand through their individual personalities.

The layout of the corporate blogs discussed had very busy pages. The amount of options could be overwhelming to the reader but also allows for quick decision making. Furthermore, the corporate blogs lacked personalization by de-centering the authors of the posts. A crucial element to blogs is a way to archive the reverse chronological order of postings which each corporate blog included in their layout. The "About" section on the corporate blogs clearly tailored to brand seeking advertisement space on blogs, not to their readers. Corporate blogs may expose their blog to more advertisements than personal blogs, because viewers come from a variety of interest that do not have to align with each individual blogger. Because readers are ad-friendly, and fashion goes hand in hand with shopping, it is no surprise the importance advertisements have on blogs.

It is clear through an analysis and past literature review that uses and gratification applied by Armstrong and McAdams as well as Kaye is a clear motive on blogging. Similarly, expectancy theory, the most widespread way of defining individual motivation, has been successfully applied. The personal blogs received extrinsic rewards such as book deals and free products, however, they also achieved a great intrinsic reward knowing their creativity has created one of the most widely viewed fashion blogs. Not only does reading and posting on blogs create a sense of belonging mentioned by Kaye, the blog world is also seen in social functions such as red carpet events and fashion shows that embody that sense of being a part of something larger than their personal blog. After analyzing the personal blogs of Neely, Schuman and Engman, it has become evident that fashion blogs are a "space of identity construction" (407), as mentioned by Rocamora. Each personal blogger expressed their creativity through their style featured on their blog but also in the elements that composed their blog. From layout to their written posts, their individual personalities radiated off the page. The individuality exhibited on each personal blog corresponds with researchers Lu and Hsiao when they commented how women's usage of blogs was found to be strongly influenced by self-expression (Lu and Hsiao 152).

Conclusion

Blogs development on the World Wide Web began slow but has since flourished, attracting the attention of millions. Overall, this close reading provided insight to how personal blogs function differently from corporate blogs and how they are still able to achieve a high amount of success. Personal fashion bloggers are able to be the main focus where as corporate blogs de-centralizes it's bloggers. Personal blogs show how ordinary people are to become a

popular brand through their thoughts, mannerisms, and style. Because more and more blogs

continue to arise each day, it will be interesting for future research to map the popularity of

blogs, whether it be personal or corporate blogs that are favored amongst consumers.

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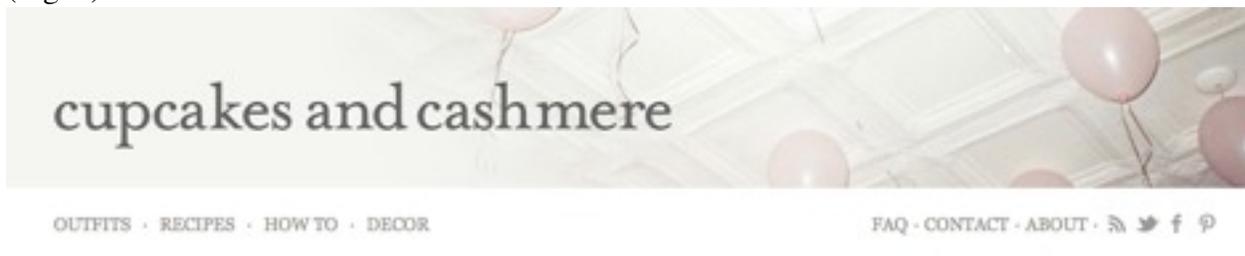
(Fig. 1)

photos by Colin Sokol

(The Reformation sweatshirt, T Alexander Wang skirt, Balenciaga boots, Proenza Schouler chain wallet)

Arrived in Hong Kong this morning, here's what I wore for the duration test of how long can I stay awake please let me make it till dark. Under normal circumstances I might go into detail about how pleased I am with my growing shrunken sweatshirt collection (this one even has shoulder pads! wtf!) but instead I am proud to say I'm typing this from a 25th story view of a neon lit city at 7:30 pm. Triumph. And now collapse.

CATEGORIES: ALEXANDER WANG, BALENCIAGA, BALENCIAGA CUTOUT BOOTS, PROENZA SCHOULER

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(Fig. 2)

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(Fig. 4)

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(Fig. 5)

Top Posts

Black on Black

Stripe on Stripe

Cap it Off

Winter Sun

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(Fig. 6)

NYC. We snapped these pictures the day before the snow blizzard hit New York and I can't believe how quickly the weather changed! I'm so happy that I brought this emerald green cashmere sweater with me to NY to keep me warm + brighten up my looks, it's definitely been a lifesaver during these past couple of days. Tonight I'm heading to the Bloglovin x Kenzo party which I'm co-hosting, and I'm so excited to finally get to catch up with all the people I haven't seen due to the usual fashion week madness!

Follow me on instagram @carolinaengman for more pictures from NY!

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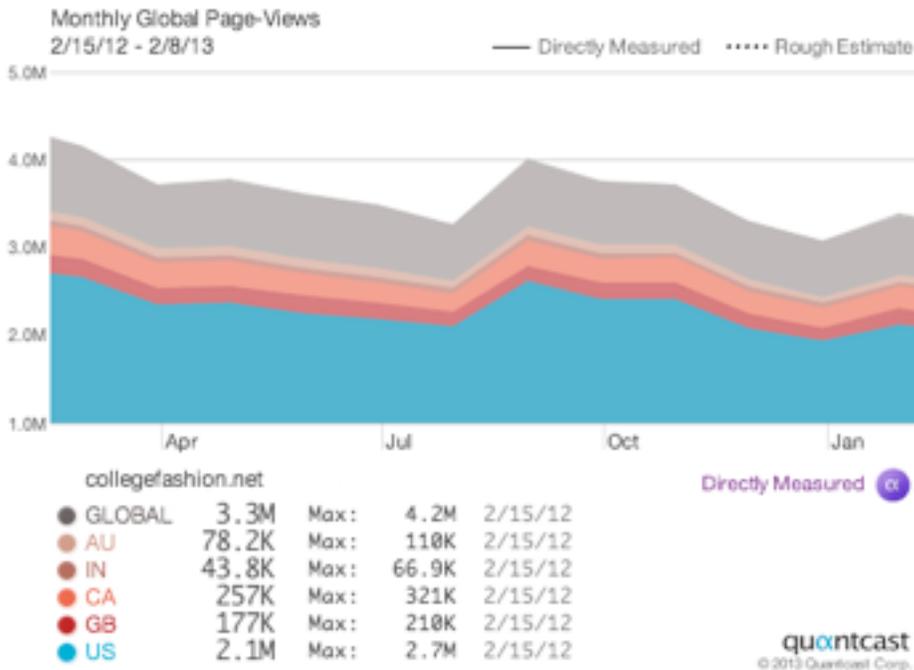👍 Like ❑ 21 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

Posted in **Fashion Week, Outfit** | Tagged **Celine, equipment, green, leopard, New York, Proenza Schouler**

before the storm   in Paris for Louis Vuitton   rainy days   nyfw photo diary

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(Fig. 7)

Monthly Global Page-Views
2/15/12 - 2/8/13   —— Directly Measured   ····· Rough Estimate

collegefashion.net				Directly Measured
● GLOBAL	3.3M	Max:	4.2M	2/15/12
● AU	78.2K	Max:	110K	2/15/12
● IN	43.8K	Max:	66.9K	2/15/12
● CA	257K	Max:	321K	2/15/12
● GB	177K	Max:	210K	2/15/12
● US	2.1M	Max:	2.7M	2/15/12

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(Fig. 8).

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(Fig. 9)

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(Fig. 10)

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