MARKS OF PROFESSIONALISM: ACADEMIC

WOMEN'S CLOTHING CHOICES AND

PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY

By

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Abstract: Guidelines surrounding "professional" dress in academic spaces can be implied or obvious, but instead of following a particular formula, these guidelines are viewed as a representation of professional accomplishment, developed and honed throughout a career. However, unlike pedagogical approaches to the composition classroom, professional dress for women is a continually debated idea, following multiple unwritten codes, cultural influences, and generational perspectives. While many points of academic research have centered on ambiguous recommendations about academic women's dress, none have conducted direct interviews based off of these recommendations. Furthermore, even more research centers on the perceptions of female academic's identities and how they influence perceptions of validity within academic spaces. In order to understand the gap between these two aspects of research, I explore how these recommendations influence academic women's perceptions about their scholarly identities.

      I posit that perceptions about the professional, physical, and behavioral presentation of the female instructor influences perceptions of validity in academic spaces, and these perceptions are rooted in the belief that a woman's physical presentation contains markers of her identity and capability in academic spaces. Therefore, I suggest a term that identifies this complicated way of seeing: the academic gaze. I suggest that this term can be used to identify the frames through which bodies are monitored, understood, and validated in academic geographies. The academic gaze draws on John Berger's identification of the assumed male heterosexual audience, the patriarchal organizational structure of academia, and the subordinate positioning of women and female-associated traits within those structures. Considering these perspectives on visual rhetoric, the academic gaze positions women at the intersection of objectification and professionalization, both of which favor masculine definitions of power and seek to remove or deny female agency. Ultimately, my exploration of the ways in which the female body is viewed in academic spaces creates the basis for understanding women's experiences in academic spaces and the implications of the perceptions of women and their alignment or dissonance with the professional recommendations made by and to female academics for success.

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CHAPTER I

INVISIBLE GUIDELINES, IDENTITY, AND THE ACADEMIC GAZE

Prologue

It's November of 2013, and I'm attending the Keynote Luncheon for the Oklahoma Women in Higher Education Conference. The keynote lunch speaker, who we'll call Donna Fish, is listed simply in the program as "Donna Fish, CPC, CSC." I and my fellow attendees wondered at these unfamiliar acronyms and were unsure what to expect during this lunchtime presentation. As the lunch attendees quickly discovered, Donna Fish was a personal style consultant and her presentation focused on the dress and personal appearance of women in professional careers. Fish introduced the need for her presentation to the audience of women in higher education, which included administrators, professors, instructors, adjuncts, graduate and undergraduate students, and other professional women, as a physical manifestation of competency through clothing. Fish asserted that a woman's competency in the professional sphere lies in her ability to properly dress her body. The remainder of her presentation outlined the criteria and guidelines for properly dressing different kinds of female bodies.

I watch as Fish tells over 200 professional women in the room that "Your bra is the foundation of all your clothes. This is how people perceive us." I listen as Fish tells me that I must position my breasts front and center on my chest, to lead with them, because they must create the right impression with my future employers, who she says are men. I listen as Fish says a visual evaluation of my body will be the way men will determine my professional competency.

I watch as Fish holds cardboard shapes up to her body: a square, a triangle, a circle, and an hourglass. These cardboard cutouts represent our body shapes, says Fish, and I wonder which shape represents my broad shoulders, long torso, wide hips, and strong thighs. I watch as Fish shows pictures of "plus-sized" women next to images of fruit, showing that I could be a pear, or an apple, or even a banana. I listen as she tells me how to cover up and hide every bodily flaw, even ones I didn't know I had.

I watch as Fish provides color profiles for the professional women to follow in their clothing choices, but see these profiles only show white women. I listen as Fish tells us to physical get up from our seats and move into groups based off our color profiles. I don't move. The seven other women at the table debate whether to leave in an act of protest. I look over my shoulder and see the women of color in attendance grouped in the back of the room, looks of fuming anger and bewilderment on their faces. Near the doors, I notice a woman in a hijab staring at images of Western women that do not represent her body. I listen as Fish continues to encourage us to move from our seats, saying "you're going to be with your own people."

Many women walk out, and I find myself at a personal and professional crossroads. I am beyond offended, but somehow entranced by the fact that this presentation exists, that I am in the midst of a blatant moment of racism, sexism, body-privileging, and just overt ignorance. I stay, and start to frantically take pictures of Fish's slides, write down what she says, and speak to the other women about their reactions to this experience. I am not alone in my anger and confusion. I don't know why this is happening here, at a place where academic women are being told how to overcome the patriarchal structures of higher education. So I write, photograph, and record, and the experience ignites a fire inside me to discover where these perspectives come from and why. As an academic woman, feminist, and rhetorician, I refuse to accept these perceptions as the norm, the way things will always be. Instead, I set out to illuminate these injustices for academic women and hopefully, eventually, change the ideologies that created them.

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As a female instructor and student of composition and rhetoric, I have sought out instructional sources regarding the professional dress of academics. However, the recommendations on these presentation strategies are as varied as perspectives on the best pedagogies, indicating a lack of decision and overarching consensus in the discipline. However, unlike pedagogical approaches to the composition classroom, professional dress for women is a continually debated idea, following multiple unwritten codes, cultural influences, and generational perspectives. In 1964, in an extensive study of academic women at Penn State, Jessie Bernard explored the implications of clothing for gender performance and perceptions of academic belonging as a part of a greater survey on female-specific experience in academia. More recently, scholars and academics have examined this topic from various perspectives, but the continual conversations amongst colleagues, on social media, and blogs indicate that academic women are still very concerned about this subject. However, the discussions of professional dress are traditionally and more recently located outside of scholarly discourse. Dress for Success, interview manuals, fashion magazine spreads, and other publications address the fashion choices for women seeking professional careers, and yet these concerns, ranging from the 1950's for secretarial work, into the 1980's for career women, and beyond are still relevant for women today.

One of the characteristic features of "professional dress," most specifically for women, is the ambiguity of guidelines and expectations. Indeed, this is the focus of the introduction of *Women's Ways of Making It in Rhetoric and Composition*, an instructional guide for academic women written by three leading female rhetoricians: Diane Davis, Roxanne Mountford, and Michelle Ballif. I sought out this text for my own personal success in the profession in the beginning of my graduate work and was surprised by what I found. While the text provides testimonials and recommendations toward navigating multiple tiers of academia, the authors lead

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readers into a book about professional academic success through a story of graduate students secretly rifling through their female processor's closet:

> The inspiration for this project came many years ago, when Michelle and Diane were in graduate school together. They both admired a female faculty member who seemed to have "it"— whatever "it" is: she was always impeccably dressed, impeccably prepared for the seminars she taught, impeccably articulate, impeccably published. In a word, to name "it", she was impeccably *professional*…Indeed, one evening, Cynthia Haynes took the opportunity to snoop around, and reported to the group, in hushed whispers, a detailed description of said faculty member's closet. It was, Cynthia reported, impeccable. Skirts, slacks, suits, sweaters: all neatly hung and categorized…They could only aspire to such discipline and order. (vii)

While there are multiple factors at work in this passage, I would like to start with the order of qualifications of this professor's "it" factor: this professor is "impeccably dressed," a description that leaves a lot of details to the imagination. The prioritization of physical presentation over preparedness, orality, and professional participation speaks to the difficulty of such an accomplishment, in addition to the value placed on this aspect of female professional life. Furthermore, this professor's closet was interpreted by her students as a representation of "discipline and order," indicating that professional dress is a skill to be mastered, and a manifestation of internal characteristics.

But as a reader, I was left wondering: What is the academic "it" factor? How do I know "it" when I see it, and how can I ever achieve "it"? I do not think Davis, Ballif, and Mountford meant to cause such confusion for upcoming scholars, but I also doubt they could define this "it" factor if asked. While the authors detail the different areas of accomplishment within the "it" factor, I am curious how academic women might unpack the "it" for themselves. What are the

secrets to success in academic professions, and what does that have to do with clothing? How does clothing play a role in the perception of professional identity? What are the filters for these perceptions? These questions led me to wonder how women try to convey their professional identity through their clothing. If a female professor is "impeccably dressed," what might that say about her professional identity?

The interpretation of professional dress as an indicator of characteristics of identity is not singular to *Women's Ways.* Women encounter visual rhetoric surrounding clothing choices in their daily lives. However, this example is intriguing for its emphasis on professionalism, specifically in academia. While these graduate students noted the order and organization of their professor's closet, the criteria for evaluating these pieces of wardrobe are vague, even obscured through the listing of clothing items without associated details. However, other discussions of professional dress in this book go into more specific detail, from panty hose shade to the politics of shoe selection. The authors preface this section with a discussion of the politics of dressing for an interview, specifically in relation to men's dress that would convey the same professionalism and competency: "[W]hat might an equally qualified *female* candidate wear so as to not, through her dress and manner, 'challenge interviewers to a fight'? That, we submit, is an infinitely more complicated question. How might she dress in a way that 'talks their language' and invites them to 'discuss ideas and values' with her?" (33). In this passage, the authors identify the differences between professional dress for women and men: women's clothing must align with the dominant language of power in professional atmospheres, whereas men's attire already speaks that language. Yet, this dominant language has no clearly established lexicon, and an ambiguous grammar that leaves academic women wondering how their attempts to speak the language affects their professional identities.

Guidelines surrounding "professional" dress in academic spaces can be implied or obvious, whether written, publicly or privately discussed, or even visually evaluated, but for female academics, the guidelines of professional dress remain as much a mystery of

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accomplishment now as they were to Ballif and Davis in graduate school. Instead of following a

particular formula, these guidelines are viewed as a representation of professional

accomplishment, developed and honed throughout a career. While many critics of men's clothing

could argue the rules of professional dress are just as complicated, women's clothing choices fall

under further scrutiny of appropriateness, fashion, and the degree to which the female body is

sexualized by the clothing, along with other factors. Furthermore, as men have continually been

seen within higher education and positions of leadership in academia, their clothing (suit, tie,

button-down shirt, slacks, etc.) is expected and viewed as the norm within these spaces, thereby

positioning women's clothing as a deviation from this expectation and giving the professional

man's clothing power and privilege.

Yet, one might ask, how does the clothing itself constitute or reinscribe power structures

and privileges, and why does it matter? Clothing is the filter through which we view the body

(and subsequently perceive or guess at the details of that person's identity), and the filter contains

markers of wealth, ethnic background, personal taste, bodily awareness, gender presentation,

situational perceptions and expectations, and many other factors that shape perceptions of the

person who wears the clothing. However, this perception is not the sole responsibility of the

wearer: perceptions are shaped by the viewer, the situation, the space, and other factors that the

wearer cannot necessarily control. Therefore, understanding the interactions of all of these factors

can be a complicated process that many have left unexplored, especially when faced with the

difficulty of defining these factors that can be ever changing and continually undefined.

In the case of *Women's Ways*, instead of addressing the ways in which the professional

dress might accent or fit the body that wears it, the authors analyze women's clothing selection as

presenting a cohesive narrative of the interviewee, particularly one that engages the interviewer in

the types of professional conversations that would generate a positive result, namely a job.

Clothing is used as a means of marking identity, whether in a blue-collar job through a uniform or

in academia through "professional dress," and for both genders, clothing choices fall within the

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predominant perceptions of power, whether a person has power or is seeking to gain access to that power. If academic women seek to succeed and advance professionally within their field, appearance becomes a factor as women are faced with clothing choices that conform or appeal to those perceptions in order to gain access, or defy the norm as a means of making a statement. Whatever the choice, academic women have few resources for exploring or even defining the boundaries and expectations of academic women's dress, and the choices they do have provide ambiguous recommendations that do not address how their clothing choices work as a filter on viewing their professional identity. To further compound the problem, the lack of understanding and scholarship about the power and privilege politics of clothing choice further clouds potential analysis of the discourse of professional dress in academia, and attempts to keep women in a subordinate professional position to men through. While the first problem of lack of resources could be partially solved by more recommendation texts that address academic clothing choices for women, the mere existence of these texts does not resolve the second problem, which is the lack of understanding of how these clothing choices work to shape perceptions of the academic woman's body in relation to her professional identity. Instead of asking what clothing choices academic women *should* be making, I wonder what the language that is used to describe women in relation to their clothing choices can tell us about the perceptions of their professional identity.

The language of fashion and gender have been explored by fashion and cultural theorists and rhetoricians alike, but the language of power in relation to professional dress and gender is more ambiguous. Instead of attempting to identify that language only through written recommendations on women's professional dress, I seek to understand how the discourse surrounding professional dress indicates perceptions about the female body and the identity of the female academic. I will do this analysis in two ways: first, I will analyze the rhetoric surrounding the female body through an analysis of the female body as an object with limited agency through the lens of visual rhetoric. Then, in order to understand how the objectified female body is understood in academia, I will explore the borders, boundaries, and expectations of what I term

"academic spaces," based on Nedra Reynolds' theorizing of geographies and place. Ultimately, my exploration of the ways in which the female body is viewed in academic spaces creates the basis for understanding women's experiences in academic spaces and the implications of the perceptions of women and their alignment or dissonance with the professional recommendations made by and to female academics for success.

Ways of Seeing the Female Body

In order to understand the way the female academic's professional identity is read through perceptions of her body, we must first understand how the female body is looked at, and by what audiences. The female body is consistently monitored for its appropriateness and validity in public spheres, but these guidelines of appropriateness are vague and ever-changing depending on many situational factors. However, the historical positioning of the female body as an object to be viewed, literally seen through a particular lens, provides us with a means through which to understand the approaches behind these ways of seeing. While many scholars have examined the female body as an object, John Berger asserts that in the artistic and visual representations of women, the female body, and thus the identity of the woman appears, yet does not act (Berger). This creates the framework for viewing the female body as an image, which is viewed within borders and frames that construct the reader's response to that image.[1]

Walter Benjamin's discussion of the reproducibility of art, particularly the ways in which that art is viewed, is particularly helpful in this case. When art is viewed, the constraints through which the audience can interpret the meaning and authenticity of the image are limited by a number of factors, the most pertinent (to this discussion, at least) being the frames through which the audience views the image. The constraints of seeing limits the audience's potential for interaction and connection with the image, which also affects potential for identification. In his

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[1] I am not suggesting that this objectification of women is ideal or valid, but I do wish to analyze the means through which the female body is objectified in order to view the rhetorically strategies behind this positioning of the woman as object rather than individual.

discussion of the role of the sight in film versus on stage, Benjamin asserts that "the audience's identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera" (228). The double-vision of the audience looking at the frame and the frame looking at the actor exemplifies the multiple ways the image is constructed and constricted, limiting audience interpretation by these borders and boundaries. Benjamin addresses reproducibility of an image through the camera lens and how that process shapes the audience's interpretation of information, which is a comparable process to the ways women's bodies are viewed as objects and also through the filter of clothing. In this comparison, the camera represents the way in which the female body is viewed and framed for a specific interpretation by any audience, literally shaping the viewer's interpretation of the image. However, in reality, there is no camera; instead, we can envision an invisible lens through which women are consistently monitored and examined, rather than engaged with as autonomous subjects with agency.

Indeed, if we consider that women view themselves though a perspective other than their own, this perpetuates a prioritization of gazes on anything deemed feminine. The most visible representation of femininity is the female body, which has been consistently objectified and positioned as a visual to be criticized, rather than part of an individual identity. Women are therefore positioned as objects to be viewed (even through their own eyes), rather than subjects capable of action and agency. The double-viewing of an image is especially applicable to viewing the female body. Berger asserts that the female body is examined through a default heterosexual male gaze, and therefore is positioned to appeal to that audience. "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at…The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object — and most particularly an object of vision: a sight" (47). The act of a woman examining herself through the eyes of a man mimics the double-vision of the camera and actor on the audience; the woman's perspective on herself is filtered and framed through these assumed perspectives. However, this viewing can also be problematic, as the woman's behavior based on these assumptions can reinforce these ways of seeing: "Every

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woman's presence regulates what is and is not 'permissible' within her presence. Every one of her actions — whatever its direct purpose or motivation — is also read as an indication of how she would like to be treated" (46-7). Therefore, even though her intention might be otherwise, a woman's presence and physical presentation could reify her objectification, though the ways in which this might occur are undetermined. I would argue that as a woman occupies a space (which, when occupied by a group of people could be classified as a geography), her body is judged within the perceptions and expectations of that space. Therefore, meaning is literally written on her body through the ways in which it is framed.

Considering how images are introduced or framed, we can assume that this method of viewing the presentation of the body establishes a particular way of seeing that influences the reader's perception of meaning. "The meaning of an image is changed according to what one sees immediately beside it or what comes immediately after it" (Berger 29). Therefore, if an image is introduced as the correct or appropriate way of doing something, then the viewer will assume that these constraints are the only ones allowed in this framework. If a woman is presented as an object, she will be treated as such. If a woman is presented as an individual with authority, then we can assume that proportionate reactions will follow. Roland Barthes' "Rhetoric of the Image" points us to an understanding of the audience reaction to such images, even when the entry to those images is carefully constructed: "If all these signs are removed from the image, we are still left with a certain information matter; deprived of all knowledge, I continue to 'read' the image, to 'understand' that it assembles in a common space a number of identifiable (namable) objects, not merely shapes and colors" (35). Barthes' interpretation of signs as a means through which we can interpret meaning is an ideal way to understand how the markers of clothing, makeup, hairstyle, and other presentational factors can influence how a body is 'read,' particularly through perceptions of the validity of that body. However, the presentation of validity is dependent on multiple factors, particularly through perceptions of the professionalism of women in the academic sphere. The feminization of teaching has been extensively documented by composition

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scholars, and many women have traditionally occupied the role as teacher, which plays into perceptions of the nurturing mother stereotype of women, particularly in secondary education. However, in higher education and academia, men have traditionally dominated the roles of professor, instructor, and administrator, creating an expectation of the male body within those career paths. Therefore, if an audience's gaze has been shaped to expect men in roles of leadership and authority in academic instruction, then when that audience envisions the role of "the professor," the figure of the professor will be rendered male.

As academia has been a traditionally male-dominated space, expectations of that space center around images of male professors and men in positions of leadership. Sue Ellen Holbrook's "Women's Work: The Feminization of Composition" details the extent to which women have been historically marginalized in the academy, specifically by being perceived as nurturing, teaching roles in English departments. Holbrook's extensive historical review of women's roles in higher education shows the continual subordination of women's work, their lower pay scales, slow advancement, and disproportionate publishing rate when compared to male professors. "So, men develop knowledge and have the higher status; women teach, applying knowledge and serving the needs of others, and have the lower status" (205). This historical framing of women's work and therefore women's roles on campuses creates a gendered expectation about the power women hold in higher education, and they are, as Holbrook has outlined, less frequently in positions of power compared to men. Furthermore, Susan Miller asserts that even in the formative graduate level, perceptions of who should move up the academic ladder shapes their potentials for acquiring and maintaining positions of power within the academy: "Drops in doctoral enrollments in the 1970s and 1980s have been decreases in *male numbers,* not in numbers of females, so concurrent drops in full-time tenurable appointments have affected women most directly. Women, by and large, fill the temporary jobs teaching composition that are the residue from declines in 'regular' appointments" (124). This means that while female instructors are numerous on campuses, they are more likely to hold subordinate

positions to men, and when the reverse is true, the gender expectations of these roles cause a disruption in the audiences' gaze on these women. The incongruity of expectation and image cause the audience to question the intended message. However, in this situation, the disrupted expectations of academic spaces causes women to find ways of asserting their validity in that space, hence the discussion of ways in which to convey professionalism through clothing choice. In order to assert validity within an academia, women must not only navigate the power associations with their actual campus roles, but also the male associations with power and the objectification of the female body.

Academic Spaces and the "Academic Gaze"

Meaning is written on our bodies not just by the way the body is dressed and presented, but by the spaces that body occupies and is seen to belong. Academia itself occupies many spaces, whether college campuses, conferences, job interviews, and other spaces with academic connotations. But within and around those spaces, feelings of belonging can not only resonate from the people who occupy those spaces, but from the discursive situation itself. Deborah Brandt has explored the concept of discursive belonging through her work on literacies, and the discourses of academia, whether written or spoken, can emphasize belonging to some over others simply through the reinforcement of particular perspectives and discourses. Indeed, in her study of spatial and geographic literacies, Nedra Reynolds looks to cultural geography in order to "study the ways cultures are contested spatially and how identity and power are reproduced in the very days in mundane, ordinary landscapes" (56). Her understanding of the relationship between the space and behavior, ideals, and standards stems from the argument that "[a] person's sense of place, while a result of many layered effects is quite directly related to her body in space" (57). Building off Reynolds' argument, I assert that when discourse moves beyond what is written or spoken, and instead out of a visual analysis of a body, that gives an indication of the boundaries and expectations of spaces.

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Reynolds' work on geographies of writing is especially helpful in understanding how these spaces are formed and maintained, and the ways of seeing and knowing that are shaped by and within these spaces. Reynolds draws on the fields of cultural geography and cartography to understand how impressions of spaces are formed: "in their attempt to understand how identities are constructed in space, through experiences with place, cultural geographers insist on explicitly material notions of culture, not abstract ones" (57). The focus on materiality in identity construction is crucial for understanding the conditions in which people feel a sense of belonging or othering, and how the material conditions of spaces represent the ideological perspectives that are created, housed, and perpetuated by those spaces. If cultural ideologies can be identified by the material conditions of a space, then how can we identify the ideologies of academic culture through an analysis of academic spaces?

First, we must identify academic spaces, both ideologically and physically. Academics share many common experiences like conference presentations, committee meetings, department orientations, seminars, job interviews, and much more. While women have occupied jobs within academia for many years, the roles in which women have succeeded have significantly changed. Moving from subordinate positions of secretary, assistant, and adjunct instructor to PhD student, tenure-line professor, and administrator has shifted the ways in which women have been viewed within academia. With these career shifts, women have literally occupied new territory, places which carry the same themes and expectations of academic professionalism, though in different degrees. However, as the authors of *Women's Ways* have actively questioned, how do women assert their professional identities in these traditionally male-occupied spaces?

Reynolds' analysis of geographies is integral for the identification of academic spaces and the influences those spaces have over people's perceptions of validity, professionalism, and acceptable bodies within those spaces. Indeed, Reynolds states, "[p]laces only become meaningful when bodies occupy them, when people move through them or stay a while or something in between. If the bodies in a place are pretty much all the same, bodies marked as

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different will sense borders and boundaries, even if they haven't been erected intentionally"

(145). If we consider the visual basis for analysis of bodies, particularly within spaces where the

predominant figures have been male, then the female body will be fundamentally othered within

those spaces by the visual perpetuation of masculinity within academic spaces. Furthermore, if

bodies are evaluated within academic spaces for validity and professionalism and some bodies are

"marked as different," how can those marks be read, and what can the marks tell us about that

person's academic identity? The authors of *Women's Ways* attempt to answer this question by

contextualizing their recommendations for success within professional dress guidelines, but that

move does not clarify the power structures at work that regulate these recommendations and

shape the perceptions of professionalism in academic spaces.

Instead, the focus on the ambiguous "it" factor keeps the achievement of academic

women's professionalism at an unreachable height, separating it from tangible goals (like those

associated with tenure requirements and other career advancement) and moving it to the realm of

hopes and dreams. Like Davis, Ballif, and Mountford, we can only "aspire to such discipline and

order," but when the stakes are a successful embodiment of professional identity and the means

are a perfectly stocked and organized closet, how might an academic woman ever achieve that

goal (vii)? *Women's Ways* presents clothing as the gateway through which professional identity

can be conveyed, and insist that it is the filter through which professional identity is read on

women's bodies. While clothing is not the only marker through which professional identity can

be read, for women, whose bodies are viewed as objects and subordinate to men in academic

spaces, clothing is an integral part of understand perceptions of academic women's professional

identities. Therefore, in order to understand not only the power structures that establish these

ways of seeing women in academic spaces, but also the discourses of professionalism

surrounding women's clothing, I argue that an analysis of women's clothing choices provides the

means through which to understand how these bodily markers are read, and what they indicate

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not only about academic women, but also about the perceptions of academic women's professional identities within academic spaces.

To further the analysis of the marks of professionalism in academic clothing, I suggest a term that identifies the complicated way of seeing that permeates academic spaces: the academic gaze. While some scholars have used this term as a means of understanding the labor divide within academic spheres, the default patriarchal perspective, and developing reflexivity in research practices, the term "gaze" has a strong theoretical history, especially with the French feminists. Indeed, Hélène Cixous' "The Laugh of the Medusa" discusses the ways in which women are viewed in detail, and argues that women can only liberate themselves from the default heterosexualized gaze and reclaim their own perspective by writing their own experiences, gender, and sexuality:

> To write. An act which will not only 'realize' the decensored relation of woman
> to her sexuality, to her womanly being, giving her access to her native strength,
> her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept
> under seal; it will tear her away from the superegorized structure in which she
> has always occupied the place reserved for the guilty (guilty of everything, guilty
> at every turn: for having desires, for not having any; for being origin, for being
> 'too hot'; for not being both at once; for being too motherly and not enough; for
> having children and not having any; for nursing and not nursing…)…We must
> kill the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing. Inscribe the
> breath of the whole woman. (1527)

This term is used in French feminist theory, and often from a psychoanalytic perspective, which both Cixous and Irigaray demonstrate in their writing.

> Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable
> language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes,
> they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse,

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including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word "silence,"

the one that, aiming for the impossible, stops short before the word "impossible"

and writes it as "the end." (1531)

I suggest that this term can be used to identify the frames through which bodies are monitored, understood, and validated in academic spaces. The academic gaze draws on Berger's identification of the assumed male heterosexual audience, the patriarchal organizational structure of academia, and the subordinate positioning of women and female-associated traits within those structures. Furthermore, I suggest that the academic gaze places women in a double-bind, much like the doubly viewed perspective that Benjamin identifies through the camera. Considering these perspectives on visual rhetoric, the academic gaze positions women at the intersection of objectification and professionalization, both of which favor masculine definitions of power and seek to remove or deny female agency.

In order to acquire and maintain validity within academic spaces, women have adapted their behaviors and challenged the default expectations of academia to include female characteristics. However, many aspects of gendered power dynamics persist, the most notable being the associations of professional identity and clothing. As previously noted, these expectations and guidelines are unclear, but what is evident is that they seek to combat the default expectations of men in positions of academic power.

While one of these factors might impede women's progress within that environment, their combination and perpetuation create a complex web through which women seek to navigate and find space to assert their identities. Furthermore, if academic women's bodies are being viewed for signs of their professional identity through the factors possibly read through their clothing, then this presents the body as an object, a text to be read. However, this text is layered and continually shifting, which resists easy analysis. By utilizing Kristie Fleckenstien's concept of slippery texts, which "are artifacts that keep us positioned on the edges that blur, the edges where literacy evolves," we can more easily understand the borders on which the academic

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woman's body is perceived in academic spaces (105). The intersection between the sexualized female body and the professionalized female body creates a blurring of meaning, and instead of falling within the strictly established guidelines of professional dress, women as slippery texts push the boundaries of accepted physical markers of their identities, providing further opportunities for identification between women and challenging perceptions about the marks of professionalism on the female body.

Furthermore, female academic's identities have the potential to be reduced to a single identification, not only resisting the slippery texts concept of movement, but also marginalizing the academic potential for women. A simplistic, singular label limits the potential for interaction and expression of professional identity. Krista Ratcliffe's *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness* provides a clarifying explanation of this phenomenon:

> [I]dentification is inextricably linked with identity but does not directly correspond to it. In other words, although an identification may inform a person's identity, a person's identity cannot be reduced to a single identification. No single identification solely defines a person's identity; he or she is a compilation of many identifications. This distinction between identification and identity is incredibly important. It demonstrates how people are influenced by their identifications with cultural categories but also how people are not rendered identical by these identifications. (51)

If women seek to push beyond singular identifications to express their identity, this can cause a slippage of meaning, a discord in ways of seeing that body and identity. It furthermore does not reflect the double vision of the women as both vision and sight, and neglects to acknowledge the spatial forces at work that create and reinforce perceptions and expectations of the academic woman. Indeed, women actively work against perceived connotations of meaning through their clothing choice, particularly when it could invite unwanted sexual attention. While *Women's Ways* provides specific recommendations for women to dress in ways that convey a professional

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identity without invoking sexual connotations, the "slippery text" approach addresses women's efforts to desexualize her body in academic spaces, which places the definition of women's professional identity at odds with the default male heterosexual gaze and creates a productive cognitive dissonance about the female body in academic spaces.

Dissonance can indeed be productive if it brings attention to previously unknown alternatives, in this situation, alternative or blurring representations of the female professional identity that reflects the multiplicity of identifications possible for women. Fleckenstein pushes not only for redefinition of women as texts, but an increase in the complexity of these definitions: "What I must do, in my life and in my classroom, is highlight not the dangers inherent in slippage, but the possibilities for richer definitions, more multi-faceted constructions of identity, including professional identity. Both sets of reactions illustrate important ways that genre slippage opens up our teaching to the evolution of literacies at the point where boundaries collapse and coalesce" (110-111). While *Women's Ways* authors seeks to define professional dress guidelines in ways that allow women to succeed within their academic career, it also provides the means through which women could understand the complexities of expressing their professional identities within the male-dominated power structures of academia. However, female academics need to understand that the root of these guidelines lie in the objectification and sexualization of the female body, and it is those ways of seeing, along with the appeals to male-gendered power, that determine the ways in which women are viewed as professional in academic environments. As female academics continually seek out recommendations for professional dress as ways to survive and thrive within this male-dominated environment, Fleckenstein's self-advice is inspiring: women must continually push and blur the boundaries of professional dress in order challenge perceptions about the markers of their identities and increase the possibilities forces identification between women in male-dominated academia.

My goal, then, is to identify how these recommendations and slippages of meaning occur within academic women's lives, and what these women's experiences tell us about the marks of

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professionalism that are read through bodies and clothing. The "it" factor resonates through academic women's minds, and I seek to understand what conditions create and work against the achievement and maintenance of having "it." Feminist rhetorical scholarship asks scholars to seek out practical applications for theory, and it is that tradition I follow. As a feminist rhetorical researcher, my goal is to not only grow in my reflexive approaches to rhetorical scholarship, but also to negotiate scholarly identities—personal, professional, and perceived—and question the potentials for agency within this balance. In the chapters that follow, I seek to fulfill this goal not only for myself, but for other academic women who question their bodily presentations for professionalism, who wonder at the hidden meanings behind recommendations from books like *Women's Ways,* and who continually attempt to assert their professional identities in academic spaces that attempt to shape, regulate, and control their lives. As the next chapter shows, gathering information about academic women's experiences is not only crucial to understanding the power structures inherent in academic spaces, but also in defining the expectations of the academic gaze and its effects on academic women's success.

CHAPTER II

THE INTERVIEWS: WOMEN'S EXPRESSIONS OF EVERYDAY CLOTHING
EXPERIENCES

*"[F]eminist rhetorical scholarship is now moving far beyond the rescue, recovery, and
(re)inscription of a diversity of women participants and on to the establishing of new watermarks
of regard and worthiness in rhetorical studies more generally for the methodologies that we have
been using and the types of insights that such methodologies have the capacity to yield" (Royster
and Kirsch 31).*

*"Metaphorically, we link 'tacking in' to the use of long-standing analytical tools…in order to
focus closely on existing resources, fragmentary or otherwise, and existing scholarship to assess
what we now understand and to speculate about what seems to be missing" (Royster and Kirsch
72).*

In order to concretely explore the factors that constitute the academic gaze, and to find
evidence that it exists, we need to go to the everyday experiences of academic women. As a
feminist rhetorical researcher, I question the approaches to scholarship that have been taught in
traditional research methods courses. Where are women in the rhetorical tradition? What do
female researchers encounter differently than men? How might the approaches to scholarship and
research be influenced by gender? Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa Kirsch's widely

acknowledged foundational feminist research text, *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies,* tackles these questions for feminist scholars, particularly those in rhetoric, and asks what methods feminist researcher might utilize or include in order to understand women's experiences and roles in everyday life.

The difficulty of studying academic women is not just in the records of adjunct pay differences, nor difficulties with maternity leave, or other gendered differences identified by scholarship. No, instead it is in the unwritten moments, those that women may be hesitant to share, the unspoken, yet resonant experiences that shape academic women's daily lives that go unrecorded. And why is gathering this information so difficult? The problem is twofold. First, most scholarships pursues research that is tangible: data that can be measured, quantified, and demonstrated through traditional examples. These sorts of research projects focus on writing, narratives, speeches, and other such acts that can be readily compared and analyzed, and therefore more easily researched and argued and subsequently published. Women and other marginalized figures exist outside of the dominant paradigm of male-privileged academia, which places them on the periphery of academic spaces. Second, analyzing academic women's experiences requires interrogating felt meaning, tone, subtle discourses, whispers behind backs or even blatant remarks, and these moments and experiences are nuanced and complex. As an academic woman myself, I knew these conversations existed, as I had observed and participated in them myself, but women's reluctance to speak to these concerns without linking to their identities speaks to their fear of retaliation and negative associations with these gender-specific hurdles in their professional careers. With this research, I seek to do what many other feminist researchers have attempted before me: bring together these women's stories to validate these experiences and

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concerns, bring them out of the periphery and to the forefront not only of academic thought, but also of scholarly discourse about research methodologies. *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* provides a means through which to identify and analyze these felt experiences, not only through shaping the approaches of the researcher, but also challenging the methods and sites in which research exists: "The idea is to account for what we 'know' by gathering whatever evidence can be gathered and ordering it in a configuration that is reasonable and justifiable in accord with basic scholarly methodologies" (71).

Royster and Kirsch challenge feminist researchers to consider alternate sites of meaning that could illuminate women's experiences, and an essential part of that is an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship. One of the difficulties of feminist rhetorical scholarship is the lack of a definite methodological framework within this ideological approach, and *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* is an effort to create a foundation for these approaches. However, instead of limiting the potential methodologies available for feminist researchers, Royster and Kirsch encourage active reflection of the researcher's perspective in order to provide the means to expand these approaches in the future. Their focus on the interdisciplinary framework is not only reflective of feminist collaborative approaches, but also allows for more experimentation in feminist rhetorical research projects in order to hone these research practices. "These reflective and reflexive practices have predisposed us to understand the inevitability that, more than likely, there will be factors and dimensions of scenes and situations that we may not notice and especially so if we fail to exercise a direct and specific commitment to look and look again, listen and listen again, think and think again recursively" (77).

It is with that mindset and goal that I ask: what might we learn from looking more closely at women's experiences with clothing in academic spaces? How is the bodily presentation of a female academic influenced by those spaces? What does that look like for actual academic women, and how does that effect their professional success?

Professional success in academia is difficult for women to achieve, and multiple texts have addressed the methods through which academic women can navigate the hidden and subtle guidelines of behavior, personal presentation, and professionalism. *Women's Ways* provides specific recommendation for women in the field of rhetoric and composition, while also illuminating gender-specific hurdles that academic women face within English departments. These researchers draw their conclusions not only from personal experiences, but also from questionnaires completed by women in English departments across the United States, and from those questionnaires, they conducted interviews with agreed upon "successful" female scholars. The interviews address common experiences among women at all stages of academic careers, but most notably contain references to negotiations of clothing in the context of "professional dress" in academic spaces. Ballif, Davis, and Mountford identify the differences between professional dress for women and men: women's clothing must align with the dominant language of power in professional atmospheres, whereas men's attire already speaks that language. This assertion is mirrored by Deborah Tannen's *Talking from 9 to 5,* which explores the implications of visual markers of identity through clothing for both men and women in professional spaces:

> A man can choose a style that will not attract attention or subject him to any
> particular interpretation, but a woman can't. Whatever she wears, whatever she
> calls herself, however she talks, will be fodder for interpretation about her

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character and competence. In a setting where most of the characters are men,

there is no unmarked woman. (112)

Tannen's work shows that women's clothing contains markers of identity, but does not fully identify what those markers are or what they signify.

While rhetorical analysis provides a means through which researchers can understand texts and contexts, the nuances of language and conversation require an analytical frame that can more thoroughly examine the detailed workings of the language itself and the ideological frameworks and perspectives those that language represents, shapes, and reinforces. In the 2012 special *CCC* issue on research methodologies, Thomas Huckin, Jennifer Andrus, and Jennifer Clary-Lemon argue that rhetoric and composition researchers can and have employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology to understand the nuances of ideology, power structures, and higher education. As many rhetorical researchers are incorporating interdisciplinary approaches in order to further develop rhetorical research methods, Huckin, Andrus, and Clary-Lemon argue that incorporating a CDA methodology provides rhetorical researchers with an ideal interdisciplinary approach:

[W]e suggest that CDA offers rhetoric/composition three embedded points of

emphasis not generally covered by others: first, it explicitly draws out attention

to issues of power and privilege in public and private discourse…; second, it

facilitates the parallel analysis of multiple, multimodal, and historical texts; and

third, it provides a lens with which the researcher can coordinate the analysis of

larger (macro) political/rhetorical purposes with the (micro) details of language.

(111)

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CDA and rhetorical analysis together represent a wealth of possibilities for the feminist rhetorical researcher, especial one who is exploring multiple modes of research data in multiple speaking locations. Particularly, the ability of CDA to engage with questions of power and privilege in language provides an ideal research dynamic for interviews identifying women's overt and subtle experiences in academic spaces.

Furthermore, the conjunction of CDA and rhetorical analysis allow for the exploration of alternative and more complex sites of meaning in research on academic women, not only for research methodologies, but also for this researcher. Indeed, Royster and Kirsch's emphasis on reflexivity require that I not only acknowledge my personal investments in these research approaches, but also how this work engages new aspects of research methodologies across disciplines, and from which future feminist researchers can build their own projects and grow the scope of feminist rhetorical research methods.

> In our view, it is work in history, theory, criticism, and pedagogy that is helping us to know more broadly and deeply the nature, scope, impacts, and consequences of rhetoric as a multidimensional human enterprise with multidimensionality being defined as engagement across one or more genres, modes of expression, sociocultural logics, material circumstances, or other possibilities. (Royster and Kirsch 42)

In that vein, I see the intersection of rhetorical analysis, feminist CDA, and qualitative research methods as the embodiment of multidimensionality, and the intention of my research is to use this approach to explore as thoroughly as possible the dense body of knowledge available in interviewing women about their experiences in academic spaces.

Many discourse analysts have identified connections between gender, discourse, and identity, most notably Deborah Lakoff's *Language and Women's Place: Text and Communication,* and Tannen's *Gender and Discourse* and *Talking from 9 to 5.* Lakoff's work is an updated reflection on her fundamental 1975 edition, but her work continues to resonate within feminist discourse in that women's language mediates and represents aspects of a woman's identity, and these discursive negotiations are reflective of the structures and access to power. Lakoff even addresses personal presentation in relation to identity: "[H]er over attention to appearance and appearances…is merely the result of being forced to exist only as a reflection in the eyes of others" (57). Lakoff's description of the viewing of the female body through appearance is strikingly similar to Benjamin's and Berger's discussions of the gaze on the female body, especially the double-viewing of the body through the default male heterosexual lens. The affordances of discourse analysis provide a new dimension to Benjamin's and Berger's theories and a chance to expand and update these theories for women and for understanding the discursive power dynamics of the gaze. Indeed, Tannen's work builds on Lakoff's through her discussions of power and solidarity through women's discourse and through the semiotics of clothing, which identifies the asymmetrical relationship necessary to understanding the polysemy of power and solidarity. Furthermore, in *Gender and Discourse,* Tannen's identification of solidarity as a means of control is vital to the understanding of power dynamics through clothing as a method of identity negotiation, and the similarity/difference continuum, which Tannen asserts is a discursive element of power and solidarity, provides a framework through which to analyze the various meanings contained within the polysemy of discourse by and about women.

Feminist discourse analysts have employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) methods in order to analyze gendered language and discourse about and by women, particularly how gendered discourse can exist as both a restriction and a constraint, which makes feminist CDA an ideal approach for this research (Kendall and Tannen). Indeed, Michelle M. Lazar argues that feminist critical discourse analysis is ideal for understanding the relationships between gender and discourse, and identifying the power structures, ideologies, and perceptions that shape that discourse:

> While the analysis includes overtly expressed meaning in communication, it is also attentive to less obvious, nuanced, implicit meanings to get at the subtle and complex renderings of ideological assumptions and power relations in contemporary modern societies. The approaches and tools for this principled analysis of talk and text are many and varied, and further indicative of post disciplinary direction of (feminist) crucial discourse studies. (151)

While critical discourse analysis does not have a particular theoretical framework, this analytic approach allowed for the identification of discursive markers of social power, dominance, and inequality (Van Dijk). For this analysis, I use Critical Discourse Analysis as an umbrella under which to view feminist CDA, which is why I use the term CDA in a broader sense than some scholars. Within the themes and categories identified during the coding process, feminist CDA provides the means to show the relationship of the interviewee's discourse to particular member-groups, examples of power as control, both individually and in public discourse (2003).

While many points of academic research have centered on ambiguous recommendations about academic women's dress, none have conducted direct interviews based off of these

recommendations. In "Performing Success: Identifying Strategies of Self-Presentation in Women's Biographical Narratives," Wagner and Wodak's analysis of professional women's biographical material through open, semi-structured interviews provides a strong model for research on academic women's clothing and relationships to perception and identity. Wagner and Wodak used a narrative interview structure to stimulate participants to tell stories of their experiences, and analyzed the roles of social actors and argumentative strategies that interviewees used to construct an image of themselves, and then sought to discover the "detours, confusions, and contradictions in the women's seemingly coherent biographies" (393). These efforts are conceptually similar to the search for faults, or incongruities in presentation, that Ballif, Davis, and Mountford articulate in their text. However, Wagner and Wodak's conclusions relate to these womens' perceptions of success and their personal performance within professional spaces, rather than identifying the conceptual frameworks of power that create and mediate these performances.

Previous research on the perceptions of female academic's identities and how they influence perceptions of validity within academic spaces has centered on the relationship of these factors to female instructor's writing and teaching (Kirsch *Women Writing*, Miller), current research has not explored the implications of clothing as a marker of professionalism in academia. However, the experiences of women in academia cannot solely be measured through their writing, and it is in the everyday interactions and conversations of academic women that we can find further meaningful sources to illuminate the gendered struggles that women continually endure. In order to identify the factors that contribute to these struggles and the factors that shape perceptions of academic women's professional identity, we must explore the implications that experiences, discourse, and conversations have on academic women's perceptions about their

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self-image and self-presentation in academic spaces. The exploration of real women's experiences can provide feminist researchers with the qualitative data through which to define the factors that contribute to perceptions of academic women, the boundaries and expectations of academic spaces, and the formation and maintenance of the academic gaze.

The Interviews

In order to discover these connections and understand women's actual experiences with dress in academic spaces, I conducted semi-structured interviews with female instructors in an English department. In order to understand how academic women perceive the role of clothing in presentation of their professional identity, I solicited participation from female instructors at a southwestern university, asking my participants about female instructor's clothing choices in academic spaces, and the factors they consider in these choices. My participants were also solicited from the English department at the university for two reasons: one, the research I address and reference concerns women's roles in the humanities, and in English and composition in particular; two, because I am familiar with the structure and organization of English departments, and as Royster and Kirsch have argued, research must not only serve the communities to which we belong and others we may effect, but our approaches to research must also show reflexive awareness of our own perspectives and ideological proclivities.

I interviewed eight initial respondents, though I report on six participants in this paper.[2] In order to encourage honesty and full disclosure in the participant's responses, each subject was assured that they would be assigned a pseudonym to protect their anonymity, and potential

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[2] One recording audio file was damaged in the collection process and deemed unusable. Another participant interview was collected far after the first phase of interviews and was not included in the initial batch because of time constraints. I hope to incorporate this interview and others into my research in the future.

identifying information (such as mentions of real names, named relationships, references to spouses, etc.) was also removed from interview transcripts.

My goal with these interviews was to explore the experiences and conversations academic women had about clothing throughout their careers, and to discover the possible connections to their perceptions of their own self-image and self-presentation. Furthermore, I sought to discover what discourse about academic women's clothing choices could indicate about the academic spaces these women occupy and from which they seek admittance and acceptance. To fully understand the affordances and constraints of academic spaces and their associated discourse, I took a feminist critical discourse analytic approach to my data analysis, which is an ideal approach for understanding the hidden or obscured power structures that shape or are shaped by discourse.

	Position	Degree	Age Range	Years in Academia	Mother?
Beth	Assistant Professor	English Literature	30's	8	No
Corinne	Professor	English Literature	60's	38	Yes
Darla	Associate Professor	Comparative Literature	50's	33	Yes
Elise	Visiting Assistant Professor	Literature	30's	7	Yes
Francine	Visiting Assistant Professor	Literature	30's	7	Yes

Georgia	Visiting Assistant Professor	Linguistics	30's	9	No

Before beginning the official interview questions, I gathered demographic data from each participant (data sheet included in Appendix A) about their career history, date and region of birth, and education. Some respondents mentioned race during the interviews, but this information was not requested on the Data Sheet. This demographic information is not included in the interview transcripts, but was used as a contextual reference for the interview responses. As outlined in Table 1, I asked participants their current position within their English department, their highest degree earned, at what university and when, their date and place of birth, and their academic employment history. Only the data sheet information regarding position, degree, general age, and years in academia are included in the table to protect the participant's anonymity. However, whether the participants are mothers emerged during each preliminary conversation about the data sheet and/or during the interview, and proved to be another informative factor to consider about participant demographics. While all participants earned their PhD in an English-related field, only one participant had professional experience outside of academia before attending graduate school, which she acknowledged could have potentially shaped her perspective on professional clothing choice.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Data

The participant data not only shows the range of degree (and somewhat ideological) formations within an English department, but also the generational differences in time of degree earned, which introduces complexities of perspectives. Furthermore, four hierarchical levels of academic positions are represented in these interviews, which not only provides a strong representation of

contingent perspectives for this research, but also has the opportunity to convey the differences in perspective between the levels of power in an English department. Indeed, I wondered: what constitutes success, not only in the field of rhetoric and composition, but for women in English academic settings? Scholars of Rhetoric and Composition do not exist in a vacuum, or rarely in large groups within departments, but instead in small clusters or even alone within ideologically diverse English departments in which multiples fields reside. Instead, the ideological characteristics of departments are reflective of this scholarly diversity, and create a space for academic women that is influenced by a multitude of humanities faculty and experiences. Therefore, these theories of success, while initially designed to tailor to the concerns of rhetoric and composition faculty, are essential for understanding the experiences of academic women in English-associated fields. Given these realities, my research includes participants from multiple fields under the disciplinary umbrella of English studies in order to paint as clear a picture as possible of the experiences of academic women in the humanities.

I started each interview with the same, open-ended question addressing experiences with clothing in academic settings, and ended each interview with an invitation to question me about the research or topics raised and not fully addressed during the interview. This structure allowed for each participant to provide relevant information that I did not cover in my interview questions, and greatly enriched the contextualization of the research data. Feminist, qualitative, semi-structured interviews allow researchers to juxtapose "academic frameworks of knowledge with popular or vernacular knowledge," and also highlight power relations, which is an ideal approach for my research questions (Abell and Meyers 149). Each interview was recorded at the beginning of data collection for the data sheet. During two interviews, after the interview questions had been

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completed and the recording terminated, the participant requested to supplement their initial interview recording with newly formed thoughts. These responses were highly contextualized and very short (1-3 minutes) compared to their full interviews, which ranged between 27 and 65 minutes. The responses are included on the interview transcript and noted as a continuation of the interview.

The interview questions, included in Appendix B, were semi-structured and semi-ordered, which allowed for more natural responses and transitions between conversational topics. The questionnaire included in the appendices of *Women's Ways*, along with the information mentioned about clothing within that text, was a tool for the creation of my interview questions. The questionnaire gathers some of the same information I asked for (age, academic appointment) but also asks two questions that shaped my interview questions:

> 1. According to your definition of success, please name one woman you think has "made it" in the field of rhetoric and composition and/or from whom you would most like to learn about succeeding in our field:
>
> 14. If you were to give one piece of advice to a woman about to begin a career in rhetoric and composition, what would it be? (Please explain.) (Davis, Ballif, & Mountford 321-323)

Considering that these questions place a lot of emphasis on advice connected to the idea of having "it," a vague marker of success, I wondered at the deliberate choice of varying definitions of success in this questionnaire. In order to understand the dimensions of the delivery of advice for success, I drew on this questionnaire as a tool to identify how academic people communicated

about clothing. Therefore, one of the main premises of my interview questions focused on advice, whether it was from men, women, mentors, or in written or oral form.

Keeping in mind the premise of advice from *Women's Ways*, which is discursive in nature and shaped by academic spaces and perspectives, my interview questions also addressed conversations that women have had with different people throughout their career. Discourse is regulatory and cyclical, as the discourse shapes and is shaped by the space in which it takes place. Furthermore, considering how the earlier passage labeled women in direct relationship to their clothing choices, my interview questions also addressed these potential connections. Finally, in order to understand the nuanced differences between the ways in which women are perceived through their clothing and the ways in which women view themselves (influenced by the double-vision of woman seeing herself through her own eyes and the eyes of her viewer), I asked women how they try to portray themselves as a scholar, how they describe themselves as an academic, and how they decided on their clothing for the day of the interview. The overall approach of the interview questions was structured to elicit stories from the participants about clothing and how their experiences related to perceptions of their professional identities, the connection that I believe *Women's Ways* fails to articulate.

Indeed, *Women's Ways* positions itself as a manual and guidebook for success at all stages in academic study, providing pages upon pages of advice for upcoming graduate students, women already employed in the field, and those looking for models of success in the field. Yet, when addressing clothing choice, the gateway through which this discussion of success is put forth, the advice is muddled and at times contradictory. Instead of trying to understand the meaning behind particular clothing choices, *Women's Ways* identifies clothing as "a rhetorical

choice" (35). Furthermore, the associations between clothing choices and identity labels is directly drawn in the chapter "Guidelines to Succeeding as a Graduate Student":

> You'll want to avoid coming off too much like the Reflective Hippy, the Wall Street Banker, or the Playboy Bunny; that is, in general you'll want to steer clear of looks that are too casual, too formal, or too sexy. How you, as a singularly fashioned human being, move toward a self-presentation that says "academic professional" will depend mostly on where you begin, on what you're currently most comfortable wearing (whether that be jeans and running shoes, a muumuu and Birkenstocks, or a short black dress with pointy-strappy stilettos). Our advice to you: Take all of the above suggestions into account and then strike a comfortable compromise with your own current wardrobe. (35)

As a graduate student, I found myself exceptionally disheartened at this recommendation. After all the research these scholars conducted, do they really believe that an upcoming scholar can wear a muumuu and Birkenstocks in an academic setting and be seen as professional? Therefore, instead of relying on my own experiences and reactions to this information, I wondered about the nuances of advice. How is it given? How is it received? When? Where? By whom? In order to determine what actually happens when women make a rhetorical choice of dress in an academic setting, I first decided to ask women about their experiences with clothing in those settings. By soliciting stories about their experiences, I intended to find data about the actual clothing women were wearing and the connections to discourse surrounding clothing and perceptions of identity in academic spaces. After all, what does a woman wear to be labeled a "Reflective Hippy?"

The process of coding data from interview transcripts has been a point of contestation with discourse analysts, particularly when considering the role of the interviewer, the awareness of the interviewee of the rhetorical situation and conventions of the interview structure, and the reactions/interaction of the interviewer that influence the interview questions. Jackie Abell and Greg Myers' address these concerns for discourse analysts and other social researchers and identify specific strategies for linking interview information "to the rest of that text, to other texts, to the immediate situation in which it was produced, and to the wider historical and socio-political context of this situation" (146). Abell and Myers identify contexts for discursively analyzing research interviews, and the most pertinent to this interview data are "*intertextual and inter discursive relationships* [which] include links between the talk in an interview and other tao, as in the use of keywords or topoi" (150). Identifying the relationships between the discourse in my research interviews and its links to discourse observed or part of a conversation in academic spaces is integral for understanding the power structures at work in these spaces, and also the factors that shape the academic gaze. Abell and Myers also emphasize that this analytical framework is ideal for interviews in which the subjects report speech, or tell stories that may or may not involve the speaker. "Reported speech allows participants to set up opposing positions, dramatize situations, try out hypotheticals, and present evidence to support their views" (153). Abell and Myers' identification of intertextual and interdiscursive relationships provided a framework through which I could identify keywords and topical similarities in each interview. This approach also allows for the identification and analysis of similar experiences between the interview participants in academic spaces. Therefore, I examined the contextual similarities between the participant's experiences, references to conceptual approaches, and repetitions of

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phrases that referenced greater discursive meanings and gave indications about the ideological structures behind the phrases in academic spaces.

I transcribed each interview using Transana, which allowed me to pair time codes in each recording with lines in the interview transcript. The transcription method was verbatim, because I was focused on the ideas, experiences, and perspectives contained within the discourse. Data coding consisted of an initial open-coding approach from a grounded theory perspective (Strauss). I highlighted instances in the interview transcripts where the participants mentioned clothing, stories or conversations about clothing, or advice or recommendations they had encountered about clothing. After noting these instances, I looked for common phrases, word occurrences, or references within each interview and across the interviews. I noted themes of common topics or words that the participants themselves said or reference in their interviews, and also experiences common to many academic women. As my research and interview questions asked each instructor to reflect on specific experiences throughout their academic careers, common factors emerged as the most common experiences. While I theorized the term "academic spaces" in Chapter 1, I was unsure of the exact factors that populated these spaces, but after coding the interviews, I now see that these common experiences are the factors I was searching for. I describe all these factors, along with the interviewee's experiences in them, in detail in the section "Academic Cultural Spaces" in Chapter 3. However, there were other experiences that were more ideologically centered, and helped to contextualize academic women's experiences inside the complex framework of factors that make up academic spaces. These experiences emerged as major and minor themes of gender experiences, which are explored in detail in Chapter 4. The emphasis of negotiation is vital for understanding how women's complex

experiences engage with the complex factors of academic spaces. While I expected that these themes could easily emerge from the framework of the interview questions, I did not anticipate that these complexities of experiences would be so ideologically challenging for women to negotiate within academic spaces. The themes I have identified speak not only to women's perspectives on their own experiences, but also to the gendered experiences that are shaped by the ideological structures of academia.

Through the careful analysis of these research interviews, supported by a feminist CDA, I hoped to find the reality of women's experiences in academic spaces, and to identify the factors that make up the academic gaze. I discovered that my own reflexivity was vital to not only discovering the meanings behind women's experiences, but also the significance of these experiences for my own academic life. Throughout the interviews, I was aware of my own presence, just as *FRP* predicted. After the interviews and coding were completed, I took time to reflect on my own experiences creating the interview questions, conducting the interviews themselves, and continually reflecting on the significances of interviewee's responses to my research questions. In the process of gathering data, following a research methodology, and examining existing theories, I found my role as researcher and academic woman to become a part of my research data, especially as it emerged in questions from my interviewees. Therefore, part of my analysis of the interviews in Chapter 3 will be an analysis of my own role as researcher, including the inquiries about my research perspective and project from the interviewees, and expanding out to strategically contemplate my position as a feminist rhetorical researcher in the academic spaces that I occupy.

CHAPTER III

THE FACTORS OF ACADEMIC SPACES: WAYS OF CONVEYING

AUTHORITY AND GARNERING RESPECT

What feminist rhetoricians have taught us is to attend to our own level of comfort and discomfort, to withhold quick judgement, to read and reread texts and interpret artifacts within the contexts of the women's chronologies, to interrogate the extent to which our own presence, values, and attitudes shape our interpretations of historical figures and periods. They have taught us to attend to the twofold challenge of being aware, not only of what enters our field of vision—what we see and recognize—but attuned also to our blind spots in order to consider with critical intensity what may be more in shadow, muted, and not immediately obvious. These reflective and reflexive practices have predisposed us to understand the inevitability that, more than likely, there will be factors and dimensions of scenes and situations that we may not notice and especially so if we fail to exercise a direct and specific commitment to look and look again, listen and listen again, think and think again recursively. (Royster and Kirsch 77)

In this chapter, I explore the data gathered through my interviews with academic women, specifically the answers to my interview questions and the factors of experiences that the women expressed as part of a greater experience within academic spaces. I pay particular attention to the evaluations made of women's identities in relation to their clothing, as this not only reflects my research questions regarding the links between clothing and visual perceptions of women's professionalism, but also builds on the intersections of visual rhetoric, identity, and discourse

described in previous chapters; the interview responses, organized through their themes, identify the power structures inherent in academic spaces and their characteristics, revealing the gender-specific obstacles that academic women face daily. These situations highlight the politics of academic spaces, along with the politics of negotiating feminine professional dress within academia, particularly within the humanities.

The interview data and themes I examine here range from teaching experiences in grad school to full professorship, negotiating perceptions of identity in various academic spaces and at different academic positions, to the specific clothing choices that garner the most responses from peers, students, and mentors. Some of the interviewees expressed concern with the personal nature of their responses, especially with regards to their anonymity and position within their respective fields. Perceptions of job vulnerability, along with the perceptions of exposure of personal details that could be negatively connoted for the female academic, permeated these interviews and affected the interviewee's responses. While these women were kind enough to share their thoughts, experiences, and stories with me, their continual concern about the safety of professional identities in light the information they shared in their interviews was telling about the academic culture that shaped these concerns, and conveyed the overwhelming power of a mindset that transcends both space and time. Therefore, while I and the interviewees worked hard to protect their identities through their responses, I cannot help but think that our efforts and removal of identifying markers of these women's lives removed something vital to this project and to our understanding of women's experiences in academia. In the protection of these women's identities, we erased parts of their lives that could paint a more complex picture of the female experience in academic spaces, and expand our definition of what "counts" as relevant information in academic spaces. However, these questions and feelings are more reflections on the situational factors that create this need for anonymity. What women choose (or try) to hide or expose is part of a larger question of identity presentation, and beyond the scope of this research.

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What these efforts and responses can tell us is that women still occupy risky positions within academia, whether through their vulnerability as contingent hires, the perceptions of women in different fields, or through the situational requirements of different academic positions, like tenure-line faculty. These women (and I) were concerned what the voluntary sharing of this information could possibly do to their reputations, and that concern speaks to the continual masculine, heteronormative ideologies that populate academic spaces and hold position of power.

These interviews reveal the factors that populate academic spaces, the resonances those factors have in the everyday experiences of academic women, and the significance of these experiences to the ideological power structures of academia. In the following sections, I outline the details of these factors with examples from the interviews. The factors are as follows: teaching, academic role, departmental norms, conferences, and job interviews. After the discussion of factors of academic spaces, I address the resonances of these factors within the framework of the academic gaze, and show the connections of double-vision of woman as image, the double-mapping of meanings onto academic women's bodies, and how these factors reveal the ideological power structures of academic spaces.

Academic Spaces

Academic spaces, as outlined in the previous chapters, are made up of contextual factors that create, inscribe, and reinforce meaning on the people that occupy and dwell in those spaces. For academic women, the factors of academic spaces shape their interactions, whether about clothing or other perceptions of identity. However, as much as academic women might be aware of the evaluation of their professionalism through their physical appearance, the connotations and denotations of these evaluations elude simple analysis.

For Beth, a newly appointed Assistant Professor in literature, clothing is a factor in her personal and professional presentation that she knows reflects her identity and shapes her interactions.

Yeah, um, I think that clothing can send a message of how a person views themselves. So maybe the air of authority is a way of projecting a sense that I take what I'm going to say seriously, perhaps, and that dressing in a particular way, again, depending on things like gender, race, and age, will project a different way of reading yourself to others, right? And so, yeah, that is an interesting question, what's the connection between clothing and authority. Maybe it's also connected to a, just kind of a long and subtle history of noticing how people respond to you differently when you wear different things? And feeling how clothing can kind of set the tone for an interaction.

Beth illustrates that the interactions surrounding evaluations of clothing are not necessarily blatant, not conversations that necessarily stem from advice or recommendations for change. Instead, evaluations of clothing are more an evaluation on the visual presentation as a whole, a judgement on the competency, authority, or identity of the individual whose clothing choices are seen as indicators of a greater personal and professional meaning. Beth also identifies the significance of personal characteristics like gender, race, and age that further complicate perspectives on the bodily presentation of academic women and others in academic spaces. However, what is interesting to note from this quote is that Beth does not exactly state what meanings or perceptions are derived from the visual evaluations of her clothing, nor the mediums of the responses to her different clothing choices. Instead, she emphasizes the feelings that clothes give her in conjunction with her bodily, personal, and professional presentation, and how they directly relate to her embodied interactions throughout her life. Beth's academic experiences are slightly traditional in that she moved from receiving her PhD to working as a contingent faculty member before taking on her current position as tenure-track faculty in her department. Her direct connection between evaluation of her authority and competency through her clothing provides an exemplar for discovering the factors that populate academic spaces.

In the following section, I explore in detail the factors of academic spaces, drawing on examples from the interviews to indicate the nuances and significance of these factors for academic women. While these factors were most prevalent in these interviews and illustrated clearly defined trends among this group of women, they are also representative of a greater academic woman's experience in academic spaces. However, these factors could be expanded and deepened to incorporate more characteristics and differences among types of institutions in order to reflect the intricacies of academic women's experiences.

Teaching

As all the interviewees are instructors in an English department, they have common teaching experiences of composition courses (both in first-year and advanced settings), introduction to literature courses, and even graduate courses as they advance in their careers. Furthermore, the nature of humanities education provides graduate students with teaching experiences early in their careers, necessitating the development of a pedagogical approach while female instructors are still in graduate school. Therefore, each participant expressed concern in negotiating their presence in the classroom, whether reflecting on their first experiences with teaching in graduate school, or in new departments, as a visiting professor, or full faculty member. Along with the concerns about teaching itself, all the interviewees expressed concern with the establishment of authority in their classrooms at all points in their careers. As Beth expressed, "How do I set myself up as a teacher who has to be listened to?" While the younger (30's-40's) instructors identified the establishment and maintenance of classroom authority as a serious concern at this point in their careers, the older participants reported that this was no longer a great concern in their classrooms. However, the younger interviewees are at earlier points in their career and hold lower ranks within the department, while the older participants hold tenured and full professor positions. This difference is notable as the academic structures of tenure and

guaranteed employment may ease teacher's comfort levels with clothing an authority as they progress through their academic career.

Elise, a visiting assistant professor teaching composition and literature, reflected on her initial experiences with clothing in her teaching. Now in her thirties, she expressed concern with differentiating herself from her students, particularly because of the closeness in age. This feeling is echoed by Francine and Georgia, both visiting assistant professors in literature and linguistics, respectively, and both also in their thirties:

Elise	I taught as a grad student, and when I started teaching, I was 21. So, it was hard to kind of, establish authority. And like walk into the classroom and have them recognize me as not another student in class? So, later on in the class, I think that was easier, but I think like to begin with, it was sort of like, the initial way I could establish authority was to make sure I looked different.
Francine	[T]here's a certain amount of wanting to make sure I set myself apart from my students, and that you know it's clear that the person who's a little more dressed up is the one who's, you know, teaching the class.
Georgia	I think I used to dress up more. Because I look younger than I am, and especially a few years ago I looked younger than I was, and it just helped me have more credibility than I would normally have. I also find, like, when I was younger, the line between me and the students was really blurry, so even at [Northern State], I started off letting them call me Georgia, and they felt like there wasn't a division between us, and so it was hard to reassert myself when I needed to be reasserted in the classroom. And so I started, again dressing a little nicer and going by Dr. and things like that. In order to maintain that. So yeah, I used dress when I need it for social distance from my students.

Table 2: Teaching and Academic Clothing

The visual differentiation between teacher and student was a factor that all the interviewees expressed as important in their own teaching. The tie between clothing and authority, particularly in the teaching setting, associates preparedness and formality with the visual presentation of dress on the teacher's body. In Table 2, Elise's concern about her teaching speaks to this factor's significance in academic spaces, as nearly every faculty member in the humanities must also teach as part of their appointment, no matter their academic role. Naturally,

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this is an element that is vital to academic success, as tenured (or tenure-line) faculty are expected to develop courses and teach with interest, vigor, and authority, but untenured or contract faculty's responsibilities lie solely in teaching. However, as we can see from Elise's experience, the factor of teaching is even more significant for graduate students, whose teaching responsibilities are integral to their financial support for their master's or doctoral studies. Furthermore, graduate students are more likely to be close in age to their students, which indicates the efforts of graduate assistants to distinguish themselves from their students. While Elise expressed that she herself had this concern, she did not state that her students provided her with negative feedback to create this concern, but that it was hard to establish authority. Instead, Elise remarked that students were likely to assume her age or level of education were lower than they actually were. While we cannot determine what made the establishment of teaching authority difficult for Elise, we can observe that her change in dress made her feel more comfortable and helped her visually distinguish herself from her students.

In Table 2, Francine notes that her "more dressed up" clothing is a visual marker of her authority, a signal to the students that she is not only the instructor, but a person to be respected for her knowledge. All three of these instructor's efforts to draw a distinction between themselves and their students were means of establishing a relationship and power dynamic from the initial class meeting, and professional clothing sets the tone for that dynamic. Furthermore, their awareness of their age in conjunction with their visual presentation makes them visually assert their authority, especially when they feel it has not yet been established in the classroom or that it may come into question if their clothing choices are incongruent with their students' perceptions of teaching professionalism.

Complimentary to both Beth and Francine, Georgia expresses that clothing can be used a means to socially distance herself from her students, which not only positions clothing as the filter through which we view the teacher and academic woman's identity, but also a marker of

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social role within academic spaces. Therefore, the significance of teaching as a factor in academic spaces is influenced by the teacher's role within the department, as well as demographic factors that interact with students' and others' perceptions of the academic woman's identity.

Academic Role

Academia contains a long list of hierarchical positions, each of which come with their own sets of expectations, boundaries, and perceptions of degrees of professionalism. As illustrated in the last section, graduate students (especially those who teach) must continually attempt to assert authority and professionalism as one of the lowest-ranked groups in academic spaces, and certainly the group with the least amount of power.

All the interviewees mentioned the importance of the awareness of their academic role, especially in relation to their responsibilities and the perceptions of that role within their department. Academic role is also a strong gauge for interactions between faculty; for example, a faculty member on tenure track might feel their role is more shaky than someone with tenure because their job is not yet guaranteed within the department. Beth emphasized that this feeling of risk and tenuous employment only multiplies for contingent faculty whose visibility might be lower, but whose role could be seen as temporary and not necessarily impactful to the department identity and culture. If and when an academic woman occupies these roles, different expectations are placed on her bodily presentation based off of that role, and therefore she is judged and evaluated differently from those expectations.

Beth	Um, sure, I guess, there's a sense in which once you're, once you know that you'll be employed for longer than a semester or two, or hopefully will be employed for longer than a semester or two, there's a sense that your, that you're expected maybe to conform more to the institutional culture than if you're going to appear and disappear.
Darla	Oh, well, um, you know, I think dignity and self-respect are important, so that's why I don't want to be too casual with jeans and things like that. Well of course when I was an undergraduate, I was always wearing jeans and things like that, but um, you know, it's different as you rise up through the ranks.
Elise	Yeah, I think if I had any sort of administrative responsibilities, I'd probably feel like I'd need to be a little more formal. But I don't.

Table 3: Academic Role and Clothing

In Table 3, both Beth and Elise expressed their perceptions about the clothing expectations of their roles within their institution, particularly with conformity to departmental norms (explored in more detail below) and levels of formality. Darla, a tenured Associate Professor who specializes in literature, expressed that academic role matters not only for perceptions of professionalism and clothing choice, but also that clothing choices should change to meet the different expectations of these roles. Beth expanded on the perceptions of her academic role in relation to the kind of message she felt she was sending with her clothing:

> And so, when I would work as a TA, for example there, the dynamic that I
> wanted to set up in the room was very different than the dynamic that say, maybe
> the main lecturer would set up during lectures, where I wanted to kind of
> cultivate a um, space where students would feel comfortable kind of challenging
> what had been said in the lecture, right, um having more informal conversations
> because my role wasn't so much to present material. And then, as I've entered
> into the teaching positions where I have to, kind of stand behind something, and
> say this is something to learn and to think about, um, the, the necessity of yeah,
> the necessity of trying to coerce students into taking what I say seriously grows.

Beth's awareness of the way in which clothing conveys her role (in this example, to her students) illustrates the discursive nature of clothing in academic spaces. If an academic woman is seeking to establish a certain tone or dynamic in her interactions, she considers the role that clothing will play in that interaction, whether it is congruent to her intentions or discordant with the expectations of the situation and space.

In academic spaces, role plays a significant part in shaping the interactions of faculty among each other, and between faculty and their students. Furthermore, the hierarchical structure of academia forms power dynamics in faculty relationships, and the differing expectations on academic roles shape the perceptions of formality and professionalism necessary to adequately perform that role. Clothing is used not only as an indicator of a person's academic role, but also a filter through which to view the expectations of that role and whether the person fulfills those expectations.

Departmental Norms

While academia as a more generalized space carries scholarly and professional connotations to all of its situations, different departments, their geographical locations, regional norms, and the department's role within the university all influence what is viewed as "normal" within that academic space. What is "normal" is also influenced by the traditional structures of academia, which are male-dominated and within English departments in particular, contain a higher number of women in contingent positions than men. Therefore, English departmental norms not only draw on the environmental and cultural factors of their surroundings, but also on factors like the feminization of composition, the ratio of faculty in represented fields within the department, the tone set by department heads and program directors, and others. Overall, careful observations and awareness of differing ideological perspectives and approaches between fields can help an academic woman assess potential departmental norms, but the specificities for acceptance and integration into a department are difficult to identify.

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Beth	Sure. Um, so I came here as a Visiting Assistant Professor, and um I noticed um, what did I notice? This is hard to think about, actually, I noticed that overall, there was a kind of more formal dress, especially among administrators, and maybe especially among women? Um, than at my previous institutions. This could also be, again, because um, I was kind of intensively on the job market my first year here, and so um, you're thinking, so, as you're thinking a lot about appearing as a colleague, right, clothing is a big part of that. So, I was maybe noticing clothing maybe more, too, but it was also noticeable, in some ways, just because there are let's say fewer women in jeans or pants, right?
Corinne	So I think some of my sense about conforming to norms may come from that. I really felt I had to. Cause I don't like being criticized. And I think now that younger faculty, they can wear what they want. I really do.
Georgia	Yeah, I think that, yeah I've always, I've never been in a department that made me feel bad for my clothing choices, at least to my face. I don't know what they're saying. Even when I did my Skype interview for here, it was just Skype so they could only see the top, and I just wore a button-down blouse. I didn't wear a suit coat with it. And I, I don't know, I just thought that was dressy enough, I guess.

Table 4: Departmental Norms and Clothing

The interview subjects in this study range in the time and experience within their English department, some having occupied multiple roles in their time there, and others having worked in multiple English departments since receiving their PhD. These academic women noted that departmental cultures relied on a multitude of factors, but all emphasized the desire to integrate into the department, whether that meant a strict adherence to norms or a careful navigation of the deviations from said norms.

While all of these excerpts illustrate the women's awareness of the importance of observation to discover departmental norms, Beth's quote is significant in this example as she emphasized the importance of "appearing as a colleague" even when she was employed as contingent faculty. While Beth indicates that there was a greater level of formality at this institution than at her graduate institution, her explanation for this is a little vague, drawing on the

details of less women wearing jeans or pants as an indicator of the level of professional dress viewed as normal within this academic space.

Corrinne, a full professor in literature, has been employed longest of all the interview subjects, and therefore has a long institutional memory about departmental norms. Therefore, her quote is not only reflective of her awareness of these norms, but also her experiences with the enforcement, development, and revision of these norms over time. Corrinne expresses that she "felt she had to" conform to norms in order to thrive in the department, and her status as full professor leads me to believe her efforts were successful. However, she has also observed the changes in academia as institution over decades in which an influx of women were starting to be seen outside of staff and contingent positions, earn their PhD's, and take on more administrative roles and apply for tenure-line jobs. While women have not reached balance in tenure-line employment in academia, they have significantly increased their visibility in higher-level roles, as Corrinne's position of Full Professor illustrates. Therefore, her observation about younger faculty is not only an observation about female faculty's change in clothing styles within her own department, but also indicative of a different generation of scholar/teachers that perhaps do not have the same perspectives on what "professional dress" looks like in academic spaces.

This generational difference can be reinforced by Georgia's quote, as she belongs to this younger group of scholars that Corrinne describes, and the job interview situation Georgia describes would provide her with little frame of reference for departmental norms of clothing formality. Therefore, Georgia's observation of what qualified as "dressy enough" indicated not only a generational perspective of what passes as professional clothing, but also reinforced Corrinne's assertion that the rules for dress have shifted in the years since she was employed on the tenure-track. However, we can also observe that Georgia chose a button-down shirt, which alludes to the formulaic professional dress of the men's suit, complete with button-down shirt and tie. Perhaps Georgia did not want to be read as too formal for her discipline as she emphasized in

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her interview that linguistics faculty (both men and women) are more likely to dress informally than their departmental colleagues, but whatever the reason, Georgia states that she made a deliberate choice in her professional presentation in relation to her reading of departmental norms. Georgia's example illustrates the careful assessment and negotiation of departmental norms when one has not yet been immersed in that environment, and her clothing choice indicates the attempt to reach a wide audience that would recognize her professionalism while also viewing her clothing as appropriate and fitting to that academic space.

Indicators of departmental norms can be gleaned from observation, inquiry, evaluation, and regulation, but are not indicated on a record that is easily referenced for those who wonder how to "fit in" to that academic space. Instead, as each of these women emphasize, one must test the boundaries and expectations of departments in order to discover what is acceptable, encouraged, and deviant for that department. As a factor in academic spaces, departmental norms shape the interactions between faculty, students, and staff by contextualizing the framework for these interactions in institutional memory, scholarly ideologies, and careful and critical evaluations of the bodies that occupy that space.

Conferences

In terms of the most widely recognized academic spaces, conferences are spaces fraught with meaning. Depending on the kind of conference (regional, national, international), the disciplinary and topical focus, and the culture of the attendees, the spatial meanings of conferences can be incredibly difficult to predict, especially if one has not attended in recent years, if ever. However, what academic women can do is observe the space around them, reading the visual markers of identity in conjunction with the perceptions of the successful performance of that identity, for indicators of what clothing choices are accepted, normalized, and encouraged within that academic space.

Beth provided insight into this practice:

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Um, I think the first few conferences I went to I felt a little underdressed, looking

around, and so um, I don't know. So whereas I would previously wear jeans, no I

had to wear trousers, so again there's a matter of trying to kind of match yourself

to a particular institution. So when you know that a particular conference tends to

have people dressed in a particular way, I try to, kind of follow along with that.

Beth's choice to observe the choices of her fellow academic women reflects the conforming

mentality of academic, which is further explored in the section "Negotiating Individuality" in the

next chapter. However, Beth does note that she shifted her clothing choices to "match" with her

peers, a move that attempts to assert a sense of belonging with not only that academic space, but

the people and groups they represent within that space. When a person is noted to belong to a

group, they can then have agency within the group, so Beth's choice to change her clothing is a

move to assert her agency and potential acceptance within the academic space of the conference.

Within English departments, the most widely encountered conference in the Modern

Language Association Conference, held in mid-January each year, where hundreds of interviews

are conducted for tenure-line positions in universities across the country. While MLA is a

traditional humanities conference, it also serves as a site for job interviews, which further

complicates the factors of meaning in that academic space. Francine, along with other

interviewees, acknowledged that the rules of dress were different most notably at MLA because it

is not just a conference, but a yearly venue for interviews. Therefore, in that space, the polysemy

of meanings abound, and academic women must negotiate the politics of dress not only for

conference attire, but also for job interviews, all the while finding clothing that will "pass" for the

default visualization of professional, which is widely received as the suit.

Francine provided the most assertive resistance to the suit of all the respondents:

I don't understand this whole suit nonsense. Because no one wears a suit to teach,

no one, none of the people who are interviewing you are going to be wearing

suits. Why do you have to dress like a lawyer when you're not interviewing to be

a lawyer? Or someone in a corporate setting? …Um, but I start looking at

magazines and websites and things to try to figure out an MLA outfit that isn't a

suit. That would pass.

Her reaction may be reflective of her previous work experience outside of academia; as the only participant with public work experience, Francine has associations with the suit that do not involve department heads, university deans, and other positions of authority within academic structures. Therefore, her practical approach to questioning the use of the suit in academic spaces is logical; Francine's implication here is that women must find clothing that conveys the same markers of professional identity that are contained within the male suit, but are contextually appropriate for women. When considering the connotations of conferences as a factor of academic space, we can read the people around us, both male and female, for indications of appropriate dress, casual attire, and other felt senses of that space as distinctly academic.

Considering the plethora of dynamics in conferences, whether their physical locations, the topical and ideological focuses of the hosting organizations and/or attendees, or the bodies that populate those spaces, conferences contain a complex intersection of academic factors that make attendees acutely aware of their academic identities. For academic women, these observations are key for understanding how they negotiate their identities in these academic spaces, particularly to negotiate the marks of professionalism that can be read through their clothing.

Job Interviews

Much like conferences, job interviews are very public academic spaces in which academics are visually evaluated on their performance of their professional identities, especially within the context of their respective fields. As mentioned in the *Conferences* section, the MLA serves dual purposes for humanities academics as both a conference site for professional networking and showcase of research, but also for job interviews. Many smaller colleges that

cannot afford to host individual campus visits for each job candidate use the MLA for job interviews, but MLA is widely regarded as the most stressful and complex site for scholars in the humanities to convey their professional identities. The MLA does not only attract particular disciplines in the humanities, but instead a wide range anywhere from Linguistics and Rhetoric and Composition to 18th Century British Literature scholars. Therefore, the MLA serves as a site for double-mapping of meanings on attendee's bodies, as they can not only be viewed through the lens of conference presenter, but also potentially as job candidate, potential colleague, scholar, and teacher.

While all of the interviewees mentioned job interviews, most mentioned them in the context of other factors, as evidenced by the examples already included in this chapter. However, one overall conclusion was expressed best by Corrinne, who had previously stated that she felt the rules of professional dress did not apply as much to younger scholars: "Although for job candidates, I think it's still an issue. Cause you're up there in a room full of people that are…they're supposed to be judging." Corrinne emphasizes the contextual framework for the academic space of job interviews, which are known to all participants as a place of judgement, professionalism, and evaluation of personal fit. Therefore, job interviews contain a multitude of factors already explored in this chapter, such as academic roles, departmental norms, and teaching. All of these factors are on display for a job candidate during their interview, and the stakes are never higher: successful performance of your professional identity results in income, opportunities, and security in a network of scholars, whereas failure denies all of these opportunities, and in some cases, causes potential academics to choose alternative career paths. Job interviews, then, are the apex of academic spaces, as they not only contain a multitude of factors, but also serve as the gatekeeper for entrance into the next hierarchical level of academia, and even a boundary for maintaining one's position within academic spaces.

Significance of the Factors of Academic Spaces

I have explored the factors that populate academic spaces in detail in the previous sections, but I must ask: how do these factors work for and against academic women? How do these factors interact with and shape the academic gaze? I offer the following diagram to illustrate these interactions and understand their relationships to academic women:
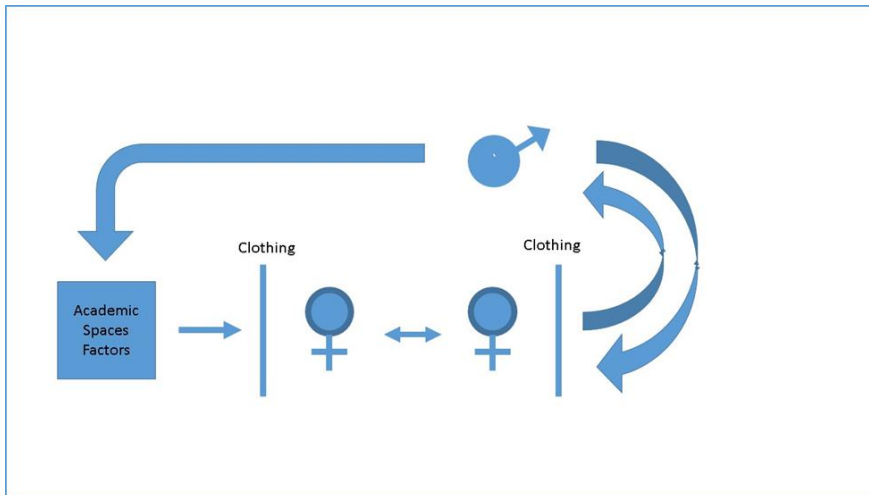

Figure 1: Academic Spaces and the Academic Gaze

Figure 1 illustrates the movement and directionality of the academic gaze. I have utilized the symbols for male and female to represent academic men and women, and their ways of viewing women in academic spaces. Starting with the women in the figure, the lateral arrow indicates the ways that women view each other, seeking out indications of appropriate dress in the different academic spaces they encounter and inhabit. However, these women are frame by two vertical lines, which represent their clothing choices. These lines frame any potential interactions with academic women through the filter of their clothing, which is reminiscent of the frames of the camera lens that Benjamin says shapes an audience's interaction with an image. Furthermore,

considering the visual nature of the evaluations of clothing in relation to the woman as image, the large arrows pointing from moving from academic women to men shows the double-vision that Berger says shapes women's interactions with men. Again, men look at women, and women look at themselves through their potential audiences, which is assumed to be male (Berger). Therefore, these two arrows represent that movement of gaze from women to men and back.

Finally, and perhaps the most important element of the image, the box on the bottom left contains the "Academic Spaces Factors" discussed in detail in this section. The factors that I have illustrated thus far go into the box, which creates a context for evaluating the clothing choices of academic women in academic spaces, which is represented by the arrow pointing to the filter of clothing through which academic women are viewed. Lastly, the arrow moving from the male symbol and pointing to the box completes the cyclical nature of the academic gaze, as factors are continually shaping academic spaces, ways in which academic women make clothing choices, and then the ways in which women are subsequently viewed.

This figure provides a means through which to understand and visualize the complex interactions of academic spaces with the bodies that occupy these spaces, and the clothing that frames our interactions with each other. As I continue to identify the overarching themes in the interviews that reveal the experiences of academic women as influenced by the factors of academic spaces, the movement and connections between the different parts of the academic gaze provides a framework through which to continually input the information I gather, thus leaving room for expansion of this research to understand further complexities in academic women's lives.

CHAPTER IV

NEGOTIATIONS OF IDENTITY, NEGOTIATIONS OF POWER:

ACADEMIC WOMEN'S CLOTHING CHOICES AND PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY

While the identification of the factors of academic spaces revealed what influences the ways in which academic women are viewed, the interviews also contained overarching themes that reflect the ideological power structures that populate academic spaces. The following sections illustrate the interview themes while considering the factors of academic spaces, and analyze the interview information in order to identify the characteristics of academic ideologies and their resonances for academic women.

Interview Themes

Theme 1: Negotiating Academia

> **Corinne:** I worry that I sound like I'm advising younger faculty and graduate
> students to play it safe. And I don't want to be a quisling. A kind of collaborator
> with "the man." THE MAN. Uh, by that I don't mean male, but in part I do. I
> don't, I'm thinking about what kinds of things I'm, it's a very hard job market. It's
> a very hard profession. And my sense is that you have to look and act in a kind of
> neutral place until you're accepted, and then it's on the merits of your work, and if
> it isn't, you're in a pretty horrible place. Um, and you should look for another job,
> if there is one, that's the other problem. But it strikes me that we send messages
> with how we dress, and if I, if somebody wears a dress with tiny polka dots or
> tiny little flowers to an interview, or if they wear a pair of blue jeans, it's sending
> a message. And I, and there are people who can't get past that message. And who
> interpret--the question is what message is it sending. The message is probably in

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the receptor. Because what I see when I see the little flowered dress is, oh, that's

a pretty dress. What my colleagues who don't like pink see is, oh, she's a wimp.

As an older faculty member, Corinne has the privilege of experience and institutional memory to inform her perspective on academic clothing choices for women, but she also has negative experiences that have resonated with her throughout her academic career. In this excerpt from her interview, Corinne not only shows concern for her mentorship of younger scholars, but for the impressions she's given during her interview about her experiences with dress. Here, Corinne not only acknowledges the visual messages sent through clothing choices, but emphasizes the significance of the potential audiences, a point that is supported by her professional ethos in academia. If we consider the importance of the audience in the bodily presentation of academic women, we can more easily understand how clothing sends a message by conducting an audience analysis. In academic spaces, as Corinne acknowledges, the people in power are predominantly male, and therefore Corinne considers how her clothing will resonate with that audience. Corinne also alludes to another academic experience in which she was evaluated by her colleagues, who are both male and female, and do not necessarily hold sway over her academic career. Indeed, the multiple audiences in academic spaces are illustrated by the academic gaze, in which women are doubly viewed, but women must constantly negotiate these audiences to consider the possible receptions of their bodily presentation. However, knowing the factors that make up academic spaces, if we consider how the situational factors further contextualize the audience's possible reactions, we can better gauge the possible reactions of audiences in those spaces. The subsections that follow within this theme reflect the potential audiences in academic spaces, and the examples within illustrate academic women's attempts to assert their validity and professional identity within those spaces.

Advice

My interview questions asked about specific moments of advice academic women had

received, encountered, or sought out. Considering that I myself had sought out advice, which was how I first encountered *Women's Ways*, I was surprised to discover that these interview subjects had little to no experience with blatant advice from their peers or mentors. Instead, these women were more likely to give advice to me (or to an imagined audience for this research) than to get it.

Being a full professor means that Corinne has served in many capacities in her institution, which has provided her with the opportunity to mentor graduate students and younger faculty within her department. Unlike the other interview subjects, Corinne had experience in which her job description encouraged her to not only point out problems, but also to provide advice for improvement, especially to teachers.

> But sometimes I point out the solutions too, and sometimes, when I would observe teachers, too, cause I used to observe everybody, and there were people whose classes were not under control, where the students were sleeping or talking or making noises, or I even observed a class where the students were singing and making rude noises and the teacher had no control at all. So one one of, one of the things that I can do is say, "dress the part." Even if you feel like its imposter syndrome you, it's like, fake it 'til you make it, walk the walk, all those kinds of things. That if you look different, if you look like you're at work, it sends a certain message.

Corinne's experience is significant in that she directly linked dress to a feeling of authority and preparedness in the classroom, likening it to feeling like you're "at work." Corinne even goes so far as to say a teacher should "dress the part," which speaks to the ideas of teaching personas, explored in more detail in Theme 4. However, in this excerpt, Corinne references feeling different than one might normally (different than what, she doesn't say), but that a shift in clothing choices, particularly one that conveys an air of authority and professionalism, can play a significant role in classroom management. Specifically, "imposter syndrome" and "fake it 'til you

make it" signal the recipient of the advice that if they wear the right clothes, successful teaching will eventually follow. The clothes therefore serve as a gateway through which the teacher can channel authority in the classroom space, which compliments the academic spaces factor of "Teaching."

While other interview subject mentioned seeking out clothing advice from Google, fashion magazines, or other clothing advice publications, Georgia's response was the most representative of the interviewee's experiences with seeking out advice:

> So I, sometimes I google, what do I wear to a conference? It's just terrible advice, 'cause it's like engineering conferences that pop up, and it's a totally different culture. Or like one, one time, it was one of my first times teaching, and we had been talking about what to wear on the first day, but I also googled it, and there was nothing for what do you wear on the first day of teaching a college class. Like there was what to wear as a high school teacher, there was what to wear as your first day as a college student, but there wasn't really, I couldn't, I didn't, and I did like a cursory search. I didn't do like a lit review or google scholar search or anything, but it wasn't easy to find information geared toward the specific context.

During the interview, I found it entertaining and completely logical (at least from my own perspective) that an academic woman would think of conducting a literature review in order to find advice about academic clothing choices for women. After all, isn't that what we teach our students to do as good research practice?

When Georgia's Google search results only brought up advice for students or high school teachers, the lack of information (at least within her cursory search) is a direct indicator of the hidden guidelines of academic dress, particularly for women in the humanities. It may be either assumed or obscured that academic women should *already know* what to wear, or to wear a suit

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(as Beth had previously mentioned). Instead, both of these moments of giving and seeking out advice speak to the complexity and hidden nature of the factors of academic spaces, which places women at a significant disadvantage to their male counterparts if they do not correctly read these factors: by the time they have figured out the rules of the game, they've already lost.

While academic women are likely to encounter conversations about their clothing in academic spaces, it is less likely that these conversations have been framed under the premise of "advice," which in itself is meant to assist the receiver in succeeding in their original intent. However, if the conversations about dress are framed under visual evaluations of dress that are instead meant to demean or discredit the wearer, that indicates a hierarchical competition in which clothing is the tool through which women's identities and credibility are scored.

Mentors

Fortunately, some interview participants had mentors in graduate school that helped them navigate the difficult maze of clothing choices in academia, whether through emotional support, acting as an example, or even giving articles of clothing to their mentees.

Corinne	Well, when I was a graduate student, I dressed like my dissertation director because I adored her and I wanted to be her and everything that's ever been good about my professional life has been modeled on her.
	But when I was a graduate student, I started, and she always would push her sleeves up and so do I now. I've never left that habit. She'd always push her sleeves up.
	I had, I really am tearing up. I had this model of this person whose purity of mind and soul was so strong, and who was so devoted to that one, that she believed, that I think I was able to follow her model. But I didn't want to dress quite like she dressed.
Elise	So often when I like, actually, literally whenever I put on one of those pieces of clothing, like I kind of feel like I'm channeling her, so in terms of, she's kind of not only, she has informed my teaching persona, for sure. Um, but any time I put on her clothes, I'm kind of, "oh, I'm sort of like Alyssa," and I don't know, it gives me strength, I guess.
Francine	**Francine**: [Y]ou know my supervisor in my grad school teaching wore um, you know those um, MC Hammer parachute pants? Type of... **Rachel**: You mean like the ones, do they gather at the bottom? **Francine**: Yeah. Every day. That, and a sweatshirt. Every day. She had four degrees, she was an extremely accomplished person, and she came to work every day like she rolled out of bed. And that worked for her and that was comfortable for her, and it didn't affect *her sense* of her own authority. But I did not like it. **Rachel**: You didn't like it for her? **Francine**: No, for, I guess, I was just like, just try a little harder, [Cathy]! I don't know. But she obviously, she was not someone who was comfortable dressing up. And so for her, in the same way that me having to wear sort of, skirts or, you know, I don't know, all black, and then heels, not big heels, but little heels. In order to teach, maybe she needed to wear those clothes in order to do her job.

Table 5: Mentors and Negotiating Academia

Corinne's example weaves together a strong narrative of her mentor, a woman who provided

Corinne with a lot of inspiration, both personally and professionally. Corinne looked up to her

mentor and very deliberately imitated her clothing style, and while Corinne mentioned that she no

longer dresses like her mentor, the motion of pushing her sleeves has stayed with Corinne ever

since graduate school. The embodiment of her mentor emotionally resonated with Corinne during

her interview, as she noticed that her sleeves were pushed up that day and reminisced about her mentor. Elise's experience with her mentor was also embodied, but different than Corinne's in that Elise actually received articles of clothing from her mentor that she actively wears today. However, both women's reactions were similar in that the embodied connection between student and mentor transcended beyond graduate study and into their professional career. While this kind of mentor relationship is not unusual, the fact that clothing facilitated the connection in these instances illuminates the significance of clothing for these academic women.

While both Corinne and Elise note the positive aspects of imitating their mentors' clothing choices, Francine provides a critical evaluation of her own mentor. In mentioning the "MC Hammer pants," Francine not only identifies an unusual clothing choice for a woman in academia, but also expresses her discomfort with her her mentor's choices, even going so far as speculate about the supposed incongruences of holding four advanced degrees and an unkempt personal appearance. Francine's story bears a striking, although opposite resemblance to the introduction to *Women's Ways* in that Francine shows great respect for her mentor, but finds her personal appearance to be a discordant factor in her professional identity. However, Francine's excerpt also illustrates the direct woman-to-woman evaluation of clothing in relation to professional identity: Francine perceived her mentor's clothing choices to be an indicator of a lack of personal investment in appearance, stating "try a little harder, Cathy!" While Francine acknowledges that this clothing choice may have been a deliberately casual choice on her mentor's part to feel comfortable as a teacher, the negative evaluation of Cathy's clothing provides a direct example of how academic women's clothing choices are regarded in relation to their professional identity.

Theme 2: Negotiating Femininity

> **Francine:** I just think that on some level I have to challenge these prudish, sexist attitudes about women's independence and women's sexuality. And having to do

that as a woman in the classroom, you know, I just have to figure out how do I negotiate that so that, cause students know better than to ask questions of my personal life, but that doesn't mean they don't think about it. I mean, I always thought about, like what do my teachers do when they're not in the classroom? And um, but also when you're calling characters in novels sluts and you are actively, you wanna talk about the abortion poem and then all you want to fixate on is she a prostitute and that's why she has so many pregnancies and so many abortions, ugh. Some of these students just need to grow the hell up about women's sexuality. And about sexuality. And, I feel like I'm in the classroom as like, a fully formed human. And you know, who does things besides teach. And they, I'm okay with making them a little uncomfortable. And I do actually think to a certain extent that my clothing helps with that. Because well I mean, I guess I wore this yesterday for the abortion poem conversation, but I was wearing earrings, I don't know, it helped a little bit, I was wearing my heels. Um, that I, when you say this stupid stuff, like "Daisy Miller is a slut," your female professor is not gonna just analyze that just on the level of textual analysis or metaphor, or whatever. You can't get away with that shit in my classroom. In a woman's classroom, right? And some of these, it's male and female students, but especially the men, like you're not gonna be able to do that in the workplace, with a female boss, talking about how people are sluts, come on! Not if you want that promotion. So um, you know, to whatever extent, I feel like I have the authority to do that in my classroom, but I think if I were dressed more sloppy I would not, feel confident, you know, kind of calling that behavior out. Yeah. Cause it's my classroom, and you know that because I'm the one who's dressed well.

As an instructor of literature and academic woman, Francine brings together a multitude of

complexities in this excerpt from her interview. Francine had been teaching poetry and literature that addressed women's sexuality, abortion, and prostitution, and she became very aware of her own gender, sexuality, and pedagogical authority while teaching. Furthermore, being aware of her own gender presentation in the classroom make Francine question how the use of "slut" in relation to the reading interacted with Francine's own gender authority. Indeed, when a woman identifies with another woman, or even when people identify with one another, their connection is formed through shared experiences or empathy through similar situations. In this instance, Francine found herself questioning whether a defense of Daisy Miller would provide a commentary on her own gender presentation. However, clothing provides Francine with an air of confidence and authority in tackling this difficult teaching moment, as she perceives her bodily presentation to be congruous to the ideals of professionalism to which her students will respond.

Francine's experience provides a strong framework through with to view the theme of "Negotiating Femininity" as it not only addresses the bodily presentation of academic women in relation to clothing, but also the aspects of gender presentation that are nuanced and can be read differently considering a multitude of factors for academic spaces. In a field where women continually navigate male-dominated spaces and structures of power, academic women are aware of how their presentation of "woman" is being read by their potential audiences. Micro-aggressions like the one Francine encountered while teaching provide insights to audiences' perspectives on women, gender, and sexuality, and these insights can manifest in evaluations and conversations about academic women's clothing.

Female Clothing

In a traditionally male-dominated profession, academic women have continually sought out clothing that is comparable to the dominant clothing language of power: the suit. The male-gendered suit is widely acknowledged as the most recognizable marker of professional clothing, not only in academic spaces, but in western society (Tannen *Gender*). Therefore, it is not

surprising that these women identified clothing that was comparable to the suit, or discussed their experiences with suits in academic spaces. However, what is surprising is that the interviewees resisted participating in the dominant discourse of the suit through their clothing choices, citing comfort, practicality, and price as overriding the need for asserting their professionalism by wearing a suit.

Georgia told the story of a woman who was employed before Georgia was hired who negotiated the professional markers of a suit in a different way:

> **Georgia:** Well, this woman was in the department and she was very petite. And because of that, she wanted to wear suits. And she, I'll just tell you the story I heard. She went to Banana Republic, which has a large selection of petites, and a lot of good-quality material suits, and she bought like, so many sets that she could afford. Have you bought a suit?
>
> **Rachel:** No!
>
> **Georgia:** They're so expensive. They're like $300. I know. So she had a selection of those, and she would rotate black pants with a grey suit top, and black suit top, you know, things like that to make a combination of outfits, cause she felt it was important, partly because of her size, probably, probably because of her position, to present herself in that clothing. But I guess the interesting part is that that advice that she had, or that decision she made is still being talked about even though she's not here.

Georgia acknowledges the resonance of this woman's story within her own department with two main factors: one, the woman's clothing choice was an attempt to compensate for a perceived inadequacy (her height) and two, the woman argued, apparently ardently to her colleagues, that her clothing choice was meant to correct for this perception in order to convey a particular

professional identity. Evidently, the woman accomplished her goal: her colleagues continue to discuss her clothing choice even after her departure.

While Georgia recognized this woman's feelings of visually compensating for her height as valid, like Francine, she also questioned the practicality of this choice in relation to monetary value. As academics within the humanities earn significantly less than their scientific counterparts, they may feel the need to portray a certain monetary status through their clothing, but they certainly identify the suit as the ideal marker of professionalism and accomplishment in professional spaces. Instead, female academics look for clothing that would contain the same professional markers that the suit conveys, but this is also an unachievable goal as the suit is gendered male.

Indeed, Corinne described a telling example the influenced her early in her career. During her first year at her university, Corinne's department head, who was a man, introduced her to arts and sciences colleagues at a university function. Corinne, who was wearing a pink dress at the time, was pointed out by the department head to her colleagues by stating, "You can't miss her; she's wearing the loudest thing in the room." Corinne said that this experience, along with other negative evaluations of her clothing by her male department head, were formative to her self-image and presentation in academia, and affected her to this day. Furthermore, this was not Corinne's only experience with a negative evaluation of pink clothing. Later in her career, she was having a conversation with two female colleagues who said they would never wear pink because they perceived it to be associated with silliness and weakness. Corinne was wearing a pink dress, which her colleagues didn't seem to notice. Nevertheless, this conversation indicated to Corinne that pink was an indicator of excessive femininity, which was also associated with weakness.

Later in her career, Corinne expressed resistance to this characterization of the color, but indirectly acknowledged its meanings through the eyes of the viewer. Furthermore, Corinne

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acknowledged the privilege of having been in academia for so many years and how her concerns about the negative evaluation of potentially feminine clothing no longer concerns her:

> And I didn't feel compelled to wear a jacket. Whereas I think in my earlier, as an assistant professor and so forth, I probably would have felt the necessity to wear a blazer, or a structured cardigan, which in some ways is simply a replica of the male suit, you know that's the crazy part.

Corinne draws a direct parallel between female-specific clothing that might speak the same language of professional authority as the suit, but Corinne's experiences with color and clothing in academic spaces reveal the polysemy of professionalism, femininity, competence, and individuality of the female academic. Her experiences, along with others referenced in this section, illuminate the regulation of identity performance through clothing in academic spaces.

Theme 3: Negotiating Individuality

While Tannen has established that women are inherently marked through their bodies and clothing, this does not mean that female academics do not attempt to prioritize or downplay those marks in different academic spaces. This theme directly compliments and is a result of the discussions of the suit and other specific clothing choices in academic spaces, which speaks to female academic's feelings that they can assert their professional identity (whether more neutral or more individualistic) through their clothing.

Elise elaborated on the politics of individualistic dress for the MLA, which also illuminated the basis for this theme:

> [Y]ou realize it's this weird, striking a balance between conformity and individuality. So like, everybody's wearing black, or dark blue or dark brown, they're all wearing dark colors, but then like a white scarf, and like, that's the academic uniform, which is so weird, like this insistence on, in most of your clothing, you don't make a statement. Sort of like, a valuing of like, grimness or

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something. But like, but show that you have individuality by wearing a scarf.

The details of color choice within clothing choices provides specific parameters for performance of the professional markers within this particular academic space, which attempt to mirror the male-gendered markers of the suit through women's clothing. Other interviewees mentioned the "academic uniform," and while this uniform is largely undefined, the factors surrounding it place an emphasis on neutrality, professionalism, and conforming to an academic sense of removal (or at least the attempt) of personal identifying marks. While the academic uniform is talked about by female academics, it is not a strictly defined dress code. However, the academic uniform provides a small spaces for manifestations of the individual's personality, but these manifestations are strictly regulated and reinforced through discourse. Furthermore, Elise defines the narrow parameters available for self-expression or deviation from an established norm: a patterned scarf. In their interviews, Corinne and Francine both echoed Elise's feelings about the scarf, which they also compared to the men's suit tie. So in actuality, the scarf is not a form of individualism, but instead, still falls within the established power dynamics of the suit, but can only express individuality through color, pattern, and texture.

Indeed, multiple interviewee's carefully negotiated the lines between neutrality and individuality, defining each depending on situational factors:

Beth	Um, again maybe in a way that's not noticeable to other people, but I yeah, it's hard for me to say how it shows, because it's so much more based upon a feeling. A feeling of whether what I'm wearing will stick out or not.
Corinne	**Rachel:** Yeah. Yeah. I'm, hmm. So when you say, "Neutral," how would you describe neutral clothing choices? **Corinne:** Something's that primarily dark colors, but might have a little bright spot to it, like black, grey, brown, business colors. The kind of thing you'd wear if you worked in a law firm, or a bank, with maybe just a little splash of color. Kind of liven you up a little bit. **Rachel:** I see. **Corinne:** Umm, but I would, the same way that lawyers and bankers and people in that field really have a very limited palate, a kind of grey, taupe, black, and these days navy, cause it's come back, which is nice because I love navy.
Francine	And um, I'm not like a, fashion maven, you know? I don't wear things to stick out. I don't wear things to be on the cutting edge. Nothing that I wear, nothing that I do is that. But um, so within the constraints of what is a very kind of odd fashion etiquette. Um, I just try to see, whose pushing the envelope in a way that I might feel comfortable doing.

Table 6: Neutrality and Negotiating Individuality

While Corinne provides a specific color profile for identifying neutrality within academic spaces, she compares it to more widely recognized professional clothing choices for business people. However, this "splash of color" reflects the "pop of color" that appears through the scarf in the academic uniform: a glimpse into the personality and complexity of the individual while still adhering to the guidelines of neutrality in academic spaces. However, both Beth and Francine rely on the observation of factors of academic spaces to give them a feeling of whether their clothing qualifies as neutral or individualistic. The felt meaning of women's experiences resonates in their clothing choices, interpreting the factors of the academic spaces they encounter and defining their personal presentation as professional, neutral, deviate, and to what degree for each. Overall, these evaluations of neutrality and individuality reflect women's observations of other women in academic spaces, as Francine emphasizes. Once someone has broken new ground and forged the path, it is easier for others to follow their example.

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Jeans

> **Corinne:** But anytime I had to go to a meeting, like a college-level meeting or university-level meeting, I would always dress a certain way. If that was the only thing I had to do all day and I was working at home, I would get dressed up to go to that meeting.
>
> **Rachel:** Can I ask why?
>
> **Corinne:** To be taken seriously. I didn't want to be the person in jeans and sneakers at a table full of men in suits.

If there was one topic that appeared in all of the interviews, it was the question of jeans. Jeans are widely acknowledged to be the most casual pant, thereby making an entire visual presentation casual, which makes jeans not necessarily appropriate for academic spaces. Indeed, Darla previously mentioned jeans as inappropriate and informal for teaching, especially as one moves up in academic role, and other interviewees echoed her sentiments. Beth previously mentioned jeans when she observed the departmental norms and deduced that the norm was more formal attire. Beth also mentioned that she used to wear jeans to conferences, and after noticing the level of formality there, she felt she needed to switch to trousers. Corinne mentioned blue jeans in her observations that clothing sends a message to a particular audience. These three interviewees noticed that jeans were markers of casual attire and all mentioned that they would not wear jeans to teach, as it would conflict with their professional teaching presentation.

However, when Corinne injured herself a few weeks before our interview, she noted an unusual conversation she had with her students:

> **Corinne:** It depends on, for which, for which kind of situations. For teaching, I just feel more like I'm at work if I'm not wearing jeans and sneakers and things. Last week when I had to wear jeans and sneakers because of my injury, I felt very awkward.

Rachel: Oh.

Corinne: Um, my students didn't care. In fact, in fact one student actually said, well I said to the students, "Look at me!" I said. "I've got a backpack, I've got jeans, I've got tennis shoes, I'm just like you!" And one of them said, "You're not like *us.*"

While Corinne had noted that jeans might undermine her credibility as a professor, in this instance, in the middle of the semester when her clothing choices had already been established, jeans were seen as an outlier to this presentation, an incongruent marker with her previous bodily presentations of her identity. Indeed, Corinne's students identified that the jeans did not undermine her, nor liken her to a student through the same clothing choice.

However, the three younger interviewees displayed different attitudes toward jeans.

Elise	Um, in general, I think I dress on the less-formal side, but I want to make sure that something I'm wearing differentiates me from the students. Like I don't like to look like I'm a student, so like say if I'm wearing jeans to class, I'm gonna wear ya know, fancy shoes, or fancy sweater or something, just so I, I don't know. So I feel, *different.*
Francine	So I'm wearing jeans right now, um and once I establish the, no I'm the person who wears all black, I'm the person who wears skirts and the person who wears heels and stuff, I can wear jeans, cause it's been established. And that's another thing I like about working in academia, I know it sounds silly, but I can wear jeans. You know? And, um, I'm not a slob, but I can be more casual, and to me, at this point in my career, it doesn't affect my sense of my ability in the classroom. But I usually spend the first few weeks, purposefully, a little bit, well not dressed up, I still wear those clothes throughout the semester, but I make sure that the first three weeks, I don't wear jeans.
Georgia	Peggy wears jeans sometimes, but a lot of female academics wear non-jean pants. And I see a lot of males in my field in particular wearing jeans, and I think it's not fair, and so I wear jeans, too. **Georgia:** Yeah, I look at other people, and I, that sometimes doesn't change my choice. Like, so [there's a female] head of our program now, and she does not wear jeans, and she wear necklaces, and I know, it wouldn't be bad to emulate her, but I also see [a male professor] who wears t-shirts and jeans and things like that, and I know he, it's just, it's neat to see the two and to feel like my decision is falling somewhere in between. I guess. Nowhere have I worked has no one else worn jeans, too. At least one, some other people. Does that make sense? So I've never been the only one in my department to make the decision to wear jeans. **Rachel:** I see. **Georgia:** But I only do that when I teach, type stuff. If I'm going to a faculty meeting, or higher position people will be there, I tend to dress nicer. And at conferences, I dress not in jeans.

Table 7: Jeans and Negotiating Individuality

Each of these women express that jeans are more acceptable for them in classroom spaces than for the other three interviewees. Interestingly, each of these academic women hold visiting assistant professorships in their departments and are all under the age of 40. However, each of these women negotiates and justifies her choices of wearing jeans in specific ways. Elise notes that she "dresses up" the jeans with more "fancy" pieces of clothing in order to balance the casual

connotations of the jeans, and to prevent potential clothing identification with her students. When compared to Corinne's example of wearing jeans to class, it seems that age and academic role come into play as further separators of teacher and student, and as Elise is closer in age to her students, those factors are not available to her. However, Elise's choice of wearing jeans is more reflective of her overall personal perspective on clothing; while she feels the need to differentiate herself from her students, she does not significantly change her attire from her everyday wear to her teaching attire.

Francine's quote strike a medium point between Corinne and Elise in their ideological approaches to jeans, as Francine acknowledges that jeans are inherently casual, but she allows herself to wear them once she has established authority through her presence and more formal dress in the beginning of a semester. Placing a specific time frame on her establishment of formality, Francine's deliberate choice of wearing jeans shows her feeling that they are a deviation from her established norm, but an assertion of her individuality in an academic space that deems jeans as too casual for teaching attire. Indeed, Francine shows her bodily awareness of wearing jeans as non-threating to her classroom authority once it has been established.

Georgia provides insight into the formality levels and gender dynamics of linguistics as a discipline, stating that she has observed men within linguistics wearing jeans, and therefore believes that affords her the right to wear them as well. However, during her interview, Georgia expressed that the overarching work of linguistics is not with other academics, scholars, or teachers, but instead with people outside the university system who represent ways of speaking that linguists wish to study. Therefore, her choice of wearing jeans is reflective of her field work and research, which then translates to her bodily presentation in academic spaces. However, Georgia still negotiates her individuality through her observations of her colleagues, just like Francine's observations at conferences. Similar to other academic women and congruent with the factor of conferences, Georgia does not wear jeans in that academic space as it is a professional networking space and adheres to more traditional guidelines of male-gendered perspectives of

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professionalism. Georgia has observed other academic women in her discipline wearing jeans, and that makes her feel that her choice is appropriate and accepted within the academic spaces she occupies daily, but not at conferences.

Each of the interviewees negotiate their individuality in different ways, but all within the acceptable frameworks of academic spaces. Consider the factors that influence these women's clothing decisions, their age and academic rank, along with their own personal feelings of comfort with "sticking out" manifest as more neutral clothing choices in their teaching and professional experiences. However, their experiences provide insight into the need for academic women to tread on previously established ground, as each woman expressed discomfort with being the first to make a bold clothing decision. While Corinne had the privilege of age and rank to protect her more bold color choices, contingent faculty like Elise and Georgia expressed worry and concern over their clothing choices being seen as outside established norms. Furthermore, the separation in perceptions of formality and casual dress also could relate to generational perspectives of appropriateness in academic spaces, but are not a reliable indicator of such a perspective. Indeed, Beth, who is the same age range as Elise, Georgia, and Francine, expressed the need to be neutral in most aspects of her life, but especially in academic spaces. Overall, the factors that influence these women's feelings of neutrality and individuality are not overwhelmingly predominant, but instead consistently present in the minds of each woman as they make clothing decisions daily.

Theme 4: Personas

> **Corinne:** I do think there's a big difference between your, your *self* and your teaching persona. Cause I always figure it doesn't matter whether I'm sad or grumpy or having a bad day; my students didn't pay tuition to find out how *I am*. They paid their tuition to see, "The Professor" doing her things about the subject matter. So I always feel like I put on a certain persona, um, sometimes I have to

watch it at home because it, you know, when you're a teacher you're a little on

the bossy, you know, it's, it's, I have to hold, pull it back. So, sometimes. But, if

you're, if you need to work on a teaching persona, one of the ways you can do

that is a wardrobe shift.

Within the gendered hierarchies of academic spaces, Corinne articulates the overarching theme of enacting a specific persona in the classroom in order to not only convey the material, but also adhere to the affordances and constraints of their role within that academic space. The language within this passage is reminiscent of theatrical discourse, as Corinne describes a situation in which students, or the audience, pay to see a performance of "the professor," a role. Instead of saying "clothing," Corinne uses "wardrobe" to describe the professional dress of the instructor, further the image of the female instructor as performer. While this quote reflects her earlier assertion of playing a role within academic spaces, Corinne takes this analogy a step further by ascribing a value to the identity of "the professor," tied not only to the institutional tuition system but the perceived value of students' education within her teaching field. Furthermore, Corinne's connection between "the professor" and tuition places a monetary stake on the quality of a female teacher's performance, increasing the pressure on academic women to convey an impeccable performance, located in and channeled through clothing, in order to adhere to academic standards of teaching.

Elise echoes Corinne's theatrical language of personal presentation in two instances: first, she discusses her perceptions of clothing as being representative of her identity:

Like rather than, I don't know, I guess, there are moments where I feel like what

I'm putting on is sort of like a costume, like I'm trying to psych myself into

feeling a certain way, so I'll wear something that's not exactly how I'm feeling,

but most of the time, it's more like, this is, I dress according to who I think I am.

Does that make any sense?

Second, Elise links the use of makeup with her teaching persona and how her audience views this persona:

> **Elise:** Um, and I was, when I was a kid I was in lots of plays, and so I sort of associated putting on makeup with going on the stage, and I was, would look at myself and think, I don't feel like I really look like that, and so every time I put on makeup, I feel like I'm playing a part. I guess it doesn't really feel like me.
>
> **Rachel:** I see. But it doesn't, so it doesn't make you feel more prepared on the days where you are---
>
> **Elise:** No. It doesn't make me feel more prepared. But I think maybe, maybe I think it makes me look more prepared.

Elise's associations of clothing and makeup with theatricality directly compliment Corinne's assertions of the persona, but Corinne seems to encourage and actively engage in the deployments of her personas, while Elise expresses less certainty and control over what part she plays and when. Both of these women emphasize the manifestation of this persona in the classroom, but Elise's experiences expand this notion out to reflect instances in which she modifies her bodily presentation with makeup or certain items of clothing in order to channel or even invoke this persona.

Francine's perspective on clothing as a performance is also complimentary to Corinne's and Elise's perspectives:

> Yeah, I, that uh, if I'm not taking myself seriously enough to think about my self-presentation, then how am I going to present the material? So it's of a piece with the performance of teaching, also. Because, you know, because it is, presentation and performance, to a certain...I don't mean that in a frivolous way, but you know.

Different than Elise and Corinne, Francine links her presentation of class material to her personal

presentation and her pedagogical stance, as well. Her feelings of preparedness and confidence to lead a class in discussion of course materials are linked to her teaching performance, which is shaped by her clothing choices in academic spaces.

Furthermore, the relationship between clothing and teaching authority is related to a particular presentation of teaching self. Corinne espoused on this relationship when considering the potential solutions to a beginning teacher's problems with classroom authority. I previously analyzed this excerpt in the subtheme of "Advice" under "Negotiating Academia," in which I illustrated that Corinne occupied a unique position among the interviewees of actively offering advice to teachers. However, this excerpt also speaks well to the establishment of the teaching persona, and significantly demonstrates the interwoven characteristics of these themes within the factors of academic spaces.

> So one one of, one of the things that I can do is say, 'dress the part.' Even if you feel like its imposter syndrome you, it's like, fake it 'til you make it, walk the walk, all those kinds of things. That if you look different, if you look like you're at work, it sends a certain message.

Corinne's recommendations highlight multiple strands of identity politics in this quote. First, she identifies teaching as playing a part within academic spaces. This connotes feelings of performance for female instructors, which is not an uncommon description of pedagogical approaches to instruction. However, Corinne relates this performance specifically to clothing, asserting that this identity can be channeled, performed, and reinforced *through* professional clothing. However, Corinne does not take the next step in describing what specific message this clothing sends, which reflects Tannen's discussion of the marking of women through their clothing.

Second, her quote identifies "imposter syndrome," a common perspective and feeling among female academics which connotes a feeling of self-doubt toward earning professional

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success. Imposter syndrome was first identified in the 1970's by psychologists as a characteristic of professional women's self-image in which women believe that their success is due to luck, or unusually hard work, in contrast to men who believe their success is an indicator of brilliance (Hinsliff). Georgia also expressed her belief in imposter syndrome during her interview:

> And you know about imposter syndrome and stuff too, right? And that never goes away! Isn't that the saddest thing? It never does. And so like, you have to continually be giving yourself appropriate pep talks and you have fewer examples of people who've made it as a female. And all that goes into lower retention of female scholars. So I think it is valuable to have a female saying, this person is strong, this person does good work, this person will continue on this trajectory.

Georgia expressed solidarity with me as a fellow academic woman in this moment, which was encouraging and discouraging. While imposter syndrome has been clearly identified as being rooted in women's insecurities, Georgia indicates that it is still prevalent among female scholars. Furthermore, Georgia also argues that the gender-specific hurdles that women face in academic spaces can only be fully understood by other female academics, which speaks to the inherent power dynamics of gendered hierarchies in academia.

Considering these responses, I can conclude that the teaching persona of the female instructor is channeled and manifested through professional clothing choices. However, that same clothing is used as a compensation to establish, enforce, and maintain authority in the classroom. Personas are invoked through clothing, but also created and shaped by the academic factors that frame the audiences' perceptions of the bodily presentation of the academic woman.

Discussion

Within the framework of feminist critical discourse analysis, this research provides specific examples of the experiences of academic women with clothing, and their perceptions of

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that relationship to their academic identity. The academic women who participated in these interviews mentioned multiple factors they considered when dressing for academic spaces, which included departmental norms, examples of other women in the department, level of comfort, weather, and local culture. While these factors could be described as contextual, their detail and complexity in relation to women's clothing choices cannot be adequately described as context. Furthermore, as the limits of context have been continually debated by discourse analysts, I propose the incorporation of feminist CDA approaches to analyzing the potential factors of academic spaces in order to fully understand the academic gaze, which takes the polysemy of factors into consideration in order to more strictly define the context of the academic interaction and dress accordingly. These efforts not only align with the development of more rigorous research methods for feminist rhetorical scholars, but also promote an interdisciplinary perspective that could provide expansion and further applications for this research outside of the humanities. Through the continual development and analysis of the factors that contribute to academic spaces and shape the academic gaze, academic women, feminist critical discourse analysts, and feminist rhetorical scholars can more accurately define the characteristics of academic spaces that create, reinforce, and regulate perceptions of professionalism and academic identity.

Furthermore, their interviews revealed that the inherently masculine-dominated culture of academia has created power dynamics that force academic women to assert their professionalism and competence within those spaces. Assertions of professionalism are difficult to accomplish solely throughout behavior, so academics search for these markers through clothing. Indeed, Deborah Tannen addresses the linguistic guidelines of marking through discourse:

> The term 'marked' is a staple of linguistic theory. It refers to the way language
> alters the base meaning of a word by adding something—a little linguistic
> addition that has no meaning on its own. The unmarked form of a word carries

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the meaning that goes without saying, what you think of when you're not

thinking anything special. (*Talking*)

Therefore, if the default perception of professionalism is an image of a man in a suit, women will

continually struggle to assert the connotations of that image through their clothing. However,

their struggles will never fully achieve their goal, as the markers contained within female clothing

convey their own markers specific to femininity and perceptions the clothing's appropriateness

for women in academic spaces. Based on this analysis I posit that perceptions about the

professional, physical, and behavioral presentation of the female instructor influences perceptions

of her validity in academic spaces, and these perceptions are rooted in the belief that a woman's

physical presentation contains markers of her identity, capability, and professionalism.

The implications for this research are notable for feminist critical discourse analysts,

feminist rhetoricians, female academics, and scholars of gender and identity and beyond.

Feminist CDA encourages interdisciplinary study in order to understand the complexity of factors

that influence power and authority, and it is with that ideal that I argue that visual rhetorical

theory is a natural extension of this research.

Like verbal rhetoric, visual rhetoric depends on strategies of identification:

advertising's rhetoric is dominated by appeals to gender as the primary marker of

consumer identity. Constructs of masculinity or femininity contextualize

fantasies of social role, power, status, and security as well as sexual

attractiveness.

(Hope 155)

While Hope addresses the gendered structures of advertising, her conclusions mirror those of

Feminist CDA about the indicators contained within discourse.

Throughout this chapter, I have explored four major themes that emerged from my

interviews with female instructors, each of which are significantly shaped and continually

influenced by the factors of academic spaces and the cyclical nature of the academic gaze. First,

the negotiation of academia that academic women navigate, in which their perceptions of clothing choices are also influenced by sparse moments of advice and interactions with their mentors, both positive and negative, but consistently resonant. Second, the negotiation of their femininity in academic spaces, not only concerning their gender presentation, but also explorations of feminine clothing that attempt to mirror the widely recognized professionalism of the male-gendered suit, despite the fact that female clothing does not contain the same professional markers as the suit. Next, the negotiation of individuality in academic spaces that is carefully regulated through perceptions of norms and careful observations of those who have deviated from these norms; academic women navigate risky manifestations of individuality in academic spaces, and would rather see the results of individualistic expression of another woman before them then to forge the path themselves and potentially fail. Lastly, academic women negotiate the expression of their identity and convey their professionalism and competency in academic spaces through a persona that is established, channeled, and mediated through clothing.

While this research does illuminate the gender-specific hurdles women face in conveying their professionalism in academic spaces, this study is limited in scope and duration. In order to fully understand the implications of this research for feminist critical discourse analysis and female academics, more research is needed to illuminate the complexities of the academic gaze, especially concerning contextual factors of race, class, age, and region. However, it is my hope that these interviews provide the basis for further development of the understanding of factors that influence perceptions of women's professionalism in academia.

Epilogue

As I wrap up my interview with Georgia, I ask her what I have asked all the other interviewees: "Do you have any questions for me? As a feminist rhetorical research, especially one interested in the subjectivity of research methods and perspectives within academic spaces, this question is vital to my reflexivity in the research process. However, unlike the other women, Georgia's question surprises me.

> **Georgia:** Do you think a lot about what you're wearing when you come to do these things?
>
> **Rachel:** To do the interviews?
>
> **Georgia:** Do you think more when, on an interview day, than you do on a normal day?
>
> **Rachel:** Um, it's been a really strange experience. So I have like, you know, things I would wear to a grad seminar, and things that I would wear to teach, and things that I would wear on a work day or whatever, but I do find myself more aware on interview days, of what to wear. Um, it's been kind of ridiculous.
>
> **Georgia:** I imagine. Even like, this morning when I got dressed, I'm like, I'm sure we're going to talk about something that I'm wearing, that like, what, am I okay with these choices, knowing that I'm going to be hyper aware of them for the whole day.

Of course I was aware of my own clothing choices. Why hadn't I been ready to admit that? Before every interview, I carefully considered what outfit to construct to shape my potential interaction with my interview subject. What if our clothes spoke a different language? Would I miss out on vital research information because I chose the wrong skirt? These thoughts make me

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laugh at myself, but Georgia's prompting of my awareness of my choices made me think of Royster and Kirsch's concept of strategic contemplation:

> "It is not enough to proclaim up front one's ethnic, racial, class, gender, and religious origins and leave it at that. Rather, the key questions are how do these features of the researcher's sense of self inform the topic the researcher studies, the research questions s/he asks (and does not ask), the data s/he collects (and does not collect), the interpretations s/he offers (and does not consider), and so on. In other words, we are suggesting that identity plays a much-larger role in research than we have considered at this point." (95).

The idea that my own subjectivity could prevent me from collecting vital and pertinent information scared me; this research is not only academically important, but I am personally invested in its factors, results, and implications for academic women's lives. I thought about how I read about conducting interviews, the ways in which to listen to my subjects, to try to interact and be active in their stories without shaping their responses. I spent so much time thinking about how I formed my research questions, the basis for my research that I neglected to consider how significant the bodily presentation of the researcher could be in influencing participants' perceptions. I knew that I considered how I portrayed myself in these interviews, how I tried to shape the text of my body to be read by my audiences. I used clothing as *ethos,* an appeal to my audience that I was in fact qualified to research this topic and take care of their personal stories.

All of these thoughts rushed through my head as I attempted to answer Georgia's question without completely revealing myself. However, I should have known that the linguist, who has conducted many more interviews than I, would read through my careful response.

> **Georgia:** Make sure you put that in your methods.
>
> **Rachel:** I'm trying to, I'm trying to understand if it's a really deliberate choice, for me?

>   **Georgia:** Well, if you're able to articulate it, it's somewhat deliberate, right?
>
>   **Rachel:** Yeah.
>
>   **Georgia:** But, it's more advice, but yeah, put that in your methods, cause that'll be really important. Cause I could imagine, if I were to think about it, I might think, oh, maybe you dress up when you know the people cause it's kind of a formal thing, but I think you're right to not do that. I think that's a good linguistic move. But it's good to tell people that, cause that's not what they'd guess a rhetoric person would do, maybe.

But Georgia's insight is more telling than she realizes; it's exactly what a rhetoric person, especially a feminist rhetorical researcher should do. I was fooling myself when I thought my role as researcher would or even could remain separate or objective from this research. It shouldn't! In order to fully enact the feminist rhetorical practices put forward by Royster and Kirsch, feminist rhetorical researchers not only need to be aware of their own role in their research, but expose their perspective and subjectivities in order to paint the clearest picture of the research possible. This is why I have included the prologue and this epilogue; in order to understand my approaches to gathering this data, I must situate myself at the forefront of this project, showing my reader and potential audiences who I am, what I looked for, and what I may have missed in the hopes that I will encourage other feminist rhetorical researchers to pick up where I left off. And so reader, I challenge you to find my research gaps, challenge my assertions, review my work and conduct your own studies so as to deepen our understandings and knowledge of academic women's experiences. We can only benefit from the sharing and continuation of this work.

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    Oct. 2014.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Data Sheet

Academic Women's Clothing Choice and Perceptions of Identity
Data Sheet

Full Name:_____

Street Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zip Code:_____

Telephone:_____   Email:_____

How long have you worked at Oklahoma State University?

Current Position in Department: _____

At what other academic institutions have you worked? Position? When?

Highest Degree Earned:_____

Where? _____   When?_____

Date of Birth:_____   Place of Birth:_____

Is there anything else you'd like to add? Please write that below.
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Academic Women's Clothing Choice and Perceptions of Identity

Interview Questions

Can you tell me about your experiences with clothing in academic settings?

How do you make clothing decisions for academic settings?

      a. What factors do you consider?
      b. Have these choices ever changed?
           -Why?

Have you ever encountered advice about professional/academic clothing choices?

      a. In written form?
      b. In a conversation?
           -with whom?
      c. In formal guidelines?

Can you recall any conversations you've had about your clothing choices in academic settings?

      a. With women?
      b. With men?
      c. Superiors/bosses?
      d. At different times in your career?

Can you think of examples of academic situations that have influenced your clothing choices?

Do you ever feel like what you wear says something about you as a person?

      a. Can you think of any examples?

How do you try to portray yourself as a scholar?

Do you ever consider your clothing choices and how they might influence that portrayal?

If you were to describe yourself as an academic, what would you say?

Could you describe what you're wearing today?

      a. How did you decide on these clothes for today?

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

VITA

Rachel Chapman

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Master of Arts

Thesis: MARKS OF PROFESSIONALISM: ACADEMIC WOMEN'S CLOTHING
          CHOICES AND PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY

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