ABSTRACT

Even the most casual perusal of television over the past ten years should reveal an increasing number of self-improvement reality shows. This paper explores the Learning Channel (TLC) television show *What Not to Wear (WNTW)*, which provides fashion advice to deviant dressers. We use Foucault's concept of governmentality to understand how *WNTW* engages women in their own projects of self-improvement in ways that are simultaneously disciplining and pleasing. Women who participate in the show are taught by the hosts, Stacy and Clinton, how to view themselves through the gaze of an imagined middle-class public. We suggest that *WNTW* tells us that outward appearances are the privileged site from which identities and self can be read. Even though the goal of the show is not to change identities, many of the women claim to experience a radical transformation. These transformations are often in the direction of a new professional and feminine identity, one maintained within the structure of the show by the continuing possibility and internalization of surveillance.

The Show

In the early 2000s, reality television moved to the centre of popular culture in North America. In 2005, the Learning Channel (TLC) had a new reality-based slogan (“Life Unscripted”). With more than 95 million subscribers in North America (7.6 million of them in Canada¹), TLC was vital to the growth of reality TV with its “authentic personal stories that inspire, engage, inform, and unite”². At the time, TLC programming was mainly aimed at women from 18-34 years old (Maher 2004:197), with shows such as *The Baby Story, The Wedding Story, Trading Spaces* and *Clean Sweep*. *What Not to Wear (WNTW)*, an American version of a popular British show, debuted in 2003. By the spring of 2005, it had become a staple on TLC with over 70 episodes aired³. *What Not to Wear* is a revision of the Cinderella story, where the central character finds self-
confident and a professional identity through the magic of an improved wardrobe, a story which viewers can enjoy and re-enact in their own lives. This paper explores how *WNTW* works to make individuals, particularly women, into responsible self-managing subjects. We argue that *WNTW* promotes technologies of governmentality, teaching participants and viewers how to gaze properly through the eyes of middle class public.

*WNTW* helps those who are outside the networks of “consuming civility” (Rose 1999): in this case, deviant dressers. These outsiders are, according to Rose, those who are unable to engage in the normal practices of consumption through “ill will, incompetence or misfortune” (87). Each episode begins with a blurb about the chosen subject and some commentary from their friends, relatives, or co-workers regarding why he or she was nominated for the show. The viewers first see this deviant dressing through secret footage of the chosen subject, walking to work or describing their style to a supposed ‘market researcher.’ A surprise meeting is set up where Stacy and Clinton, the show’s co-hosts and fashion experts, ambush the unknowing fashion victim and offer them a chance to go to New York and shop for five thousand dollars worth of clothing. In exchange, the participants hand over control of their mind, body, soul, and entire wardrobe. When they arrive at the New York studio with their wardrobe in tow, the participants are subjected to a humorous mocking of their secret footage by the hosts. This is followed by their entrance into a panopticon-like 360-degree mirror room, which traps them in multiplications of their own unstylish image, and finally a symbolic trashing of their ‘terrible’ clothes.

After this destruction of their erroneous wardrobe, participants are provided with a few fashion rules, dictated by the experts and exemplified by well-dressed mannequins. The following day they are allowed to wander free among the shops in the hope that they will follow the new rules and spend their money accordingly. On the second day of shopping, Stacy and Clinton monitor the participants’ progress and stage another ambush to keep the shoppers on the right track. When the spending is finally complete, the subjects are sent for a transformation of hair and makeup with the resident stylists, Nick and Carmindy. At the end of the show, they display their new image for Stacy and Clinton and are then reincorporated into their social lives with a party and presentation to their friends, family and co-workers. At this party, their loved ones comment on the new style and how successful the participant will now be in their career or love life.

**Governing Identity**
In recent years, scholars have found Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality useful for considering how conduct is shaped in non-violent ways and how everyday citizens participate in projects of their own rule (Cruikshank 1999; Dean 1999; Foucault 1991; Li 2007; Moore 2005). Governmentality has been described as “the conduct of conduct”:

Any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape our conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes. (Dean 1999:209)

Scholars have shown how governmentality works through the agency of subjects, where citizens are encouraged to take action to improve their own conditions. Ironically, citizens often view themselves as choosing these actions and ‘freely’ performing them but this freedom is always already limited to a select number of possibilities. This concept of governmentality and its role in the management of self is highly applicable to WNTW. The fashion experts Stacy and Clinton, as the “authorities and agencies” of governmentality (see Dean 1999), seek to refashion the participants’ conduct, not through forceful or violent means, but by reshaping their desires. Through its participation in discourses of transformation (both sartorial and personal), WNTW submits participants to the expertise of professionals, whose disciplinary surveillance engenders a new set of rules under which subjects govern themselves. Power operates here not only through repressive (disciplinary) but also through productive means (e.g. through pleasure).

Fittingly for a TV show, the focus of this governance converges on the visual plane. In his work on prisons, Foucault (1977) discusses how in the 19th century prisoners were subjected to a new gaze. He suggests that the architecture of the prison, exemplified by Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon, allowed the prison guards to observe the prisoners without being seen themselves. The prisoners, knowing that they were being watched, internalized this gaze. The power of panopticism is that it creates a situation where power no longer needs to be exercised directly because as Foucault states “the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (201). In other words, the deviant dressers no longer need Stacy and Clinton to constantly inspect them because the participants view themselves as under their eyes already. The power of this gaze is that it is no longer situated in individuals but could be from anyone in society. As Foucault suggests in the case of the prison, “any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants” (202).
Feminist scholars have also written about the role of the gaze in organizing the visual system of the cinema (Mulvey 1975; Hansen 1991; Studlar 1996). Mulvey (1975) suggests that the structures of classic cinema encourage women to view themselves from the outside and promote them as the common-sense objects of the gaze. While there has not been as much work on the structures of the gaze in television, this focus on women as both objects of the gaze and internalized viewers of themselves is at issue in shows like *WNTW*, which centre around women’s appearances, while also being directed at a female audience. In this work on governmentality, fashion and reality TV, we are interested in what kind of gaze is being produced in the show, and how it is internalized by the participants and its viewers. We argue that *WNTW* promotes technologies of governmentality, teaching participants and viewers how to gaze properly through the eyes of middle class public. *WNTW* teaches the participants and viewers the techniques of observing and evaluating the self from a normalizing perspective. This normalizing gaze allows one to evaluate and classify people’s dress according to different categories: too old, too sexy, too big, too masculine. It teaches the participants to place people into categories of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ dressers, and instructs them to differentiate between these categories.

The goal of the show is thus to inform the participants and viewers about the rules of judgment, but it also teaches them the effects: the pleasure they experience when they dress right. It illustrates the pleasant new forms of recognition that come with the improved style of dress.

In the sections that follow, we explore the discourses of transformation of wardrobe and self within *WNTW* and the way they produce subjects whose identities are linked to their visual appearance and produced through their consumption practices. We also discuss the disciplinary measures which construct a desired identity which is professional, heterosexual, and gender and age appropriate. Finally, we examine how these forms of practice are internalized through a continuing project of self-surveillance.

**Narratives of Transformation: Clothing and Identity**

Narratively speaking, *WNTW* is located within one of the larger discourses surrounding transformation in Western culture, the “makeover.” It resonates especially with the story of Cinderella, the mistreated daughter covered in ashes who attends the royal ball in a magical new dress, helped by her fairy godmother. *WNTW* participants make the connection explicit through references to the rags to riches story, saying “I feel a little like Cinderella” (Jeanine). Importantly, as in *WNTW*, in the fairy tale Cinderella’s behaviour is not changed, merely her dress. By putting on the gown, she is magically transformed into a person the prince might recognize. It is the clothing that allows the prince to recognize her value.
Elizabeth Ford and Deborah Mitchell state that the makeover genre in films “rest[s] on this premise: the central female character makes the journey from blah to beautiful. Her physical self must be transformed before she can become an effective person” (2004:3). The ‘before’ is an essential part of this narrative and the participants in WNTW exemplify the perfect ‘before’ – terrible hair cuts, dumpy shoes, unstylish clothing. All they need is a little bit of style to make them smart and attractive. This genre is also quintessentially feminized; as Ford and Mitchell explain: “Centuries of Cinderella tales have prepared audiences for transformation as an integral part of a central female character’s quest” (2004:30). This transformation is a particularly visual one and thus subject to the organization of gaze as discussed by Mulvey (1975). This image of women as particularly appropriate subjects of both the gaze and visual transformation may be one reason the episodes with women participants were more felicitous than those with male participants. On the show, Stacy and Clinton play the role of the fairy godmothers, making the WNTW participants see the inadequacy of their current dress, and with the use of the magic credit card, transforming them into Cinderella at the ball, ready to be embraced by friends and relatives. Except in this case, Cinderella is made over not only to marry the prince but to get the right job.

If governmentality is about instilling a set of rules for the conduct of the self, then what are the rules put forth in WNTW? Like the makeovers discussed above, WNTW privileges clothing as a central sign system for the production of identity. The show has its own theory of the production of identity, one where the transformation of the signs of clothing affects a deeper self-transformation. It diagnoses the problem with each of its participants to be their failure to see how important clothing is in shaping one’s identity, an identity that essentially social. Stacy and Clinton’s role is to inform the participants that the public sees them differently than they see themselves. The show’s project is thus to give them the ability to align their own self-production of those signs with a new understanding about how the public interprets the sign of clothing. Governance that begins with Stacy and Clinton is then internalized as the participants’ own self-governance.

Given that clothing is seen as an important factor in creating identity, like in the makeovers that Ford and Mitchell (2004) discuss, WNTW is not only about a transformation of style, but also a transformation of identity. These two changes are fused together in the popular phrase “the new me” which conflates a change of style with a change of self. Participants have not only a shiny new wardrobe, they also have a spectacular new self. Clothing is explicitly linked by many of the participants to issues of identity and self-expression. The discourses of self expression and personal transformation, however, often seem contradictory. The show posits a central core of identity which is being misrepresented through the participants’ clothing, due to a lack of knowledge or
self-confidence. At the same time, a reformation of clothing both reveals and forms this inner personality. As the promotion for the website states, this show is all about “Stacy and Clinton reveal[ing] how to be the best possible you.” This is directed not only at the participant, but also at the viewing public. “The best possible you” includes all of us who may be watching. Thus, the TV viewer is imagined to benefit from this advice on how to be a “new self.”

Within the show, the participants’ identities are often initially described as being hidden by or mismatched with their dress. For example, Jeanine, a dental hygienist and professional Anna Nicole-Smith impersonator, is at first described by family in terms of missing identity:

*Voice-over:* Her real sparkling smile is hiding under layers of frumpy style and her family thinks she’s lost her identity.

*Mother:* If she’s not in Anna Nicole garb or in her scrubs for work, she’s gone.

Danya, another participant, is described by the voiceover as having “created a look that is no match for her punk persona.” Thus, it is not the participants’ personalities that are ostensibly at issue (although they do come into play, as we discuss below); it is their ability to properly match their clothing practices with their identity. They need to learn how to appropriately present their identity through the sign system of clothing. Stacy and Clinton often highlight that their goal is not to change personalities. Stacy states, “All the things that you like about yourself [...] should come out more in your wardrobe” (Danya). To another participant, she says, “You’ve got a great personality – show that through your clothing” (Amy).

Personality changes, however, are a constant discourse in the show. The clothing transformation is often described in terms of a personal transformation, and a change in personality is linked to the remodelling of style. As the boyfriend of one of the participants comments on the results of a makeover: “It’s just a whole different Alana.” Participants often link this new style to new feelings and ways of being: “I feel like it makes me feel more assertive” (Alana); “I feel like a different person, I feel beautiful, inside and out” (Jeanine); “I feel confident, I feel strong” (Laurie); “It has been a journey of transformation. I feel a bit more empowered. This sounds a little corny; all of this that has happened has given me the impetus to stand and be braver and it is the beginning of the second half of my life” (Anne). Almost every participant on the show talks about their alteration as a person. Overwhelmingly, this transformation is seen to produce self-confidence. This self-confidence is based on their new knowledge of how the public sees their self-presentation; they know that their new stylish selves will be recognized and validated by others and thus feel able to recognize and project their own value.
Thus, *WNTW* tells us that outward appearances are the privileged site from which identities and the self can be read.

Within the show this “best possible you” is a “you” produced through consumption practices. As Victoria Pitts suggests, identities are closely related to consumption: “under consumer capitalism, [they are bodies] under contract, so to speak, to produce [their] own identit[ies] through consumption practices” (2003:197). The prominence of shopping within the show enables this emphasis on consumption practices as producing new selves. Learning to shop the right way becomes a method of learning proper self-governance. Each episode begins with a credit card, and the participants are given the opportunity to try and enact their consumption independently, navigating the wide ranges of choices available. In these situations, individuals are not merely free to choose what they wear (within the boundaries outlined by the experts) but they are “obliged to be free, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice” (Rose 1999:87). Stacy and Clinton then intervene and educate the participants about the dos and don’ts of buying clothing. Consumers choose amongst a series of identities for purchase, and *WNTW* educates them in their choices. It is thus through making the proper clothing consumption choices (an ability instilled in them by the experts of *WNTW*) that participants in the show are enabled to produce their professional identities.

Central to the narratives of transformation are the discourses of self-esteem and self-empowerment. Discourses on self-esteem focus on improving one’s life by working on the self. According to Barbara Cruikshank (1999:89) “personal fulfillment becomes a social obligation in the discourse of self-esteem, an innovation that transforms the relationship of self-to-self into a relationship that is governable.” These discourses also place the responsibility for change on the individual through their focus on individual choice and personal responsibility. In *WNTW*, market rationality moves into the sphere of self transformation when *WNTW* strives to make individuals efficient and competitive in the heterosexual market of relationships and the cut-throat job market through wearing the ‘right’ clothes. The solution to women’s problems (identified as those of self-esteem) becomes the idea that women need to take responsibility for their lives through dressing. Thus, *WNTW* encourages an intensified governance of the self for both the participants and its viewers.

**Constraining Identity: Professionalism, Gender and Sexuality**

While *WNTW* includes many discourses about allowing fashion to reveal one’s inner self, it also constrains what kind of inner self can be revealed. One of the most noticeable discourses concerning the production of identity through clothing on the show is professionalism. References are constantly made to the idea of a
‘professional’ style of dress. As Joanne Entwistle points out: “Looser codes of bodily presentation are often set over the bodies of ‘professionals’ who, rather than be told what to wear, are expected to have internalized the codes of the profession” (2001:40). WNTW deals with participants who have not yet internalized the ideal of professionalism. Stacy and Clinton consistently tell their apprentices that they are dressed inappropriately for work and that a new wardrobe would lead to greater success in business and life. As the voiceover states in one show, “Alana’s in need of a professional look to open doors in her professional life”. The constant reiteration of the term “professional” obscures the connection this term has to a certain class position. As is common in projects of governmentality, the potentially political is reframed as apolitical and part of a natural progression to self-betterment.

While the social positioning of the participants is ignored, at the same time they are taught how to enact a middle class status. Stacy and Clinton consistently dress the participants in suits, jackets, skirts, blouses and other office wear. Ripped jeans and out of date outfits are not directly identified as inappropriate markers of class or financial status, but rather as inappropriate for participants’ age or workplace. As June Deery (2001:212) notes, “in the makeover as with other reality formats, the subject’s socio-political context is largely erased. Gender, race, and class are present as superficial markers on characters who emerge with little back-story or political charge: rather like the figures who parade through advertising.”

The show reframes a potential lack of socio-economic capital as merely the participants’ lack of knowledge and expertise to dress themselves appropriately. Each individual needs to be styled according to the fashion experts who are themselves professionals. In discussing the hosts of the BBC version of the show, Gareth Palmer argues (2004:183) “Trinny and Susannah already have the taste and style that the individual is seen to need. They are signifiers of middle-classness – in manner, accent and bearing.” Likewise, the subjects of Stacy and Clinton’s fashion regime end up looking strikingly similar to them. As both Barthes (1957) and Bourdieu (1984) have noted, middle class norms and aspirations are often taken as natural in areas such as weddings, shopping, food, and leisure activities. WNTW suggests that you can climb the social ladder through fashion. Clinton said to one participant Jeanine, “When you’re dating, you want to be taken out for a nice dinner, not just for beer or pizza.” Therefore, like many lifestyle TV shows, WNTW provides experts to help citizens learn to be middle-class through learning what to wear, eat and how to decorate their homes properly.

This striking focus on professionalism is especially interesting in a show with such a concentration of female participants and viewers. This could be related to the increasing participation of women in more professionalized areas of
the workforce (for example, participants in the show had jobs as record executives, salon managers, potential window designers, and sales representatives) and anxieties about what exactly this change means. Women in the workplace are particularly subject to discipline over what they wear. As Gillen discusses, business women have to be particularly aware of what kind of image they present, as they have to walk the boundary between presenting the appropriate levels of femininity, one that is not too sexy, too feminine, too masculine, or too young (Gillen 2001:86; Kimle and Damhorst 1997). WNTW thus reinforces the disciplining women confront in the professional workplace while aiming them to give them the tools to meet these requirements, so they can move from discipline to self-governance.

The feminist movement has been long concerned with the relationship between fashion, femininity and women’s empowerment. In some ways, WNTW promotes an idea of the new woman who is empowered, feminine and fashionable as exemplified in shows like Sex in the City. Part of the power of WNTW thus comes from its ability to deconstruct the opposition between feminism and femininity and envision a world where women can be liberated, professional, and feminine at once, as they are trained in the pleasures of fashion. At the same time WNTW stimulates consumption and disciplines women to internalize middle-class, heterosexual, gender and age appropriate norms.

The Constrained Self

The inner self in WNTW is by default a heterosexual self learning the techniques of managing the opposite sex’s gaze. New looks are described in terms of their sex appeal to members of the opposite sex. As Clinton states, “the guy in the next booth could be a hottie” (Jeanine). If participants have spouses, the effect of the sartorial transformation on them is often discussed (e.g. Stacy says they should look for “Something to impress the heck out of Julian” (Cynthia)). This heterosexual self is also constrained by norms of femininity, masculinity and age, which apply to both men and women on the show. One participant’s initial look is described by Stacy as being “like the girly man lumberjack, really” (Eric). Clinton requests that they give one female participant’s item of clothing “back to the linebacker you got it from” (Jeanine). And both Clinton and Stacy chastise a participant, Laurie, for her workman-like boots:

Clinton: You work for a landscaping company, but you are not a landscaper
Stacy: And you’re a girl...
Laurie: ...And I need to be more feminine – I’ll agree.
Stacy and Clinton encourage and reward the women contestants when they begin wearing high-heels, skirts or other symbols of femininity. This feminine sexuality conforms to normative able-bodied heterosexuality. At the same time, this is a particularly classed sexuality, which must not be too sexual, lest it jeopardize its middle-class positioning. The new self paraded before friends, family and colleagues often links the sense of identity and empowerment to being a feminine sexual being. For instance, friends of Michelle, a participant of WNTW, notice that she receives a lot more attention with her new look. While as analysts we cannot assume sex, gender and sexuality exist in direct relation to each other as society suggests, these connections are made through their performance in WNTW (see Butler 1993). WNTW works to solidify these connections as the feminine and masculine identities (which are re-affirmed or clarified through clothing) are assumed to be essentially female or male and always heterosexual. Those bodies that do not affirm these clear relationships are disciplined through a process of humiliation and education.

Participants are also chastised for clothes that are classified as either too young or too old. As one of the fashion road signs in the title sequence says: No miniskirts after 35. Particular shoes are described as “basically made for a 14 year old girl” (Cynthia), while other outfits are, as Stacy says “much much older than we would want you to go. This outfit to me, says mother of the bride [...] it says retirement home. Why don’t we give it back to the 85 year old you stole it from” (Cynthia). Ultimately, participants are rewarded by the compliment that “You look like a grownup” (Terry). For Stacy and Clinton looking like a grown-up necessarily entails looking like a professional, someone who will enter the naturalized office workplace from which 14 year old girls or women in retirement homes are excluded.

Surveillance: Internalizing What Not To Wear

Some critics of reality TV have explored its connections to the increase in governmental and private surveillance of citizens (Ouellette and Murray 2004:6; Butcher 2005). As Laurie Ouellette and Susan Murray claim, “In an era in which a ‘total information awareness’ of all U.S. citizens has been made a top governmental priority, the recording and watching of others – and ourselves–has become a naturalized component of our everyday lives” (2004:6). The presence of video surveillance in airports, schools, stores, ATM machines and the streets has been normalized (Pecora 2002:347; Couldry 2004:65). In WNTW, the participants are secretly videotaped for two weeks prior to the surprise appearance of Stacy and Clinton. Although many of the participants do express some horror in having been secretly taped this is generally ‘forgotten’ because it is assumed to be part of
the ritual (Couldry 2004:66). Eric, one participant, says “I’ve been videotaped for about a week without me knowing it…that feels odd.” In this section we discuss the role of the internalization of surveillance in WNTW and how this contributes to the shaping of the participants’ desires. Since surveillance is a normalized activity in society at large and in WNTW, many of the participants incorporate this idea of surveillance into their lives after the show is done. The rules of conduct they take with them include seeing themselves as if a viewing public is always watching and judging them according to the norm of professionalism.

WNTW is structured so that participants learn to see themselves in new ways, through a series of stages. In the first stage, the participants view their surveillance footage along with Stacy and Clinton’s commentary, seeing themselves from the outside as if for the first time. Stacy and Clinton’s comments give them the first insight into how the general public views them. Seeing themselves on the screen positions them as viewers of the self, able to objectively evaluate their self-presentation. In the second stage, the participants are also asked to view their own image, standing in the middle of the 360-degree mirror and describing what they see. Then Stacy and Clinton walk in and reinterpret the clothing from their viewpoint. This is often a moment of shock as the participant tries to assimilate the differences between how they viewed themselves and how they are seen from the outside. In this process, the participants are taught to accept this new interpretation, and assume that the public also views them in this way.

The show leads participants into the habit of seeing themselves through the lens of the public (where WNTW and its hosts stand in for the wider public). The idea of surveillance exaggerates and emphasizes the power of the observers whereby the gaze of others is noticed and felt more strongly. In one episode, Jeanine makes this goal explicit:

**Jeanine:** I should always live as if a hidden camera was watching me outside my house.  
**Stacy:** I think that’s actually not a bad rule to live by  
**Jeanine:** I think I should pretend someone is always watching me.

Having been subjected to the intense surveillance of the hidden camera and then the 360-degree mirror, it is remarkable how easily Jeanine internalizes this idea of being watched. She takes up this technique of surveillance which has been used to monitor her from the outside and proposes it as a tool for her own self-management.
This kind of imaginary surveillance is reinforced in one episode where Stacy and Clinton in fact do return to secretly film a participant again, furthering the idea that someone is always watching (Larissa). In essence, *WNTW* seeks to make citizens into consuming subjects who have acquired the skills to exercise choice in acceptable ways. What begins as a social norm that the individuals should follow becomes a personal desire (Rose 1999:88). The individuals on the show then act upon themselves according to the techniques and rules made available to them by the experts. These rules become the norm by which to judge and observe others. In this way, governance acts, not through force, but through shaping the desires of participants.

The validation of participants’ transformation at the end of the show is important if not essential to the success of this self-governing project. The participants meet their friends, family and co-workers at a party where the *WNTW* participant receives the attention and validation of the attendees. The participants gain a new form of recognition that they did not have before; they are hailed as new subjects – ones that are beautiful, professional, successful, and confident – confirming the rules outlined by Stacy and Clinton. In fact, in this gathering with friends, family and co-workers this hailing is what continues to bring this new subject into being (see Butler 1997). This moment of recognition is pleasurable (and thus powerful) as participants are told they not only look good, but can also expect similar validation in other arenas such as their workplaces or their love lives.

Conclusion

We have described how *WNTW* exemplifies a form of governmentality where experts shape the conduct of participants towards an ideal subject. The experts Stacy and Clinton re-educate the participants in terms of how the public views their dress. They are taught a new gaze with which to see themselves — that of the middle class public. *WNTW* privileges clothing as an important sign of identity, one which needs to be properly aligned with middle class signs of the ideal subject. This ideal subject is one whose identity is produced in and through consumption (in particular, clothing consumption) towards a professional, gendered subject who will maintain the surveillance instituted by Stacy and Clinton long after the cameras stop rolling. As viewers we are the implied recipients of this expert knowledge; we learn from the mistakes of deviant dressers who make the wrong ‘choices’ and fail to manage their wardrobes and by extension identities. Through “governing at a distance” 13, *WNTW* encourages us to become active surveyors of society, to locate others who are ‘dangerous’
dressers in need of rehabilitation and shopping therapy to help them become the professional people they and society desire them to be.

Notes

4 In this paper we will focus mainly on the show’s female participants since men appeared less often and in later seasons were excluded entirely from the show.
5 Moseley (2000) argues that lifestyle shows often have a “double-audience” which consists of the internal audience who knows the person being transformed and the external audience who view from television. The internal audience plays an important role in convincing the external viewers of the emotional significance of this transformation (Brunsdon 2003:11).
6 Other examples of this include Bernard Shaw’s Pygmalion (1913) and the musical version My Fair Lady (1964), Now, Voyager (1942) and The Princess Diaries (2001).
7 Makeover shows such as WNTW are dependent on a narrative of ‘Before and After’, according to Rachel Moseley (2000), which is reliant on a discourse of transformation or what Brunsdon (2003:10) describes as “instantaneous transformation”.
8 This displaced issue of class surfaces occasionally as in one episode where they ridicule a participant’s (Kathy) jacket, saying that it looks like it belongs on a “homeless” person.
9 The gift of five thousand dollars erases the question as to whether most participants would be able to buy new clothes regularly (see McRobbie 1997).
10 Women, in particular, are encouraged (through disciplinary power) to embody through dress to perform a normative femininity. Begum states “Through the countless images of beauty that find their way into the daily lives of women, the message that they must have a certain appearance to be admired and loved, particularly by men, is internalized (1992:76)”. Yet, women with disabilities are often denied the privilege of this femininity and have to work particularly hard to be recognized within these scripts (Begum 1992: 74; Garland-Thomson 2002:17).
11 Although WNTW does not seem to be produced for the purpose of creating citizen-workers, the show in fact encourages the participants to become part of or succeed in the work force through dressing professionally. WNTW rarely includes people who were not part of the work force except for women working from home who might enter the ‘formal’ workforce someday.
12 This is not a project that the participants immediately accede to but after a series of techniques are used the participants generally come to view themselves in terms the show
employs.

13 Rose describes governing at a distance as “dependent upon the political authorization of the authority of these authorities, upon the forging of alignments between political aims and the strategies of experts, and upon establishing relays between the calculations of authorities and the aspirations of free citizens” (1999:49). This refers to the governance across a “territory spanning space and time” (49).
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