

## **WHO AM I?**

Sandra Nicolas

New York City College of Technology

SBS 3201- Gender, Dress, and Society

Professor Dr. Adomaitis

12/08/2023

Who am I? Who is Sandra by definition, Sandra is the “protector of humanity”. Sandra, a feminine name of Greek origin, is a variant of Alexandra. Its roots trace back to Alexandros, a by-name of the revered Goddess Hera, known for her role as a defender of many ancient Greek heroes and warriors (Sandra 2023). Sandra does not fit into a box; she is a complex individual with many interests and goals. Sandra connects to herself by utilizing the concepts of *identity, gender, dress, and society*. She uses a T-shirt to create a visual and explore *social perception, symbols, and phrases in self-expression*.

Dress is used to communicate information about the self to others, to be creative, and to protect the self from physical and psychological harm. Dress is a form of modification, to change the appearance of the plain self. Sandra doesn't follow social dress rules, society doesn't play a role in her decision-making. When Sandra dresses, she uses some principles of the concept of Schema, a knowledge structure containing information about a concept or stimulus (*Social Psychology of dress, 2018*). Sandra dresses based on the occasion and mood. Sandra defines and explores her identity through dress, she interplays between *gender, dress, and social expectations*. Sandra's identity is unique due to the many influences around her. Sandra is a Haitian immigrant, Gemini, bisexual, humanitarian, daughter, sister, aunt, and most of all creative. Sandra accepts all she is and expresses it through her everyday life. Sandra uses the way she dresses to *assimilate* into spaces, for example as a young working professional she *uses role theory*, it is important to look the part. Sandra participates in *impression management*, as an operations assistant it is required for her to dress in business casual attire with a *uniform* to match. During that period, she understands *social perception and stimulus variables* are at the forefront of her *appearance*. Sandra understands she must *self-monitor* her clothing style, clothing color, grooming, cleanliness, and scent.

For her T-shirt, Sandra wanted to utilize scrapbook decoration to design a visual representation of who she is. She uses hand drawing techniques, stickers, and phrases to convey messages to connect to her personal life. On the left side of her T-shirt, Sandra *pins* a large button pin she had purchased on Pride 2023 written “Bi The Way” as a way to symbolize her sexuality. She continues to draw an *asymmetrical* thin outline of a double-face woman to symbolize her zodiac sign and uses a green alphabet sticker to write out “Gemini” placed on the bottom left side of her T-shirt. On the lower center of the T-shirt, Sandra drew a working woman holding a laptop with a graduation cap on her head to connect to her current representation of herself. Continuing down, Sandra drew a music sheet with notes. This drawing represents her love for different genres of music, Sandra listens to Haitian music, afro beats, R&B, Hip-hop, reggaeton, and many other small niche music genres. Moving up to the right corner, Sandra draws a thinking bubble with the written words “Sandra’s world” because she is always in her own world. She sets goals for herself in her image neglecting others’ opinions on how she will achieve them. Sandra is a go-getter and determined individual, it is only right she creates a world for herself. Under the thinking bubble, Sandra drew two baby paws with a question mark in the middle. The blue baby paw represents her seven-year-old nephew, the pink baby paw represents

her one-year-old niece, and the question mark represents her older sister's baby she is currently carrying.

On the back of her T-shirt, Sandra continues to draw symbols and phrases that represent who she is. On the left side, she drew four hands holding the earth, this represents her active mission of helping less fortunate individuals. Sandra has participated in many volunteering projects since high school, now she volunteers at a mutual aid resource hub located in Brooklyn called Collective Focus. Her current full-time job is working for a non-profit organization that helps with international Asylum to the United States. This symbol also ties to her passion for sustainability, Sandra thrifts, and her participation in low consumerism help with this cause. As you look further down, Sandra draws a woman squatting down with a kettlebell as a representation of her fitness journey. Sandra struggled with gaining weight, which motivated her to get into fitness, she loved it so much that she began to help others with their fitness goals where she worked as a personal trainer. On the bottom center of her T-shirt, Sandra uses more green alphabets to spell out "Humanitarian". This represents more of her firm stand on human rights and activism, Sandra believes everyone deserves the right to a happy, healthy, and safe way of living. Moving up the center line of the T-shirt, Sandra draws a map to represent her love for travel, she loves exploring nature and culture, and utilizing her credit card and passport is the best way to do it. She dreams of traveling full-time and living abroad in the future while volunteering and continuing to advocate for world peace. On top of the map, she also drew a tree. This tree is from her town in Ayiti where she grew up. This tree was a big part of Sandra's childhood, she remembers always playing under the tree and climbing to pick the fruits. To further represent her culture and country, Sandra draws a geographical outline of Ayiti in the right upper corner. Sandra has many families who reside back home, and because her family is still there, she is very aware of the current issues that her people face. To finish the T-shirt off Sandra placed stickers on the front and back of animals, flowers, and quotes to further her scrapbook aesthetic.

To create the T-shirt, Sandra *altered* the *silhouette* by designing elements *tailored* to her identity in the way she dresses. She first *modified* the T-shirt by *removing* the collar using scissors to cut off around the *neckline*. To further *customize* the *collar*, she makes a *diagonal cut* down to be more revealing around her bust region. Then continued to create more *surface designs* by making two *horizontal cuts* on the shirt *sleeves*. Sandra did not want a *loose-fitting* T-shirt, she cut five inches upward from the bottom of the shirt to make fringes, she tied two knots on each side of the shirt to tighten the sides for the *illusion* of a smaller waist.

Sandra does not conform to a certain aesthetic or *modesty*; she uses *modifications* like *adornment/ornamentation* to decorate the self. Sandra is not a *stereotype*; she does not dress according to societal standards. Sandra sometimes wants to dress comfortably, she will gear toward loungewear, and she collects sweaters, sweatshirts, and sneakers for that aesthetic. When she wants to express more femininity, she wears revealing clothes, bodycon dresses, and more form-fitting silhouette clothing.

Sandra is a feminist; she stands clear that what she wears might define her but rejects any attributions put onto her way of dress. Her reason for dressing is not an invitation to certain

behaviors or thoughts from *society's perception*. Sandra isn't easily influenced by others; she likes to tap into her principles and ethics to dress appropriately.





## Citation

Lennon S. J. Johnson K. K. P. & Rudd N. A. (2018). *Social psychology of dress*. Bloomsbury.  
Retrieved December 8 2023 from <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501317491>.

*Sandra*. Sandra - Baby Name Meaning, Origin and Popularity. (n.d.).  
<https://www.thebump.com/b/sandra-baby-name>