



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Master's Degree programme

in European, American and Postcolonial Language and Literature
Second Cycle (D.M.270/2004)

Final Thesis

Harper's Bazaar's Representation of American Style in the 1950s

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Ciani Daniela

Assistant supervisor

Ch. Prof. Simone Francescato

Graduand

Mariachiara Bertazzo
Matriculation Number 848909

Academic Year

2017 / 2018

*“...The only real elegance is in the mind; if
you've got that, the rest really comes from it.”*

Diana Vreeland

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1 - WITHIN HARPER'S BAZAAR	6
1.1 THE LAUNCH	6
1.2 HARPER'S BAZAAR IN THE 1950S: THE DEFINITION OF FASHION	14
1.3 THE QUARTET: CARMEL SNOW, ALEXEY BRODOVITCH, RICHARD AVEDON, DIANA VREELAND.....	31
CHAPTER 2 - HARPER'S BAZAAR: A READING OF AMERICAN SOCIETY IN THE 1950S.....	44
2.1 AFTER WORLD WAR II: THE POST WAR CONTEXT.....	44
2.2 THE COLD WAR RISING AND FASHION	58
CHAPTER 3 - HARPER'S BAZAAR AS READER OF SOCIETY	74
3.1 FASHION AS A LINGUISTIC SIGN: SEMIOTIC AND SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES.....	74
3.2 HARPER'S BAZAAR AND ITS 'TALKING ACCESSORIES'	84
CONCLUSION	96
WORKS CITED	98
SITOGRAPHY	102
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	104
AKNOWLEDGMENTS	106

INTRODUCTION

"What is really interesting is the composition and creativity that is going on. [...] It's much more about making your dream than about showing the clothes." (Diana Vreeland 193).

1950s: *Harper's Bazaar*'s alluring pages filled American women's mind with reveries. The magazine acted as a shelter. That was their place, their time... there, they could be whoever they wanted... there, there was no limit to their own free imagination... there, femininity was all about elegance, charm, posture...

In the thesis I here present, *Harper's Bazaar* outlines the starting point of this dream. Everything begins between its pages, looking into the magazine's details to understand the audience it was addressed to.

Thence, I deemed it interesting to examine the history, evolution and developments of this fashion journal.

The first chapter titled "Within *Harper's Bazaar*", aims at giving relevance to its most important and revelatory moments. "The Launch" – it's first section – recounts the conception behind its origin, and the meticulous selection of certain items perfectly suited to the American upper-class readers.

Harper's Bazaar most prominent personalities are, then, the core of the second and third section of the first chapter. Among them famous 1950s models Dorian Leigh, Dovima and Suzy Parker, Cuban-born writer Truman Capote, and those whom I will later call 'the quartet': Carmel Snow, Alexey Brodovitch, Richard Avedon, and Diana Vreeland.

"*Harper's Bazaar: A Reading of American Society in the 1950s*" – the second chapter – focuses on the relevance the magazine had in the 1950s: a decade marked by the remnants

of World War II, the insistence on the reaffirmation of the American Dream and the rising of the Cold War. Here, the oldest of all American fashion magazines acts not just as an aloof portrait of fashion and elegance, but it also deals with people's bearing, manners and habits, thus influencing the private sphere of its readers. After a brief contextualization – which deals with historical facts but also with the history of fashion – the magazine acts, again, as the starting point of my analysis where domesticity evolves – ambitious towards preeminent social standings – and with it, the collective conception of femininity.

Communication is the key word. And since *Harper's Bazaar* developed with this objective in mind, I considered it appropriate to linger on this concept.

Finally, what the third chapter proposes, is a more scientific analysis of the magazine, based on the studies of some of the most noticeable semiologists and sociologists who debated the phenomenon of fashion and its intrinsic relation to the social system. According to them, clothing is a linguistic sign. This implies that before verbal interaction – or simple action – what we decide to wear and how we wear it, begins a non-verbal conversation with the observers.

To assume such a responsibility are not just garments in general, but accessories as well. This very interesting branch of fashion, has always been marginalized, or not considered for its powerful essence. Yet, the 1950s wardrobe proved to be different. As I will later remark, it is quite hard not to find last-trend hats, gloves, jewelry, shoes...on the magazine's pages. Accessories are 'talkative' objects, definers of women's historical, cultural, sociologic and unique identity.

Clothing says who you are, thence, "Know, first, who you are, and then adorn yourself accordingly." (Epictetus xix).

CHAPTER 1

WITHIN *HARPER'S BAZAAR*

1.1 THE LAUNCH

As the introduction explains, my thesis aims at providing a reading of the American society in the 50s through the oldest of the United States fashion magazines: *Harper's Bazaar*, a narrative that repeatedly generated experiences of surprise and discovery. My objective is to show how fashion can be a means through which we can understand society and how this magazine – targeted to the upper classes – perfectly portrays that same world. In order to deduce how fashion and people's attitude, culture and behavior are so intrinsically connected, it is fundamental to 'set the stage' and have a look at the history and evolution of the magazine. Thus, before exploring the social, historical and political context of the 1950s, we will see how this monthly publication evolved and became what has become and globally praised for.

Fashion magazines, such as *Harper's Bazaar*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Charm* – to list the oldest – are repository of semiotic and sociological meanings. Clothing, accessories and colors become symbols, emblems of a pristine literature.

The magazine was – and still is – published by Hearst Communications, or Hearst, an American mass media and business information conglomerate based in New York City, and founded by William Randolph Hearst in the early years of the Twentieth Century.

Stephen Mooallem, fashion journalist of the same magazine, to celebrate the 150 years of its production and publication thus opened his article, dated November 21, 2016: "Founded in 1867, *Harper's Bazaar* was one of the first publications dedicated to looking at the lives of women through the lens of fashion" (Mooallem n.p.).

Women are centerstage here, it is a magazine designed and studied precisely for them and their needs.

"A repository of fashion, pleasure, and instruction" is how *Harper's Bazar* described itself on the cover of its inaugural issue, in 1867. *Bazar*—then spelled without the double "a"—was founded by Harper & Brothers, a New York-based publishing firm run by siblings James, John, Joseph Wesley, and Fletcher Harper. At the time, the Harpers were already established book publishers. They'd also ventured into periodicals with *Harper's New Monthly* and *Harper's Weekly*, illustrated journals conceived to present contemporary fiction and writing on the arts, science, and politics.

It was the youngest of the Harpers, Fletcher, who came up with the idea for *Bazar* after stumbling upon a copy of a publication called *Der Bazar*, from Berlin. Like the Harpers' journals, *Der Bazar* featured artwork and writing on a range of topics. But *Der Bazar* also covered fashion and illustrated its stories with elaborate woodcuts of the clothes that people were wearing in places like Paris, Vienna, and London. Fletcher soon discovered that *Der Bazar* had agreements with other publications to syndicate its illustrations—which it provided by sending electrotype duplicates of the original woodcuts—and he became interested in pursuing a similar arrangement. (Mooallem n.p.)

To then proceed:

"The Industrial Revolution had given rise to a new leisure class in the U.S., which was obsessed with all things European; and there was room, Fletcher reasoned, for a publication aimed at affluent women that operated as a kind of guide on how to live—and live well—in the modern world. Fletcher presented his brothers with his plan, and after a bit of convincing, *Harper's Bazar* was born" (Mooallem n.p.).

"Affluent women" had to be the inspiring source of the modern world, sharing suggestions and giving tips to the 'other women', those same tips they had absorbed while reading the magazine, which was addressed to them.

In the same article Mooallem writes that the first thing Fletcher did was hiring an editor. Mary Louise Booth seemed to be suitable for that job. She was relatively young (36), a well-known journalist and a translator. She spoke fluently French, German, and knew Latin. She had also been the first woman to work as a reporter for *The New York Times*. Yet, her background was not restricted to this, as Mooallem reminds: "Before coming to *Bazar*, Booth had received a letter of praise from President Lincoln for her translation of French Count Agénor de Gasparin's *The Uprising of a Great People: The United States in 1861*, an antislavery tract used to drum up support for abolition" (Mooallem n.p.). She was also a

supporter of the women's right movement and a suffragette. Rumors said that she tried to finance her own publications about these themes.

The first issue of *Bazar* appeared on November 2, 1867. It was titled "Our Bazar" and preceded by a very elegant cover featuring "Bridal Toilets" matched with the last-trend coiffures, whose subtitle captured *Harper's Bazaar's* mission to become "A Repository of Fashion, Art and Instruction" (*Harper's Bazar*, November 1867 Cover).



FIGURE 1. "Cover." *Harper's Bazar*, November 2, 1867.

Booth envisioned "Silks, velvets, cashmeres, spices, perfumes, and glittering gems; in a word, whatever can comfort the heart and delight the eye" (Bailey 12). But since the beginning it was clear that the magazine's subject went far beyond clothes. Indeed, she went on uttering in that first famous page: "Fancy work of all kinds will also find room in our columns, together with every department of household affairs. In a word, we promise to make the *Bazar* a first-class weekly newspaper of fashion – the only one in existence in this country – comprising all subjects that legitimately pertain to such a journal" (Bailey 12).

Account on style and polite instructions on how to pin a bun or to tie a bow come beside fragments of poetry and fiction, reflections on families and moral conventions.

Harper's Bazaar claims the contribution of writers such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Henry James, and later, Thomas Hardy and Mark Twain. In fact, reflecting upon the magazine's 150th anniversary, editor-in-chief since May 2001 Glenda Bailey says: "No matter how aware you are that *Harper's BAZAAR* has always attracted the best talent over the years, there is nothing like opening an early issue and seeing a byline from Charles Dickens" (Stiehm n.p.). Apart from the many interviews Bailey gave, praising the work of her predecessors during this important celebration, she also wrote a book titled *Harper's Bazaar: 150 Years: The Greatest Moments*, where she captures the greats who have shaped the magazine over these decades. Bailey traces more than 150 photographs and covers and 50 text excerpts, including articles, poems, and works of fiction. She recognizes how the efforts of certain names reinforced the success of *Bazaar*, especially in the earlier period, under Booth's guidance: "*Bazaar* flexed its muscles early on with the serialization of *No Thoroughfare*, a novel co-authored by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins that was later adapted for the stage in London" (Bailey 14). Page 154 of the original issue dated January 4, 1868 preserves this treasure, and Bailey pays homage to him by quoting a fragment:

Obenreizer would have given an eye, an arm, or a leg to have been born an Englishman. Out of England there was no such Institutions as a home, no such thing as a fireside, no such object as a beautiful woman. His dear Miss Marguerite would excuse him, if he accounted for *her* attractions on the theory that English blood must have mixed at some former time with their obscure and unknown ancestry. [...]. (Bailey 14)

"Literary Lions" reads the title Bailey uses to remember the other celebrated authors who contributed to render *Harper's Bazaar* a little more than a mere Fashion Magazine: "*Bazaar*'s reputation as a serious cultural journal was further enhanced by featuring original fictions and essays. One early coup was being the first American magazine to publish Thomas Hardy's *Tess of d'Urbervilles*" (Bailey 16). Twenty-four years after Dickens, his name appears on the pages of *Harper's Bazaar*, and the editor-in-chief adds another fragment:

The mixed, singular, luminous gloom in which they walked along together to the spot where the cows lay often made him think of the Resurrection hour. He little thought that the Magdalen might be at his side. Whilst all the landscape was in neutral shade his companion's face, which was the focus of his eyes, rising above the mist stratum, seemed to have a sort of phosphorescence upon it. [...]. (Bailey 16)

A little earlier in time appears Henry James and his fictional work *An International Episode* (1878), and again Mrs. Bailey is proud to insert some of its lines in her work:

Mrs. Watergate disembarked on the 18th of May on the British coast. She was accompanied by her sister, but she was not attended by any other member of her family. To the deprivation of her husband's society Mrs. Watergate was, however, habituated...

The two ladies...alighted at Jones's Hotel, where Mrs. Westgate, who had made...the most agreeable impression at this establishment, received an obsequious greeting. (Bailey, 16)

On the same page of Bailey's work another remarkable literary American name appears: the one of Mark Twain. *The Turning Point of My Life* turns up on February 1910 issue. Here follows what Bailey selects: "The summer came, and brought with it an epidemic of measles...[A] child died almost every day...in the homes there were no cheerful faces...there was no singing but of solemn hymns, no voice but of prayer, no romping was allowed, no noise, no laughter..." (Bailey 16).

Harper's Bazaar's team was strong and ready to let new tastes absorb it. Writers and journalists were eager to talk about it. Indeed, Mooallem reports:

As the U.S. entered its Gilded Age, there was a fascination in America with the predilections of the larger-than-life characters of Victorian England, which the novelist James Payn chronicled in his recurring "English Gossip" feature; while George William Curtis wrote about culture and domestic life in a column called "Manners Upon the Road" (which he signed, "An Old Bachelor"); and the magazine's society maven, Mary Elizabeth Wilson Sherwood, explored the realms of etiquette and social grace. (Mooallem n.p.)

Out of *Harper's Bazar's* viewfinder was everything that concerned politics. According to Fletcher Harper that issue had not to be included: "*Bazar* would be a window on the world, but *pleasingly* so, to appeal to a cross-section of people on different sides of the modern divide" (Mooallem n.p.). Although Booth's view was more progressive, she knew her job and what it implied: she challenged her readers, never affronted them. "To be truly fashionable," Booth intimated, "was to be immersed in the culture and ideas of the moment—to be forward-thinking" (Mooallem n.p.).

Of all the primacies *Bazar* can boast, its endorsement of women's suffrage effort stands first. In June 12, 1869, *Bazar* wrote that the entitlement to vote was based on "the groundwork of truth and justice" and "the awakening of the public conscience" (Mooallem n.p.). All of this went along with articles concerning educational opportunities and work for women.

On *Harper's Bazaar's* anniversary in 2016 some researches emerged drawing attention on the magazine policy and history. Booth's modern sensibility could accept certain features of women's lives more than others. Leafing through the magazines it is clear that for *Harper's Bazaar* homemaking was a particularly conflicting issue. If some pieces, as the one of the August 19, 1871, described women's days as "absolute bondage", thus as solely consumed with taking care of the husband, children, and household chores; others exalted the role of American housewives, enhancing the importance of a well-furnished house. Exemplary of this is *Castleton's porcelains'* advertisement on issue April 1953, perfectly combined with last-trend colors and distinguished by the seasons in which they could be displayed. Another is the section "Shopping *Bazaar*" (included in every number) where readers could find new non-stick frying pans, or tips about how to lay the table or where to dye and clean their clothes.¹ *Bazaar* was the perfect repository of advices and suggestions for 1950s upper class women.

¹ "Shopping *Bazaar*" allowed readers to buy directly the advertised products of the section. As Daniel Milford-Cottam – History of Dress scholar – explains in his work titled *Fashion in the 1950s*: "By 1958, mail-order and catalogue shopping was widespread. Many worldwide stores offered ready-to-wear clothes in a variety of styles and designs. [...] Already quite inexpensive, they could be paid off in monthly instalments" (Milford-Cottam 8).



FIGURE 2. Castleton's porcelains. *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.



FIGURE 3. "Shopping Bazaar..." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

Since they were the target – as previously reminded, and as Fletcher himself declared – it was fundamental for them to be always impeccable, and *Harper's Bazaar* worked as an instruction manual ready to follow.

As mentioned earlier, *Harper's Bazaar*'s mission was to comprehend all the subjects pertaining to a fashion magazine. Literature was included. As a matter of fact, Mooallem recalls that:

In 1882, *Bazar* ran as a serial the anonymous society novel *A Transplanted Rose*, which was later credited to Mary Elizabeth Wilson Sherwood. It tells the story of a Midwestern girl named Rose Chadwick who comes to New York and, with her bullish aunt's guidance, is transformed into a cultured woman. Along the way, Rose wrestles with an array of moral quandaries but finds redemption in the arms of a British lord, whom she marries with a trousseau by the English-born Parisian couturier Charles Frederick Worth. "Clothes," Rose says to a friend while reflecting on her journey, "have a great deal to do with one's happiness." (Mooallem n.p.)

Each novel had the world of clothing as central issue. The aim was to give relevance to what the magazine itself proposed and advertised, but also to show how fashion could determine positive or negative outcomes in people's lives and decisions.

July 29, 1871 issue – and, again, Mooallem himself – shows how *Harper's Bazaar* was also concerned, and really appreciated, the theatre of fashion:

Worth, who is credited with pioneering haute couture, described the scene at his atelier: "Around him were a bevy of women, some pretty, some ugly, listening to his observations with the rapt attention of the disciples of a sage. He called them up before him like schoolgirls, and after inspecting them, praised or blamed their dresses. One, a pretty young girl, found favor in his eyes, and he told her that he must dream and meditate several days over her, in order to find the inspiration to make a gown worthy of her. 'Why do you wear those ugly gloves?' he said to another. 'Never let me see you in gloves of that color again.' She was a very grand lady, but she slipped off her gloves and put them in her pocket with a guilty look. ... The empress, who dealt with him, sent to tell him that if he did not abate his prices she would leave him. 'You cannot,' he replied; and, in fact, she could not, for she stood by him to the last." (Mooallem n.p.)

To *Harper's Bazaar* – a publication targeted to upper-class women – this was all fashion.

1.2 HARPER'S BAZAAR IN THE 1950S: THE DEFINITION OF FASHION

The 1950's represented highest moments and important personalities who contributed to the magazine's fame and diffusion. But these were also the years *Harper's Bazaar* had to face rival magazines, which, also, were engaged in the promotion of the 'American' style. As the journalist Stephen Mooallem remembers, during the middle of the twentieth century "the magazine enters a golden age of fashion, photography, and literary genius" (Mooallem n.p.) proving its competitiveness against a quite powerful backdrop. Although *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue* and *Charm* are not as old as *Harper's Bazaar* is – as reminded previously – some investigations reveal how their influence on people is undeniable, as well as their outcomes.² In the 1950s, Fashion was considered something worth spending time and money on, since many magazines – not centered on the world of clothing as the three mentioned above were – included sections dedicated to the last-trend outfits, and not just for women. Daniel Milford-Cottam stresses this phenomenon in the mentioned above recent work titled *Fashion in the 1950s*:

Alongside dedicated fashion magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, many newspaper and general magazines dedicated sections to the latest modes, typically targeted towards their specific readership. *The Lady* presented accessibly written, richly illustrated articles covering the last London and Paris couture, but also featuring good quality mid-price ready-to-wear by labels such as Susan Small and Selincourt. Their target audience was the upper-middle-class reader (and those with social aspiration) who might dream of Dior, but would be more likely to wear Susan Small frock, particularly if presented as an acceptable alternative to Paris couture. Other, more widely distributed magazines such as *Women's Own* offered dress patterns and knitting instructions, rather than exclusively promoting garments that, more often than not, might be beyond their average reader's budget. (Milford-Cottam 7)

² Phyllis Fine approached this matter. As columns editor for MediaPost, Fine confronts *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*'s outcomes in "Vogue Vs. Harper's Bazaar: Battle Of The Fashion Icons" dated April 25, 2007. The two editors, fashion coverages, features, and the look of the book undergo a subjective evaluation, anyway based on some concrete data. "With a \$10,000 difference in median household income (*Bazaar's*, at \$68,807, is higher), they diverge in ad targets" (Fine n.p.), in fact "*Vogue* is now reaching for the mass consumer" (Fine n.p.), and it always had, if confronted with its older rival, targeted to the upper-classes.

Harper's Bazaar sprang back from the tumultuous remnants of World War II, the climate was uncertain, and the magazine raised its voice assuming a vengeful tone. The success of the war brought a sense of power and strength that made Americans feel superior and opened to what seemed to be a positive and visionary future. "Carmel Snow's cool eminence, Diana Vreeland's wild imagination, and Alexey Brodovitch's creative genius are all by now the stuff of lore, and the magazine they made together was once again the definition of fashion" (Mooallem n.p.). Richard Avedon, and his masterful use of the camera, must be added to this influential troika.

Their work and efforts were fundamental for the development of the magazine, they suited perfectly the post-war period and its intrinsic need for a revolutionary change. Snow began working for *Bazaar* in the early 1930s, but it was not until the 1950s – when the other members of the crew joined the staff – that she really brought freshness and innovation to the already successful periodical. This happened because it was the work of each member of the group that shaped the magazine's creativity. In fact, creative and forward-looking are the most suitable adjectives describing Brodovitch's art. His use of white space – his signature – spoke to people, made them participate as an active audience – what they had never been – while leafing through the pages of the oldest of American's magazines. A real engagement was then what Vreeland brought in her articles, she knew what women wanted, what they needed to read and how they needed to be entertained. *Harper's Bazaar* owes a large part of its post-war success to this open-minded personality.

Finally, Avedon transformed photography, he made of it an 'art'. If the 1950s were labelled the 'Golden Age' of the magazine, it is partly because of his original production.

Other names should be added to this list, because the 1950s ethos was somehow personified by Richard Avedon's favorite models. Dorian Leigh, who became mother in her late 20s, and lied about her age to get a job; the tall and imposing brunette Dorothy Virginia Margaret Juba, who rechristened herself 'Dovima' "after the name of an imaginary friend she conjured when sick with rheumatic fever as a child" (Mooallem n.p.), and Suzy Parker, younger sister of Leigh.

Some questions might come up while looking at the magazine issues, staring at photographs of these beautiful models. For instance, why did the magazine – and Richard Avedon in particular – focus on these three girls and why did they become so influential? The three of them were undeniably beautiful, even for nowadays standards, but still they embodied 1950s beauty: what attracted men's attention and women's admiration. Since World War II had denied women to express completely their femininity – given the fact that the majority of them had to substitute men in factories and enter into the recently discovered world of work outside the house³ – 1950s' fashion innovations gave them the possibility to rediscover their inner elegance and to pay more attention to what they wore, not just as far as garments were concerned, but also fabrics and accessories became relevant parts of their outfits. Women wanted luxury to enter their home field, the same luxury that the worldwide conflict had nullified.

For American women, Dorian Leigh, Dovima and Suzi Parker represented the possibility to perpetuate that same elegance they embodied. If you could dress those clothes, fix your hair and wear the new-fashioned lipstick and nail polish, that 'perpetuation' would start. Following *Harper's Bazaar's* instructions, thus imitating those models, meant rebuilding women's femininity, hid behind some years of war's constrictions.

³ See, for example, the account of the study in Ellen Carol Dubois and Lynn Dumenil's *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*. "World War II provided unprecedented opportunities for American women to enter into jobs that had never before been open to them, particularly in the defense industry. [...] 350,000 women served in the armed forces during World War II" (Dubois and Dumenil, 487), and when the war ended they were fired. Even though they started working outside the home in 1940 "World War II changed both the type of work women did and the volume at which they did it. Five million women entered the workforce between 1940-1945" (Dubois and Dumenil, 487). Departing soldiers created a gap in the labor force, which meant work for women. "In particular, World War II led many women to take jobs in defense plants and factories around the country. These jobs provided unprecedented opportunities to move into occupations previously thought of as exclusive to men, especially the aircraft industry, where a majority of workers were women by 1943" (Dubois and Dumenil, 487). From this change in the work field the myth of Rosie the Riveter was born, and her "We Can Do It!" echoed in 1950s women's minds.



FIGURE 4. Dorian Leigh, Carmel Snow, Suzy Parker and Richard Avedon, 1955.

Dorian Leigh “was definitely attractive: pristine blue eyes, curling eyelashes, an arresting intelligence and intoxicating sexuality, [...] standing 5 feet 5 inches, with an hourglass figure and an alluring smile” (Douglas n.p.), states the American journalist for *The New York Times* Marin Douglas. *Playbill* reports that she was on the cover of the June 1944 *Harper’s Bazaar*, that she adorned seven *Vogue* covers in 1946, and in the following years she appeared in more than fifty outer parts of various magazines. “Her images in Revlon’s ‘Fire and Ice’ nail polish and lipstick campaign in the 1950s — ‘For you who love to flirt with fire ...who dare to skate on thin ice’ — were shot by Richard Avedon and became Madison Avenue legend” Martin Douglas, American obituary writer for The New York Times recalls (Douglas n.p.).

The English fashion, portrait and war photographer, diarist, painter, interior designer Sir Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton wrote in his book *Photobiography* that Ms. Leigh was “as demanding as the eminent photographers who shot her, including Louise Dahl-Wolfe and Irving Penn” (Beaton 58). He then adds that she could transmit many emotional states: “the sweetness of an 18-century pastel, the allure of a Sargent portrait, of the poignancy of some unfortunate woman who sat for Modigliani” (Beaton 58). Her versatile temperament allowed her to suit the magazine’s eclecticism, its need to change to attract the audience.

In an interview with *The Roanoke Times* in 1997, Eileen Ford, the doyenne of the modeling agency industry remarked: “Dorian was truly the best model of our time, [...] She instinctively knew what every photographer wanted, and she came alive just at the moment the shutter clicked” (Douglas n.p.).

Although it remains unclear how Leigh started her career as a model, it is well-known that Mr. Conover, from Harry Conover Agency, discovered her when she was 27 and suggested to go immediately to *Harper's Bazaar* and tell Diana Vreeland that she was 19. “The first thing Ms. Vreeland said was never to touch her exquisite zigzag eyebrows”⁴ (Douglas n.p.). This is relevant because Vreeland saw in Leigh something that might have attracted *Harper's Bazaar's* audience. It is not peripheral the fact that she saw in those ‘zigzag eyebrows’ a potential, the source of women’s attraction⁵, something readers could praise and like.



FIGURE 5. “See Yourself in New Colors...A New Make-Up Art for Wearing Color.” *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

⁴ In the 1950s women paid a great deal of attention to their eyebrows. In 2014 *Marie Claire* dedicated an article to “The History of Women and Their Eyebrows”. Its writer, Lauren Valenti, begins: “These days, it's all in the brows — but in a way, it always was” (Valenti n.p.). And then titles the 1950s section “The Plentiful 1950's Brows”, to later proceed: “Dior's 'New Look' called for a full face of makeup, which was often topped off by a strong brow with a high arch. The biggest Hollywood stars of the time, Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, and Audrey Hepburn, all boasted lush, immaculately-shaped brows” (Valenti n.p.). Abundant and high, eyebrows had to highlight women’s eyes, shaping doll faces, aspiration of the mid-Twentieth Century woman.

⁵ Not by chance, Dorian Leigh's face appears on April 1953 issue (see figure 5), on pages dedicated to how to wear make-up and which colors to choose combined to women’s faces and the last fashionable proposals (“See Yourself in Your New Colors. A New Make-up Art for Wearing Color”).

During Leigh's first session of photographs, she wore a little black tulle hat trimmed with a pink rose. Shot by Dahl-Wolf, those pictures are repository of a conventional beauty of the 1950s.

Dovima, instead, "was post-war's glamorous and sophisticated totem, the ideal embodiment of Parisian haute couture. [...] She was the face of both Christian Dior and Balenciaga throughout most of the 1950s" (Blasberg n.p.). Called by Avedon the Queen Neferiti, her dark hair and distinctive deep eyes reminded the Egyptian Empress. Her beauty was considered unconventional, that is to say not usual or traditional, not the typical beauty advertised in the magazine, somebody out of the ordinary. Choosing Dovima meant exiting ordinary beauty boundaries. Avedon's nickname is something worth pondering on: Egyptian beauty standards couldn't be more far away from what readers were used to see⁶, yet this didn't deny her to be considered the embodiment of seduction.

Dovima's life changed in her 20's, when she was scouted by a fashion editor on Lexington Avenue and featured her first shooting the same afternoon. Irvin Penn then asked about her the following day: "The story goes that he asked her to smile, which she did slyly, her mouth closed to hide a tooth she chipped as young girl when she was playing dress up in her mother's closet. It was a haughty smile that was compared to the smirk of the Mona Lisa, and it would become the template of high fashion for the 1950s" (Blasberg n.p.). She became Avedon's favorite model. Complicity was the key word of their relationship: she knew what he wanted without him asking her.

Dovima appeared in what is considered the most ineffaceable fashion picture featuring *Harper's Bazaar*. There she is, elegantly posed between two elephants in Dior's Sinuous Evening Line enduring as the epitome of beauty, power and mythology of fashion. Dior's line "is marked high, like an empire silhouette, then flows supplely against the figure, narrowing as it goes" (Vreeland 214-215), reads the caption below Avedon's pictures, part of a full session dated August 1955, shot at the Cirque d'Hiver in Paris. The New York's

⁶ Since Marilyn Monroe made her first appearance in George Seaton's movie *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* (1947), and her fascinating attitude resulted so attractive for men, blond hair, full lips and a voluptuous body were considered examples of conventional beauty, thus sources of women's aspiration.

Museum of Modern Art keeps these masterpieces, reminders of the magazine's Golden Ages and of what elegance meant in the 1950s America.

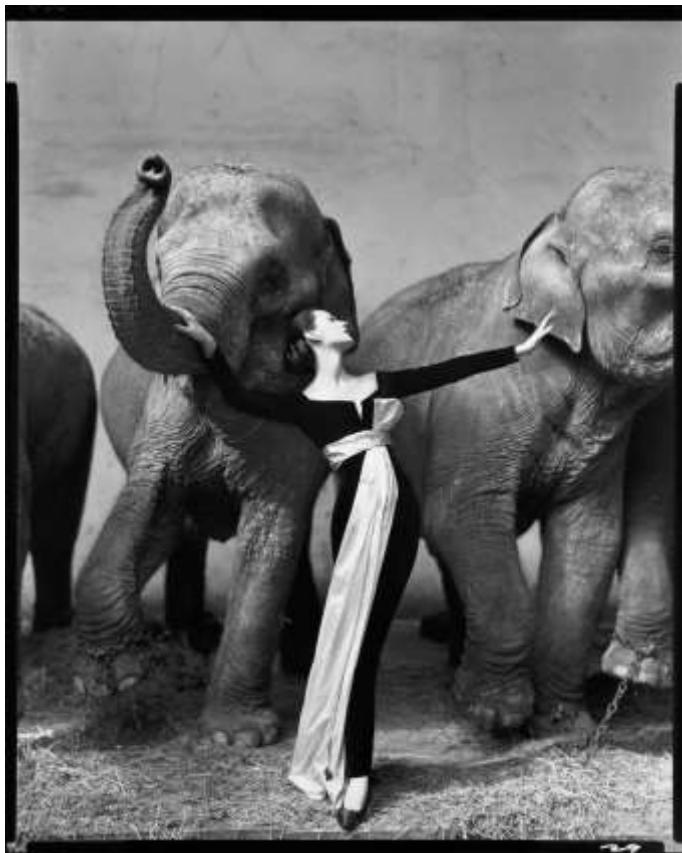


FIGURE 6. "Dior's Sinuous Evening Line." *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1955.

Last but not least is Leigh's sister, Suzy Parker. Even though Avedon initially considered her too conventionally good-looking, her curly red hair and longilneal body granted her success and admiration for, at least, two decades. Thank to her older sister, Parker will enter the panorama of fashion as early as she was 15. Her face appeared on the covers of about 70 magazines around the world, *Harper's Bazaar* included. She was introduced to many fashion photographers, among them Richard Avedon and Irving Penn. She worked no-stop for *Vogue*, so much so that the magazine declared her one of the faces of the confident, post-war American woman. This meant that her features spoke about America. Her face and body were taken as representative of American women. *Harper's Bazaar's* May 1956 cover was hers. Only her ginger hair could stand out perfectly with the

off-white trend of that summer. But most of all it was her look what American's housewives needed.

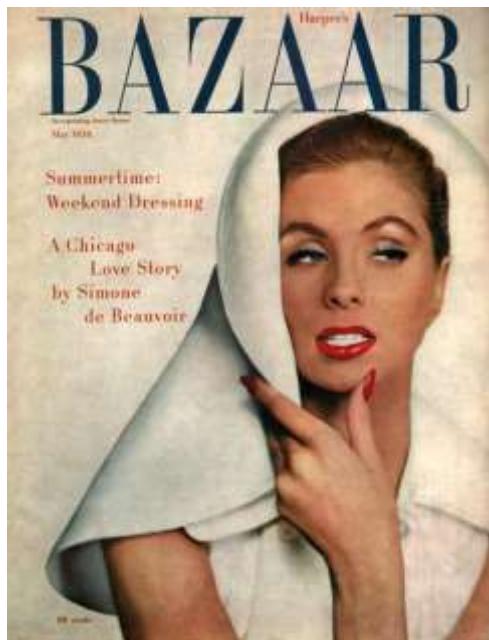


FIGURE 7. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1956.

After War World II, America needed the confidence she represented. Her smile and security provided a sort of celebration of what was meant to be the most powerful of all nations, commemorating its victory in the last global conflict.

Yet, during the 1950s, *Harper's Bazaar* owes part of its success to the captivating lines written by Truman Capote. His mannerism attracted the audience of the magazine – for the majority, the American upper classes. He knew his job because he himself embraced the same society life he explored in his pieces.

Adapted by the well-off Cuban-born textile broker Joseph Capote, after his mother's second marriage, Truman decided to become a writer after having attended the Upper West Side private school.

Fascinated by "Miriam", one of Capote's stories, Mary Louise Aswell, *Harper's* fiction editor, found him and after having reviewed some of his manuscripts, he decided to publish "A Tree of Night", cornerstone of Capote's career. It was October 1945, and he was just 20.

Capote's presence in *Bazaar* helped thrust the magazine into the center of the postwar social swirl. He was unabashed in his embrace of society life, jubilantly gliding through the Stork Club and El Morocco with glamorous women like Gloria Vanderbilt and Oona O'Neill on his arm. [...] Capote's instincts about the culture he had come to inhabit were notably prescient. (Mooallem n.p.)

Since his writing ability is unquestionable, it is powerful to see how he shows a certain closeness to the people he's writing about, the same closeness he wanted his audience to perceive. Here follows what he wrote about his friend, infamously solitary fascinating actress Greta Garbo, in *Bazaar*'s April 1952:

"Nowadays, when not anyone is much of a mystery, when indeed the effort everywhere is to publicize celebrated figures as having personalities interchangeable with one's drearier neighbors, Garbo remains, after eleven years of professional retirement, an unconquerable legend. [...] Because she is beautiful; and it is beauty of depth, of interest: to watch her face is like contemplating a masterwork." (Mooallem n.p.)

This was the style of the 1950s, what women searched for and liked to speculate about. He blended with that world so much concerned with preserving appearances.

"Wealth, fame, glamour, conspiracy, secrecy, and the gleam of high society and movie stars" (Mooallem n.p.) was what really attracted Capote, he breathed this sense of life. This was often combined with a prophetic sense of the tragic: "He could be tart, petulant, self-pitying, and even cruel." (Mooallem n.p.) because he knew his audience, he knew what people wanted to read. Out of the ordinary struggles, *Harper's Bazaar* represented the moment to look at famous people's lives and gossip about them.

Albeit *Harper's Bazaar* is the oldest of American fashion magazines – as reminded earlier – it was not the only one, and had to get a foothold against others, equally competitive, fashion magazines.

By age, *Harper's Bazaar* is immediately followed by *Cosmopolitan*. Born in 1886, *Cosmopolitan* was a monthly magazine for women, which, unlike *Harper's Bazaar*, contained "advice-oriented articles on relationships, sex, fashion, entertainment, and career" (Augustyn n.p.).



FIGURE 8. "Cover." *The Cosmopolitan*, March 1894.

As the title suggests, the magazine was meant to reach a wider audience, running for success. If *Harper's Bazaar* focused on the upper classes – even though the working women didn't dislike it – *Cosmopolitan's* readers were not, for the majority, upper class.

Its history is far more troubled than the one of *Harper's Bazaar*. Publisher Schlicht & Field launched the magazine at the end of the nineteenth century “as a family journal of fashion, household decor, cooking, and other domestic interests” (Augustyn n.p.), but as the company failed, the magazine was sold to Joseph Newton Hallock who introduced book reviews and serialized fictions to its pages. When John Brisben Walker substituted Hallock in 1889, he expanded its circulation. With him as chief, *Cosmopolitan* acquired a different tinge: “poetry, travel essays, and short stories with a strong focus on education and social reforms” (Augustyn n.p.) were introduced, making of it a literary magazine. Thus, between the ninetieth and the twentieth century, the two magazines diverged in their essence. *Bazaar* was centered on fashion, yet, as previously reminded, literary elements were inserted, never randomly, within it. Stories or excerpts of novels came along with vacation spots, perfumes or clothes advertisements.

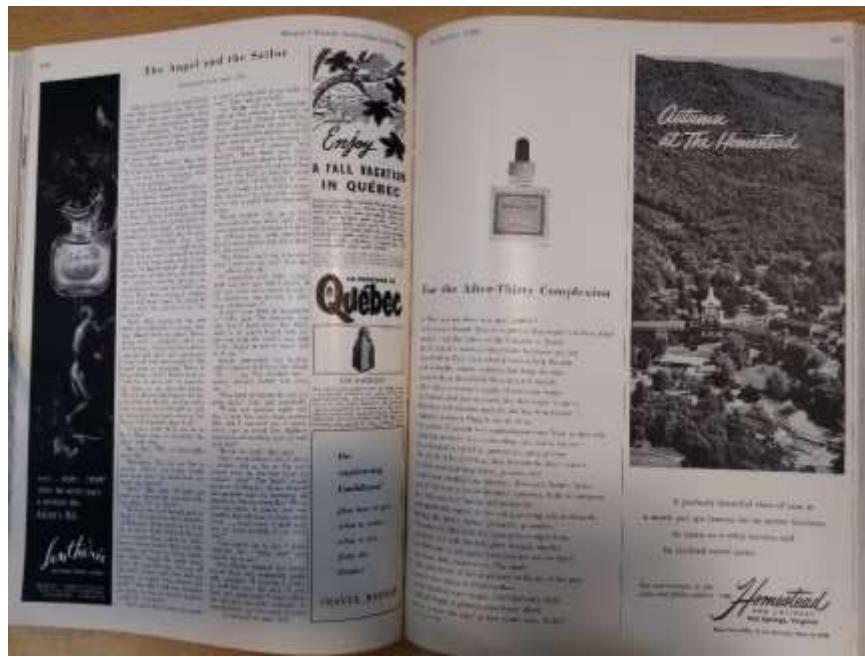


FIGURE 9. "The Angel and the Sailor" by Calvin Kentfield. *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1956.



FIGURE 10. "The Song" by Edwin Muir. *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1956.



FIGURE 11. "That Special Face" by Sidney Carroll. *Cosmopolitan*, May 1951

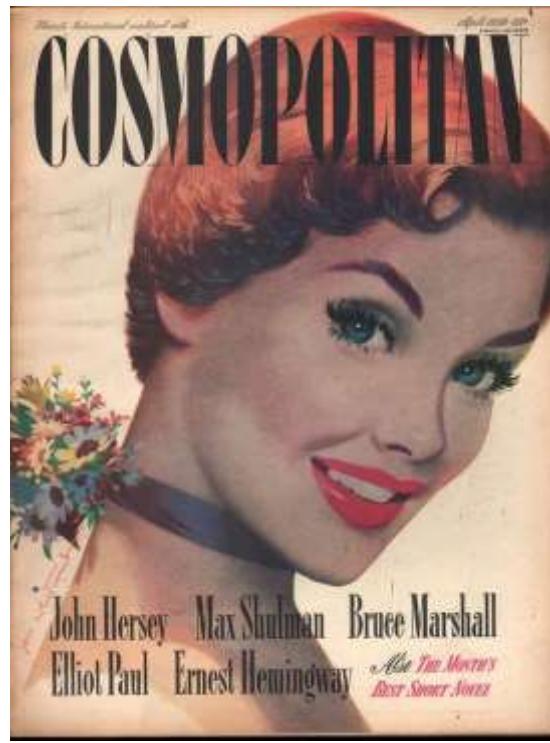


FIGURE 12. "Cover." *Cosmopolitan*, April 1950.

Far from them were *Cosmopolitan*'s tales, as the picture above shows. Wide drawings accompanied them in each number. Interestingly, whereas *Harper's Bazaar* took advantage of recently developed photography – making of it an Art concept – in *Cosmopolitan* drawings were centerstage, you could hardly find photos. *Cosmopolitan*'s covers worked in the same way (see Figure 12).

As it happened, William Randolph Hearst – the American publishing tycoon – acquired *Harper's Bazaar* in 1905. After an initial “exposing scandal” style, the magazine assumed a different format consisting of articles on celebrities as well as public affairs, and short fiction. For instance, Jack London's novella “The Red One” was published in the October 1918 issue, together with 82 ‘scientific detective’ stories by Arthur B. Reeve. In the 1930s it became extremely popular, and in the 1940s it began putting more emphasis on fiction, which allowed it to maintain its popularity during the war time. The overshadowing rise of paperbacks and television in the early 1950s made its circulation drop. Yet, with the arrival of Helen Gurley Brown in the early 60s as first female editor, *Cosmopolitan* boomed again. “Under a new motto—'fun, fearless, female’—it began to focus exclusively on the interests of young women. Its coverage of premarital sex, birth control, and corporate careers sparked scandal in the 1960s, but Brown’s relentless, frank approach to the ‘Cosmo girl’ lifestyle contributed to the gradual transformation of cultural norms” (Augustyn n.p.). *Harper's Bazaar*'s target instead was not just young women, but also mothers growing their children, upper class housewives concerned with their chores, and, why not, also husbands or single men.

Vogue must, indeed, be considered the real antagonist of *Harper's Bazaar*. As the journalist Adam Augustyn reports, *Vogue* was founded 15 years after *Bazaar*, in 1892 by Arthur Baldwin Turnure. Since Carmel Snow, Diana Vreeland and Richard Avedon worked for both *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, the two publications were often confronted, and some similarities were found between them. For instance, both were targeted to New York's social elite and featured “news on the local social scene, tradition of high society, and social etiquette, they also reviewed books, plays and music” (Augustyn n.p.).

When in 1909 Condé Montrose Nast, the founder of Condé Nast Publications, bought the magazine, it became focused on beauty, etiquette, and composure. Nast knew her job and hired the best illustrators and photographers of the time, granting it success. Revolutionary and sophisticated, *Vogue* was the first to print a color photo on its cover in 1932, before *Harper's Bazaar*.⁷

Another interesting curiosity regarding the two magazines concerns their size. Until 1950, *Harper's Bazaar*'s issues were not quite big. From that year on, they began being enlarged and expanded, measuring almost 30x20 cm. *Vogue*'s issues copied these measurements, as the picture below shows.



FIGURE 13. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1950. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1958. "Cover." *Vogue*, April 1953.

⁷ Even though Richard Avedon's experimentations with black and white pictures, appearing on *Harper's Bazaar*'s issues after the 1930s, cannot be considered regressive or conservative, but mere attempts to exploit this past device in a contemporary way.



FIGURE 14. "Cover." *Vogue*, March 1950.

The two rival magazines accused one another of copying ideas or styles. They are quite similar in content and design, although – as the French title suggests – *Vogue* (meaning ‘fashion’) had a European tinge and gave relevance to all things International (just notice Figure 14). It connected the concept of elegance with Europe, or rather, with French women and fashion. Charm, gracefulness, stylishness, all things that related garments to female appearance, came from the other side of the Ocean.

In the early 60s, when Diana Vreeland became *Vogue*'s editor-in-chief, after she left *Bazaar*, the magazine discovered a new femininity, giving emphasis to thin, gender-neutral physiques.⁸

When Anna Wintour became editor of the magazine in 1988, more emphasis was given to women's bodies, not just their faces. Instead of giving prominence to traditional fashion models, she preferred Hollywood actresses instead, “thereby sparking an international trend” (Augustyn n.p.), again the same preference detectable on *Harper's Bazaar*'s covers

⁸ Interestingly, *Vogue* was also the first magazine to feature an African American woman on its pages, in the mid-70s.

of the same decade. She also launched *Teen Vogue* (2003), and *Men's Vogue* (2005-2008) in the United States.

Vogue has enjoyed international success, with both standard and special editions published around the globe. One of the world's most prominent fashion magazines, it has heavily influenced the development of the fashion magazine industry and continues to shape modern fashion trends. In 2009 *The New York Times* christened *Vogue* 'high fashion's bible.' (Augustyn n.p.)

Charm, then, has to be added to the list of the most popular American fashion magazines. Even though it was launched in the 1940s, it was not until 1950s, after Cipe Pineles was hired as art director, that the magazine really began spreading. "The Magazine for Women Who Work" was the catching title given to the periodical publication by Editor Helen Valentine, Estelle Ellis, director Cipe Pinelles, and a "small staff of women writers, editors, and marketers" (*Charm* n.p.). differently from other concurrent magazines – *Harper's Bazaar* included – *Charm*'s target were women who worked outside their homes: employees, office workers...



FIGURE 15. "Cover." *Charm*, April 1952.

1950 is the date of *Charm*'s debut, with women exemplary of female professional roles on the first pages. "Although *Charm* spoke to a cohort of white working women, the magazine touted the broader spectrum of women in terms of occupation, family life, and reasons for working. Feature stories addressed the various opportunities and common challenges facing working women, along with articles and literary pieces written by the era's leading cultural critics, journalists, and fiction authors" (*Charm* n.p.). Irrefutably, *Charm* was extremely inspired by its predecessors for content and design (Just see Figure 15). Yet, differently from *Harper's Bazaar*, as well as *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*, this magazine was based on market surveys, given the statistical mind of editor Ellis. She gathered information about women's buying habits reflecting of the fact that the post-war climate, and the insertion of women in the work field – started during the war –increased women's request for different wardrobes: home, work, evening and travel. This need for more clothes that she detected "convinced some department store owners to keep their stores open later at night" (*Charm* n.p.).

The impact fashion magazines had on 50s American women stands as a reminder of how fashion and clothing per se are charged with meanings. In different ways and manners Carmel Snow, Alexey Brodovitch, Richard Avedon, and Diana Vreeland work on these meanings and contribute to render *Harper's Bazaar* an undisputable work of art.

1.3 THE QUARTET: CARMEL SNOW, ALEXEY BRODOVITCH, RICHARD AVEDON, DIANA VREELAND.

The Victorian period in *Harper's Bazaar* coincided with women's new sense of feminism. This foregrounding 'sense of new' was further embraced by the resolute and buoyant soon-to-be editor-in-chief Mrs. Carmel Snow, former editor at *Vogue*, who began her career at *Harper's Bazaar* in 1933, and spread her mission to dress the women of the world, to instruct them in the ideology of progress. During the Twenties, while at *Vogue*, she was extremely inspired by Russian designer Mehemed Fehmy Agha's style, who became art director of the same magazine in 1929. At the time it was widely thought that Snow would replace the long-standing editor of *Vogue*, Edna Woolman Chase, yet she seemed reluctant to leave her position. During this time, she had been asked several times if Snow wanted to join *Harper's Bazaar* by Hearst's founder William Randolph Hearst. "After seeing no immediate route to an editorship at *Vogue*, Snow jumped ship in 1933 (with many at *Vogue* whispering 'treason' as she went) to become editor of the rival magazine" (Purcell 64). Working at *Vogue*, Snow developed her knowledge of photography and design thanks to Agha and the magazine's chief photographer Edward Steichen. "It was at *Vogue* that Snow realized the creative benefits of allowing photographers carte blanche on any project" (Purcell 64), and she will be praised for that.

Carmel Snow was the one who actually initiated many *Harper's Bazaar's* photographic innovations: "She imagines a new kind of literary household helpmate, one designed to elevate the women reader from the drudgery of domestic chores and suburban isolation to the rarified pleasure of high taste and urbane culture" (Sellers 14). As Susan Sellers –a British author, translator, editor and novelist– explains in an essay on Hollywood musical *Funny Face* (1956), based on the success of *Harper's Bazaar*:

Carmel Snow was an internationally recognized authority of sorts, a paradigm of the high fashion maven, equally at home in the salons of Paris and New York. *Life* included her image alongside other "Headliners": Eleanor Roosevelt, Martha Graham, Georgia O'Keefe, Grandma Moses and Clare Booth Luce. But even as an assistant editor, working her way up the ranks of the fashion industry, she was an early and ardent promoter of the budding aesthetic movements and contradictory avant-garde activities now gathered under the general heading of modernism. (Sellers 17)

"The well-dressed woman with the well-dressed mind" (Sellers 17), this is what the new modernist Carmel Snow's *Harper's Bazaar* envisioned. Introduced to this aesthetic in graphic design by the above mentioned Russian art-director Mehemed Fehmy Agha and photographer Edward Steichen, she brought life and freshness to the pages of *Bazaar*. "Snow was frequently characterized as hard and uncompromising, a stickler for detail for which she was loved, mocked and despised. Perhaps the most frequent word to describe Snow was 'uncompromising' and yet her masculine attitude reveals the sacrifices she made for a life outside the femininity she helped to manufacture" (Sellers 30). Carmel Snow was never a victim, as Sellers suggests: "She is not subject to the vagaries of fashion; she creates them. She fabricates the spectacle on femininity" (Sellers 30). Richard Avedon— hired by Snow as staff photographer from 1945 to 1965 – believed she unconsciously imagined herself "a dictator over women – a general, maybe" (Snow, Aswell 207). She literally entered her clients' minds, putting herself into their shoes, as Avedon observes:

She made a strange slip of the tongue at the last collection we went to together. She talked through the collections, always out of the corner of her mouth, and sometimes she'd say, "now if I were a society woman, I'd choose that dress, or "If I were a secretary, I'd take that." (Snow, Aswell 208)

Snow literally cultivated the "best" people, in fact, in hiring the art director Alexey Brodovitch, she undeniably made a deal. In 1934 Snow attended an exhibition of advertising art curated by Brodovitch himself. He was just 36, but his revolutionary touch made the bold editor write:

"I saw a fresh new concept of layout technique that stuck me like a revelation: pages that "bled" beautifully cropped photographs, typography and design that was bold and arresting. Within ten minutes I had asked Brodovitch to have cocktails with me, and that evening I signed him to a provisional contract as art director."

In hiring Brodovitch, Snow advanced the aesthetic ideals of a European-based modernist movement through the editorial, sartorial, typographic and photographic forms of *Bazaar*.

Bazaar's success and distinction in the vast marketplace of women's magazines were tied to its close association with the European fashion industry. Brodovitch would serve as Snow's conduit to the European avant-garde facilitating the transformations she envisioned in both the magazine and its

audience. According to Brodovitch, *Harper's Bazaar* and models like Dovima would serve as the canvas for his formalist vision of the world as a montage of rhythms, sequences, light and color. (Snow, Aswell 19)

"Snow was the guiding genius behind *Bazaar's* editorial transformation and it is difficult to overestimate her influence on Brodovitch's twenty-four-year tenure at the magazine" (Grundberg 63). Nevertheless, it was Brodovitch's creative imagination that shaped the look and feel of the magazine. It was thanks to his visual innovation that Carmel Snow succeeded in creating a new dialogue between the reader and the magazine.

Yet, to be part of *Harper's Bazaar's* team, Brodovitch had to have the approval of the magazine's owner: once again, William Randolph Hearst. Despite his being conservative, and his views on design being no less conventional, he valued Snow's opinion above his own, since he said to her: "Well, if you want this man, go ahead and get him" (Snow, Aswell 91). Snow recognized that the magazine needed him and his research for freshness and "shock value" on every page. With his directive "Astonish me", he inspired some of the greatest visual artists of the 20th century (including protégés Irving Penn, Hiro, Gleb Derujinsky, and, of course, Richard Avedon). One of his assistants was future Rolling Stone art director Tony Lane.

Brodovitch was born and educated in czarist Russia, and "although he never attended a traditional school of artistic instruction, his immersion in this age of 'condensed' modernization clearly shaped his unique vision" (Purcell 12): the bright shop signs and advertisements, the plate-glass display windows, the motorcars and trams. "It was a language in which shops, street lights, cars, and the like became letters of a visual alphabet, spelling new words and sentences" (Purcell 12). The young man spent the 1920s in Paris, working with Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*, arriving as an exile from the Bolshevik Revolution. In France, he had obtained a short-term position as a painter of backdrops.

Brodovitch had been extremely influenced by Diaghilev's integrated approach to design, and this way of working would eventually find its way onto the pages of *Harper's Bazaar*. The France years became central to his development as a graphic designer. In fact, in the "Twentieth-century Paris was to the intellectual pioneer what nineteen-century America

had been to the economic one. Here, the world beat a pathway to the door of the inventor – not of mouse traps but of perspectives” (Rosemberg 542). He always approached each new project with the attitude “If you know yourself you are doomed.”

Before Carmel Snow made him part of her team, Alexey Brodovitch was coordinating a “Design Laboratory” at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, where he arrived in September 1930. The program of this project rendered clear that he was fascinated with new forms and production techniques. What really interested him was photography, “which was to become his acknowledged contribution to the profession of graphic design and the development of the fashion magazine” (Sellers 20). With it, “he was able to focus on what made a particular image original and accentuate this aspect through a unique set of graphic devices” (Purcell 67). In fact, from 1941 to 1966, he taught a class for students of photography and the graphic arts titled precisely “Design Laboratory”.

In his works we can find alignments with the Surrealists, as he declares in his article in the British Journal, *Commercial Art* (1930), titled “What Pleases the Modern Man?”:

Blinking lights of a city. The surface of the revolving phonograph record, the fantastic reflection of the red tail light and the tread of an automobile tyre on the wet pavement, the heroism and daring in the silhouette of an airplane. The rhythm of the biographical or statistical diagram...In the monotony and the drudgery of a work-a-day world, there is to be found new beauty and a new aesthetic. (Brodovitch 60)

The capitalist need to expand markets (intrinsically American) coincided perfectly with the tendency towards novelty and intense interest in defamiliarization that drove the modernist movement.

As previously noted, Brodovitch was fascinated by visual innovation, and this tendency suited completely the fashion industry’s inexhaustible need to invest old products with new meanings. Furthermore, *Harper’s Bazaar* itself was devoted to the modernization of the domestic landscape. There was a need behind to speak to as many women as possible which found its perfect form in the expressionistic photography Brodovitch would pioneer, especially in the Forties and Fifties. “Via his manipulation, these photographic compositions would meet the reader halfway. While offering a glimpse of a lifestyle of experience, the

nebulous nature of these photographs would also enable the readers to project their own desires into the empty white space" (Purcell 75), the last element being Brodovitch's signature. His 'democratic' cropping allowed all readers - no one excluded - to enter the pages of the magazine and dream, dream outside the home world reality, outside the dull routine. It was not meant to be an intelligible art, something far from people's comprehension. Instead, it was thought to be the way to allow readers' participation in conjuring up meanings. His signature, the use of white space, is up front in every page he designed. It represented the space the reader was assigned to fill, to render his or her own. An instance of his mastery is well depicted in his innovation of *Bazaar*'s Didot logo: large, bold and laid out letters dominate every magazine issue, framing every cover, rendering each of them works of art.



FIGURE 16. "Cover." By Alexey Brodovitch. *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1952.

Thus, both functionalism and surrealism were aesthetic devices that could reinvest everyday images with intrigue and the mystique of high culture.

In his unpublished manuscript “Ideas on Advertising”, the art director renders explicit the importance of allowing a creative interdependence between the modern environment and a corresponding inner vision. It reads as follow:

We are living in the age of industry and mechanization. We are spoiled by the quality and quantity – result of standardization and competition. The comfort of our surroundings increases our demand (requirement). The tempo of life is fast – new achievements open new horizons – our psychology and taste are in constant evolution. The best medium to persuade to buy is to appeal to the common-sense of the consumer, knowing his weaknesses. Studying the condition of the average buyer, knowing his habits, the schedule of his day, his life and his customs. [...]

But it seems to me that up to now Newspaper Advertising is not staged to the highest degree. To follow logically the general idea, studying human psychology, the Advertisement must have a human appeal combined with novelty and originality in appearance. [...] To be logical and successful we must stress not only what we are announcing but how we present our announcement. [...] No longer can we sell the cigarettes, the liquor, or the perfume by announcing that “They are milder” and showing a nice-looking picture of a beautiful girl.

The Advertising idea of today must be prepared and presented in a dramatic, new, unusual, direct and logical manner. (Brodovitch n.p.)

Modernization was the key word. Brodovitch started with this objective in mind, trying to continue it while working for the magazine.

Before him, Erté was the cover illustrator for the magazine, and he had been in charge for nearly two decades (1915-1936). With Erté, *Harper's Bazaar* was different: the text was the most relevant element, illustration represented clothing. Everything remembered traditional book design, with words and pictures that were not closely allied, and the text area was determined by a grid of symmetrical proportions. Conventional frames contained drawings and photographs within the text area.⁹

⁹ See also covers from 1915 to 1936 issues of *Harper's Bazaar*, or the book style format of his layouts.



FIGURE 17. "Index." *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1931.



FIGURE 18. "Simpler Styles." *Harper's Bazaar*, January 1921.

Brodovitch redesigned *Harper's Bazaar*: "His typography tended toward the stark and unadorned, setting off vivid, often surprising, photographs [...] The extreme excess of white page, asymmetric typography are emblematic of his style" (Sellers 21), based on simple geometric forms and their relationship with that clean white space of the page. Yet, "His layouts, of course, were the despair of copywriters whose cherished tone poems on girdles or minks had to be sacrificed to his sacred white space. Just before going to the press, all the layouts were laid out in sequence on Carmel Snow's floor and there, under his eye, rearranged until the rhythm of the magazine suited him" (Bunker 13), says Frances McFadden, literary and managing editor at *Harper's Bazaar* for various times. Furthermore, "Brodovitch was the first art director to integrate image and text. *Vogue*, for instance, still contained the stylistic formalism of its origins as a society magazine before 1929" (Purcell 63).

Unfortunately, because of his heavy drinking and a need to change management, Brodovitch was dismissed from his position at *Harper's Bazaar* in August 1958 (Carmel Snow left a year later). "His departure from *Bazaar* signaled the end of a twenty-four-year period of continual design innovation for Brodovitch" (Purcell 104). He was substituted by Henry Wolfe in September 1958.

Alexey Brodovitch was a very good and honest teacher with his students, he assisted them in any way possible. Such an intimate and trusting relationship is embodied by one of his most celebrated students: Richard Avedon. He was doomed to enter in the fashion world, since his the Avedons once owned a department store on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue and, even though they lost it during the Depression, his father's "job as a clothing buyer for retailers and Avedon's mother's passion for culture (she had wanted to be an artist), there were occasionally copies of *Bazaar* around the house. [...] 'Harper's Bazaar had a glow,' Avedon told the magazine in 1994. 'It was a happy combination of the things my parents valued in American life'" (Mooallem n.p.).

After having taken at least 14 appointments with Brodovitch, all of which were cancelled, Richard Avedon joined his Design Laboratory in 1944, after having worked in the photographic department of the merchant marine. Examining the pictures Avedon took of

the seamen with whom he had served, Brodovitch discovered Avedon's potential as a fashion photographer. The American art curator Jane Livingston, in her book *The New York School: Photographs 1936-1963*, quotes what Avedon said recounting his meeting with Brodovitch:

[I] brought my first attempts at fashion photography to Brodovitch, and, for good luck, I included an experiment I had done during my time with the Merchant Marine: a picture of twin brothers. Brodovitch dismissed all my carefully wrought attempts at fashion photography. They were completely derivative, he said, but if I could take some of the psychological power that was in the flatly lit yet complicated experiment and turn it into fashion photograph, I might be ready to begin. He also helped me immediately to see that I could use technical means, even accidents of imperfections – objects in and out of focus, for instance – to achieve what I needed. (Livingston 337)

Livingston than adds: "Brodovitch somehow helped Avedon understand what kinds of demands one not only could place, but was obligated to place, on oneself as a creative person" (Livingston 337).

Avedon was 21 when he began his career in the fashion world. He was assigned "a shoot for a special supplement to the magazine's November 1944 issue called *Junior Bazaar*, which offered teenage girls advice on clothes, makeup, and coming-of-age topics" (Mooallem n.p.). *Junior Bazaar* run as a separate publication from *Harper's Bazaar* from November 1945 to May 1948. It was a success. Especially because, after the traumas of World War II, his works at both *Junior Bazaar* and then at *Harper* gave to American women what they most needed: 'a vacation from life', creating an 'harmonic composition'. "Avedon's photographs soon set the visual tone for the magazine. The women in his pictures weren't statues or seraphs—they were living beings who danced and leaped and longed and moved in blurs. There was a searching in his images, an ephemeral quality" (Mooallem n.p.).

For Avedon, Brodovitch represented a source of inspiration, he once uttered about him: "[t]here is nothing you can take away from him but his essence. Like an inherited quality, there is something of him in you for the rest of your life and it keeps growing...You never learn anything the day he says it. He gets you irritated and angry. Then, one or two months later it happens" (Brodovitch 92).

A work worth mentioning, as far as graphic invention and Avedon's efforts are concerned, is *Observation* (1959). *Observation* is the fruit of a perfect collaboration between Truman Capote's text, Alexey Brodovitch's design and Richard Avedon's images. It "featured pictures of royalty, heiresses, and doyennes Avedon had photographed for *Bazaar* over the years" (Mooallem n.p.). From this we can deduce some of Avedon's sources of inspiration and fascination, for example the human face. As Capote comments "Avedon seems to have a fascination with the elderly; and, even among the just middle-aged, [he] unrelentingly tracks down every hard-earned crow's-foot" (Avedon, Capote n.p.). He was extremely fascinated by the signs of aging:

A combination of the dazzling backdrop and the glare of the flash serve to expose all the engraved wrinkles, saggy chins, and puffy eyes of various elderly writers and performers [...] Avedon attempts to signify a more condensed sensation of motion. Through pin-sharp photographs of the aged he strives to read the impressed evidence of time of their still faces. (Purcell 179)

Again, John Szarkowsky in *Looking at Photographs* observes that "this aspect of Avedon's work aims to show movement as a crystal-clear fossil, suspended in perpetuity, like the ones-human figures disinterred at Vesuvius, seemingly overtaken in mid stride; or, more nearly, like faces illuminated by a catastrophic explosion, the significance of which has not yet registered in their expressions" (Szakowwsky 108).

Observation encouraged Avedon to use those images which represented at best the personality of the individuals featured.

Avedon became being a prominent personality photographing the collections of the most exclusive European designers, especially Christian Dior, whose "New Look" was inserted between the pages together with words, images and portraits of renowned novelists, painters, photographers, architects, dancers and actors.

"Avedon wrapped what was perceived as a regressive style of almost caricatured femininity and material excessive a new form of photography that emphasized color, movement and carefree, incidental gesture in blurred or out-of-focus images. In this way, he managed to suggest freedom and spontaneity even when [his] subject matter was corsetry" (Sellers 23).

The use of the silhouette, was one of his most interesting techniques: an empty shape, waiting to be filled. The silhouette indicates an inevitable filmic association, the shape drives the reader to insert herself into the pages of the magazine, to become the “Beautiful Individualist”, as one of Avedon’s titles in *Harper’s Bazaar* suggests.

Avedon was drawn to subjects who had some road under their feet. For this reason, he was exceptionally attached to some models: Dorian Leigh, Suzy Parker, Dovima, who were subject to many transformations, fruit of his professional fantasy. “As with magazine art direction, it is not through the naturalistic, indexical aspect of photography that the manipulation takes place, but rather in its ability to be distorted, cropped and changed. It is through the perversion of the object that the *Harper’s Bazaar* woman is manufactured” (Sellers 25). These models were taken as reference, exemplary of a new femininity.

Yet, the powerful 1950s *Harper’s Bazaar*’s quartet is not completed without Diana Vreeland, who “has been credited with inventing the role of the fashion editor” (Vreeland 7). Before her, “fashion coverage had solely managed by and for society women” (Vreeland 7). She was also a noted columnist. After her launch at *Harper’s Bazaar*, where she worked from 1936 to 1962, she has also worked at *Vogue* as editor-in-chief for the following 8 years. Furthermore, she became special consultant at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In March 1936 she debuted as editorial journalist with her first column titled “Why don’t you...?”. In it Vreeland “shared her fun and outrageous ideas that were accompanied by charming illustrations” (Vreeland 7). Just to mention some of them: “[Why Don’t You] [w]ash your blond child’s hair in dead champagne, as they do in France” or “Why don’t you own, as does one extremely smart woman, twelve diamond roses of all sizes?” (Dwight n.p.).

Her lively and extravagant attitude made her feel that Vreeland, on the other hand, felt that “to-day only personality counts . . . I do not believe we should put in [the magazine] so-called society, as it is démodé and practically doesn’t exist . . . but ravishing personalities are the most riveting things in the world -- conversation, people’s interests, the atmosphere

that they create round them -- these are the things that I feel are worth putting in any issue" (Dwight n.p.).

When, in 1953, both Carmel Snow and Alexey Brodovitch left *Harper's Bazaar*, she became extremely influential for the content of the magazine. Having lived in European fashion cities such as Paris and London, Vreeland studied and knew a lot about the fashion world. She was endlessly creative, and she really loved her work, for this reason she was profoundly respectful with the fair sex and created images that praised intelligent women and their full lives. What Vreeland showed through the magazine was not a girl, a woman or an ageing person outshined by their clothes, but rather in love with fashion, seeing what they wore more as a means to an end than an end in itself.

The same modernization detected by Brodovitch, was what Vreeland helped in pursuing while working at the magazine. She revolutionized the fashion imagery – that spoke to new, modern women. As she herself utters: "I think part of my success as an editor came from never worrying about a fact, a cause, an atmosphere. It was me – projecting to the public. That was my job. I think I always had a perfectly clear view of what was possible for the public. Give 'em what they never knew they wanted" (Vreeland 1). Another thing Vreeland accomplished was to create a kind of reference line between fashion and celebrity. In fact, it was thanks to her that people like Katherine Hepburn, Marlene Dietrich, Rita Heyworth, Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren, Brigitte Bardot, Audrey Hepburn, Jane Fonda, Humphrey Bogart, and Lauren Bacall became extremely famous and influential.

Not just Hollywood celebrities owe part of their fame to Diana Vreeland, she also championed a great number of both male and female photographers. Whereas Snow and Brodovitch brought many photographers to the magazine, Vreeland worked directly with them to create the fashion images.

It is interesting to see how Alexander Vreeland – the grandson of Diana Vreeland – pays homage to his great-grandmother through a biography which, through charming images, retraces Vreeland twenty-six years of hard work and passion at *Harper's Bazaar: Diana Vreeland: The Modern Woman*. In it he remembers her great-grandmother recounting him that:

when she attended fashion shows, she knew what it would like to be wearing each outfit that came down the runway. She said she experienced each dress as if she were wearing it herself.

During her twenty-six years at *Harper's Bazaar*, my grandmother helped liberate women. She was the advocate of the modern woman because she was one herself. She was ahead of her time and understood where things were going. Month after month she dazzled her relationship by portraying a woman who was self-assured, active, intelligent, beautiful and modern. (Vreeland 10)

A woman who was “self-assured, active, intelligent, beautiful and modern”. Vreeland’s mission was the magazine’s mission, further contextualized in the following chapter.

The second chapter, indeed, enters the oldest of all fashion magazines taking as a reference the backdrop of its insertion: the 1950s. Post-World War II America, the Cold War rise, women’s role and the home dimension are read through the journal’s pages, which sees women at the center of the 1950s’ social changes.

CHAPTER 2

HARPER'S BAZAAR: A READING OF AMERICAN SOCIETY IN THE 1950S

2.1 AFTER WORLD WAR II: THE POST WAR CONTEXT

If the first chapter roughs out the history, development – with special emphasis on the 50s – and the most prominent personalities who rendered *Harper's Bazaar* worldwide renown; the second chapter enters within American society, shifting the reader's attention on the role of this magazine during the post-war time. For this reason, some premises must be taken into account: even if *Harper's Bazaar* was born as a fashion magazine, issuing style and last trend lessons, the magazine works perfectly as the index of society. Through images, photographs, advertisements, stories inserted in it, we are given an instrument to read and try to understand the same community to which it was – and still is – addressed.

As the experts and researchers on fashion issues Djurdja Barlett, Shaun Cole, and Agnès Rocamora suggest in their work titled *Fashion Media: Past and Present* “Fashion advertisements, magazines, fashion films, websites and photography are among the media sites discussed as a way of engaging with a range of topics central to the understanding of not only fashion but of society and culture, too” (Barlett, Cole and Rocamora 1). Again, fashion magazines have not just the purpose of entertaining or giving advices to a mainly female public, but play as a sort of key, a way through which we can read a given society and culture. Through fashion we can speculate about the “wearer’s identity and the complexities of elements that make up each individual’s identity” (Barlett, Cole and Rocamora 5). Yet, their function is not limited to this. As the fashion critic and researcher Sandra Miller remarks in her essay titled “Taste, Fashion and the French Fashion Magazine” inserted in the above-mentioned volume. “Ever since their emergence [...], fashion magazines have been truthful mirrors of their time. They have functioned not only as

repositories of the progress of sartorial fashion and the most up-to-date social, cultural and artistic developments but also as self-styled barometers of taste” (Barlett, Cole and Rocamora 13). Hence, through magazines, readers “were told how to dress, how to furnish their elegant interiors and how to entertain, as well as everything they needed to know about manners and mores and examples abound. [...] We witness the beginning of what is now referred to as ‘life and style’” (Miller 16). This is and was all possible thanks to what belongs to the visual art sphere: pictures, images, photographs which capture moments or events, rendering their own study possible. These elements nurture the nature of *Harper’s Bazaar’s* development. They are the expression of Fashion Art: fruit of collaborations and creativity. Thanks to them people can write and study the past of fashion. For this reason, it is fundamental to see the impact they have and played in the world of clothing.

Even if the subject of Nilgin Yusuf’s essay “Caught on Camera: The Fashioned Body and the Criminal Body” – a study focused on the relation between fashion and crime – is not so central for the purpose of the present dissertation, his conclusions about the role of mass media are remarkable and useful:

Media is central to our understanding, construction and consumption of fashion. [...] Through image, fashion has become part of the spectacle of all our everyday lives. [...] Through fashion media, we are informed of the prevailing taste and esthetics, what is considered sartorially acceptable and desirable and by extension what is regarded as déclassé or démodé.¹⁰ (Yusuf 107)

Photographs or portraits, images – i.e. fashion images – have an important impact on viewers. Like dress historian Aileen Ribeiro observes “A portrait is not merely a mechanical image, it is a likeness of the sitter and his or her character seen through the temperament of the artist” (Ribeiro 14). In the same way, when photography was invented at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the way in which dress and the dressed body could be presented and viewed changed. Photography made its major impact in printed media

¹⁰ Nilgin Yusuf is a former Fashion Editor of the *Sunday Times* and Fashion Writer at the *Daily Telegraph*. She has interviewed a host of fashion icons and established the trail-blazing MA Fashion Media Production at London College of Fashion. She currently works as the Creative Director of School of Media and Communication based in London.

precisely after World War II, and it served as a means of recording fashion, thus in fixing those images, perpetuating its essence for the following decades. In “Fun with Pins and Rope: How Caroline Baker Styled the 1970s”, Alice Beard reminds us the various functions fashion photography has: “advertise clothing, accessories and make up which can then be consumed by the reader,” (Beard 28) but they can also “encourage the creative activity of constructing different fashionable personas through the process of dressing up”(Beard 28), which is what *Harper’s Bazaar* undeniably did. The magazine’s photographs did not just function as promoters, but as basis to construct and develop each individual’s creativity. Brodovitch’s white space is exemplary of this. It was the reader’s task to fill it and doing so rendering it his or her own.

Anne Hollander, then – American historian whose original work provided new insights into the history of fashion and costume and their relation to the history of art – goes even further by asserting that fashion can only claim its existence through visual media.¹¹ According to her, no separation is possible between the two fields: “We dress with images of fashion in mind. It is an essential fact that without the constant reference of its interpretation, fashion could not be perceived. Certain ways of looking could not be seen as more desirable than others, as acceptable or in need of subversion or further exaggeration, without the visual demonstration that pictures provide” (Hollander 350). Clothes are created to be photographed, they are “designed for the flashbulb” (Hollander 328). The sovereignty of the shooting session became so strong to make painted portraits of people look dowdy; and people such as Richard Avedon and Alexander Brodovitch made of that shooting session, and of the products of it an Art.

Garments begin living when shot, photography is what renders them ‘immortal’, and *Harper’s Bazaar’s* purpose is to celebrate this immortality.

Precisely around the 1950s photography began playing an important role, providing “the viewer a glimpse of ‘reality’” (Söll 86). “Extreme viewpoints, spontaneity, graphically

¹¹ Anne Hollander’s approach is remarkable because, as an independent scholar, she explored fields of fashion not considered before or regarded as unimportant. She insisted on concentrating on cloths and drapery before talking about clothes, and she studied the association between dress and Art. Hollander worked as a fashion columnist for *Slate* as well as reviewer for many periodicals.

designed images working with strong lights and shadow contrasts. [...] Photography was to become a means of artistic self-expression, experimentation and unique style" (Söll 86). Very interestingly, this evolution of photography into the realm of the Arts, as Hollander reminds, coincided with a change in women's clothes in the middle of the Twentieth Century. World War II altered everything. According to Elaine Tyler May, Regents Professor in the Departments of American Studies at the University of Minnesota, "Post-World War II America presented itself as a unified nation, politically harmonious and blessed with widespread affluence" (Tyler May 8). This could be the ideal subtitle of one of *Harper's Bazaar* issues in the middle of the Twentieth Century. "Widespread affluence" is what one breaths while flipping through its pages. As bearer of the post-war transformation and promoter of the latest fashion, the magazine gives way to the 'newness' Snow emboldened. In the 1950s there no longer was place for the boyish freedom of the 1920s' flappers, or the strength evoking power of the shoulder-padded styles typical of the 1930s. If in the 1940s clothing was heavily restricted: comfortable garments such as suits and shirtdresses, pants to work resulting in a slim, straight silhouette; the 1950s look reminisced the mid-nineteenth century style. When Christian Dior raised the curtain in February 1947 on his 'New Look' – as Carmel Snow would baptize it – he really gave a shake to the mood of the era:

"Swirling skirts. Pleats and pleats. Dior makes a skirt 45 yards wide," *Bazaar* raved in the October 1947 issue, marveling at Dior's quasi-libertine use of material, coming as it did on the heels of wartime fabric rationing. It was a boon for couture, as Paris reclaimed its place as the seat of high fashion; the houses of Balenciaga, Balmain, and Fath were all flourishing. And more designers were following in the footsteps of Chanel and Schiaparelli, and branching out into fragrances, boutiques, and licensing deals. (Mooallem n.p.)

With its launch women bid their farewell to the previous "comfortable" style, to embrace a step back towards corsets, hip pads, crinolines and frills:

The fabric was luxurious and voluminous. Shoulders were soft instead of squared, the figure was hourglass instead of boxy, and the short, straight skirt of the ration-happy '40s was replaced by a huge, billowing one that hit at mid-calf. There were also skirts that were so slim and fitted that women found it hard to walk. Bodices were extremely tight, accentuating a tiny waist. ("1950s Fashion History: Women's Clothing" n.p.)

Dior's silhouette reminded an hourglass: boned corsets, busts, girdles, padded brassieres, layers over layers of precious fabrics helped in shaping those harmonious proportions, "that made women appear to have large breast" (Tyler May 108).



FIGURE 19. Corsets and busts. *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1947.

Harper's Bazaar's issue of October 1950 whispered:

You're of 1950 if...

You wear a skirt as straight and slim as a toothpick –

Even slimmer when worn under one of the new dangle jacket that swing from fitted shoulders to just above the waist.

You are straight from the shoulder, even in the fullest coat. You love the strapless sheath, you love the sweater dinner dress, and you love to see a tight, fitted underskirt under your full, transparent organdie skirt.

You like one wide line to meet your eye in the mirror – a wide horizontal from upper arm to upper arm. And you achieve it with 1830 sleeves that bloom out below molded shoulders – some flounced, some inflated in balloon size – or with separated piqué cuffs that button around your bare arms.

You have black on the brain – black linen, black piqué, black alpaca, black chiffon and, in a big revival, black lace.

You insist on a suit that is really a suit – strictly, superbly tailored in wool herringbone, gray flannel, or in beige flannel for a change. And you're happy as Larry if white pearl buttons are included in the price of your black tailleur.

You look for hats that hug the crown of your head, big-brimmed leghorns, little-brimmed sailors and no-brimmed caps. Your most delicious evening hat is the skull veil, a tight cup of netting.

You're intrigued by familiar fabrics in new places. You go to a restaurant or the theatre in a strapless sheath of grey flannel under a dangle jacket of flannel lined with white satin, or a black sweater dress worn with diamonds, an orange chiffon handkerchief, a narrow white lizard belt.

You go in for décolletage clear around the clock – scooped-out necklines on tailored suits, and jersey street dresses so sleeveless that they look like halters with a back set in.

You dote on a sweater top, due for a big renascence, long-sleeved, short-sleeved, high-necked, low-necked, sometimes only a tube. By day it's a black jersey top with your black linen skirts. At night it's the same sweater. (*Harper's Bazaar*, October 1950 121)

If you wore "skirt[s] as straight and slim as a toothpick", dangle jackets "that swing from fitted shoulders to just above the waist", "1830 sleeves", hats "that hug the crown of your head" ..., you were part of the 1950s (*Harper's Bazaar*, October 1950 121).

Elegance, sophistication, posture...these were the key words. A woman who got back in the 'game' of life, who knew her role as wife and mother, yet maintaining some sort of grace and refined qualities. Front-view, slightly inclined face, wide-opened eyes staring at the world with confidence (the same confidence Suzy Parker radiated, as the first chapter reminds), diamond ring and earrings, gloves, a hat, pointed shoes: this was the woman *Harper's Bazaar* envisioned for the post-war time.



FIGURE 20. "You're of 1950 if ..." *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1950.

The magazine described Christian Dior's innovative - yet expensive - collection as the "first major post-war fashion ... every line is rounded, there are no angles ... shoulders are gently curved ... The big story is a curving, opulent day silhouette that is the most elegant fashion for decades" (Barbieri n.p.).



FIGURE 21. Christian Dior's 'New Look', February 1947.

Yet, unfortunately, harmony and sinuosity were not enough for the post-war American minds. When the French couturier's collection crossed the Ocean, many protests were held, especially on the part of feminists, who had strived to obtain a little more equality before and during the war, and to dress with less restraints¹². In fact, it was precisely in the 1950s that a general acceptance of trousers for women took place: the source of this tendency?

¹² The 'New Look''s arrival in Chicago in 1947 was greeted by women with banners exclaiming "Mr Dior, we abhor dresses to the floor" (Barbieri n.p.). Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Cecil Beaton - English fashion, portrait and war photographer, diarist, painter, interior designer – likened Dior to a "bland country curate made out of pink marzipan" (Barbieri n.p.). Unforgettable was, then, Rue Lepic's episode in Paris. It was "the autumn of 1948, and the photographer Walter Carone captured a scene that was later shown throughout the world: a young woman literally had her clothes torn off by older women, who better remembered having to 'make do and mend' during the war and were outraged at what they saw as the obscene waste of fabric in her New Look skirt" (Barbieri n.p.).

Of course, *Harper's Bazaar* and its emancipated director Carmel Snow. As a matter of fact, it was not quite hard to find collections centered on pants in their seasonal shapes and looks. April 1950s issue displayed Louise Dahl-Wolfe's creative picture featuring six models, whose only legs are revealed under sliced umbrellas, covering their heads but giving relevance to the "Short, Shorter, Shortest" pants tendency for the following summer.



FIGURE 22. "Short, Shorter, Shortest". *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1950.

To this trend another was added in 1954, when the June issue was dedicated to "The Afro-Hispanic Influence" where geometric embroideries and Canary Islands motives were combined with loose and tight trousers, changing depending on the day and time occasions, signed by Richard Avedon's photographs (see Figure 23).



FIGURE 23. "The Afro-Hispanic Influence". *Harper's Bazaar*, June 1954.

A growing number of pages dedicated to sportswear gave relevance to loose pants. Designed in California, inasmuch apted for the informal lifestyle of the West Coast, trousers became extremely popular both for work and leisure time. Diana Crane – emeritus professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania – detects an interesting movement connected to the popularization of trousers in the 1950s America, which is both geographical and social. First, geographical because of its Westward motion: the usual direction of fashion's mutation used to move from East to West, which was not the current case, since the trend starting point seemed to be California. Social because, instead of being divulgated by the higher classes – as it was usual – working women spread this fashion. So, if on the one hand some feminists discouraged the popularization of Christian Dior's 'New Look', others supported not just the newness of the incoming style, but its fitting perfectly into the moral ethos behind American civilization. However, the 'New Look' spread all over the country, having *Bazaar* as one the most fervent supporter: the hardships of the conflict brought with them a deep desire for change. Snow's "sense of new" was embracing America. The magazine was explicit in its images: appearance was deemed fundamental, your look determined who you were and where you came from. It clearly supported the idea of a wardrobe that should please American husbands' eyes. On their part, men were the bread winner, but their power was becoming more and more necessary at home as well.

Their success and wealth resulted in what they wore; thus, in what their wives could afford to buy for themselves. Spending money on clothing became women's favorite hobby. It was a race towards perfection. The closer the resemblance to the faultless family pictures advertised everywhere in *Bazaar*, the better:

As men returned home from the war, women also returned to the home as wives, mothers and homemakers. There was a migration to newly-built suburbs where life was supposed to be picture-perfect and traditional. Society became very conservative, and there was a rise in affluence. Racism and anti-communism were rampant. There was an air of conformity – everyone wanted to act and look 'normal.' ("1950s Fashion History: Women's Clothing" n.p.)

Domesticity, as well as fashion, was affected by the global conflict: "World War II had a dynamic effect on American women. By the end of the war, many women who had been keeping the country running had no intention of subjugating themselves by trying to fit into a societal or marital role that they had shed. No longer wishing to be condescended to, the reader of magazines such as *Bazaar* and *Vogue* wished to be addressed as an equal" (Vreeland 7), reminds Alexander Vreeland praising his great-grandmother in *Diana Vreeland: The Modern Woman*. After having experimented some sort of release from certain domestic boundaries, American women wanted to protract that sensation. They wanted their sexual and economic emancipation to be recognized. Unfortunately, it was not that simple. Exiting the domestic boundaries, or rather, allowing women to follow their career aspirations was considered dangerous, source of imbalances for the perfect national stability. The United States of America were called to show their strength through the consolidated roles of husbands and wives: women had to "embrace domesticity in service to the nation, in the same spirit that they had come to the country's aid by taking wartime jobs" (Tyler May 98). American feared the Cold War, and strong family units were meant to be the strongest 'arm' to fight that fear. Therefore, women's energies had to be channeled into their intimate relationships. Thus, even if ambitious, young American women were discouraged to complete a higher education career, above all if they decided to marry. After matrimony, they were held responsible for the home maintenance and the fulfillment of their sacred bound. Attending to child care, hospital work, social work, and emergency feeding then, were their social commitments.

Harper's Bazaar's language was captivating and fascinating at the same time, and women absorbed by those pages knew it. The French linguist and semiotician Ronald Barthes reasoned about this unconscious knowledge and produced a theory contained in *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*: "A fashion magazine reader, is almost in a conversational situation; while two people talk, they understand each other very well, but at the same time they don't analyze their words grammatically. In the same way, the fashion-magazine reader isn't conscious of the mechanisms which produce these signs, but they reach her" (Barthes 59). Therefore, Barthes suggested that what happens between the magazine and the reader is something very natural and essential in human's lives: a conversation. He also recognized that the language used "must be everything at once in order to represent the greatest possible number of women readers" (Barthes 59), in order to reach the furthest extremities of the magazines' possible audience. For this conversation to take place, language has to act as a filler, restricting the gap existing between upper society and working classes, creating a commune idiom understandable by different realities.

Generally, the strategy adopted by fashion magazines, which was applied by *Harper's Bazaar* as well, lies in its bifurcated structure "in which an audience is both constructed and courted, this shapes readers to be the kind of women who read fashion magazines" (Sellers 27).

In the 1950s, *Harper's Bazaar* was addressed to the white-collar world. Women belonging to a "distinct highly-paid, hard-working caste that emerged in the nascent mass-market fashion industry in the early century" (Sellers 28), mocked as "the Brahmins of the ready-to-wear store world, and Lady Buyers. [...] She [the female reader] laughs too much, she argues too readily. She is used to getting her way. She is Success" (Leach 312).

Instead, Modernization – key concept of the 1950s innovation – was something regulated by men for the most part, reserved for the space of the city center, the factory floor, the efficient office. The official corporate language adapted became the International Style, which spread while corporations grew increasingly. Russell Lynes – American art historian, photographer, author and managing editor of *Harper's Magazine* – writing in 1954,

detected a failure of the program at the domestic level which was, according to him, what caused the spread of the modern in the corporate landscape. Lynes argued that suburban men couldn't think about their houses as mimicking their offices:

The modern house was unrelenting in its demands for an orderly life...It seemed an unlikely place for a man to come home to, throw himself down, put his feet up and shut out the world of work and neighbors...He insisted it was for him and never would be. Modern was damned nonsense and he wanted no part of it, and neither (except in the kitchen) did his wife. (Lynes 247)

Men wanted to come back home to tradition after a hard day immersed in the world of corporate modernization, and they expected their wives to aid and abet them.

Yet isolated wives in the suburbs – the audience of *Harper's Bazaar* – were not allowed to approach the cold rationality of the modernist and corporate office.

Bazaar brought the visual language of museum and the boardroom into women's home [...] [It] bore the mark of 'good design' showcasing modern products amidst models. In relegating all advertising to the front and back sections of the magazine, Carmel Snow afforded women the luxury of negotiating their path through the magazine – their path through art and culture – without passing through the kitchen, the home, the suburb of the representational worlds portrayed in the unrelenting advertising which had assailed readers in earlier decades.

Bazaar sold women 'upward mobility' through the pleasure of knowledge rather than pecuniary advantage; it produced a kind of high culture consumerism. (Sellers 31-32)

It was the novelty of the temporal materials, which easily conformed with people's routine. In general, products designed during the 1950s became rapidly obsolete, "with seasonal model changes in cars and kitchens appliances, supported by a highly efficient advertising system, devoted to the maximization of profits" (Pavitt 34).

In 1933, *Harper's Bazaar*'s advertisers varied from Budweiser (beer) to Heinz (tomato paste), Canon (towels) to Hachmacher (suits). As a matter of fact, "Magazines are primarily spaces of consumption. In addition to the cover price, their pages paid for several times over through advertisements, advertising features and editorial advice on which objects and experiences to buy" (Cheang 4), the connection between readers and magazine seems

not to be barely conversational, as Barthes postulated, but ruling – through advertisement – people's decisions.

"By the early fifties, new advertisers were almost exclusively department stores and fashion accessories with the exception of few discrete beauty items" (Cheang 4).



FIGURE 24. "The Stirrup" by Ronay. Ronay Handbag, 1950.



FIGURE 25. "Heinz Tomato Ketchup," 1957.

Handbags and Tomato Ketchups were just examples of this tendency. Advertising was central in the magazine's construction. *Harper's Bazaar*, as well as the other periodicals, were based on commercials. They had to be appealing and groundbreaking, catching the reader's attention and capturing the essence of the moment in which they were advertised. The magazine gave birth to a new consumer market created from the "Career or Would-Be Career Woman [...] very interested in houses and things: chairs, tables, silverware" (Freidan 206), who dismissed traditional notions of domesticity. As told in the first chapter, opening an *Harper's Bazaar*'s issue of the 1950s, one could easily find the last-trend porcelains, candle holders, bread baskets, pretty bookcases... (see Figure 26).



FIGURE 26. "Shopping Bazaar...". *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

Arts, leisure and home life became the real territory of the post-war conflict. During this decade home became the central cultural battleground, and the kitchen the perfect site of competition, fruit of time's evolutions, above all for the upper classes. For women, this was the moment to display what they had absorbed through fashion magazines: the perfect curtains, porcelains, plates, cutlery, the perfect outfit, colors, attitude, ...

According to Betty Friedan – famous for her women's rights' struggles, and author of influential works, such as *The Feminine Mystique* cited earlier – the general modernization

of domestic furnishings was a response to the reformation of the 1940's notion of domesticity, when women – because of the second world conflict – began working outside their homes and assuming male work places. As reminded in the second section of the first chapter, married women were not just allowed to work but urged to take 'men's jobs' as a duty they owe to their nation, to maintain the economic strength of the country while men were fighting.

Jane Pavitt, University of Brighton Senior Research Fellow in Product Design, attributes modernization to a desire for material wealth. In fact, as she says in *Fear and Fashion in the Cold War*: "Innovation adapted for peaceable use, including plastics, computers and microwaves, became part of the landscape of desirable affluence in the post-war Western world" (Pavitt 8).

If in the 1910s and 1920s scientific housemakers in efficient kitchens were fashionable, *Harper's Bazaar's* women were abstract, cool, formal. Those housemakers and the amenable wives did not appear within the magazine. Instead, "Modernization represented women as connotative of elegance and cultural sophistication, outside the messy realities of everyday life" (Sellers 33). This style added a layer over the framework of femininity, a still confusing socially built surface, but it helped in smoothing it.

2.2 THE COLD WAR RISING AND FASHION

"The atomic blast that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked both the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War" (Tyler May 8), begins Elaine Tyler May author of *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1988).

The onset of the Cold War coincided with what W. H. Auden labelled the "age of anxiety". The house seemed to be the only safe place where to stay: "the home seemed to offer a secure, private nest removed from the dangers of the outside world" (Tyler May 1). Even the same architectural structure of suburban houses seemed to evoke protection: "low-

pitched roofs, attached carports, and fences surrounding yards gave these structures a sheltered look...[The] 1950s designed standards conceived of the natural world in a simplified and controlled way that eliminated anything that was wild and irregular" (Clark, Jr. 212-213), hence what was meant to be outside home protection. Consequently, *Harper's Bazaar*'s issues of this decade were filled with suggestions on how to furnish people's dwellings in the most comfortable ways, or to render them more secure against what was outside their doors. *Harper's Bazaar* really embodied the image America wanted to give of itself in the 1950s. The magazine presented refined lives, fashions, traditions in accordance to the message it wanted to send to people: America was strong, no Cold War could threaten its elegant superiority.



FIGURE 27. "Daystrom's Coloramic!" *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1950.

Award winning "Daystrom's Coloramic" features just beside August 1950's index, along with captivating gazes beguiling the next possible buyer. A combination of strong metal and soft leather made this Hollywood design barely irresistible.

Technology was perceived extremely positively: around the 50s and 60s, people relied deeply on science and its power to shape what was expected to be a better future.¹³ Utopia was the key word. Shaping, influencing, changing “a surprising number of cultural products, including designed goods, buildings, films and novels”¹⁴ (Pavitt 8). Everything was concerned with this ‘newness’, as seen before, fashion too couldn’t escape this tendency. Jane Pavitt’s account on this matter is, again, very useful. Indeed, in her work titled *Fear and Fashion in the Cold War* (2008), she detected that “the fashions of the period sometimes reveal a concern to insulate the wearer against the shock of the new, and to equip him or her to deal with the onslaught of information and experience that the modern world had to offer” (Pavitt 10). “Equipe with Elegance” is what one of *Harper’s Bazaar’s* writer might have claimed. Charm: the portrait of a refined America and Americans with prestigious roles and lives – according to the magazine – proved to be the most powerful weapon against this uncertain climate.

The allusion to the Cold War was always there, upfront: the bikini is exemplary of this. To suggest its explosive potential, the bikini took its name from Bikini Atoll, the Polynesian island location of US nuclear test, which happened in 1946, precisely when the bikini was designed.

¹³ Within the house sphere, all innovations brought about by technology resulted in a concrete and palpable progression: washing machines, dishwashers, fridges were not just proofs of American wealth, but real improvements in people’s lives, especially for women, who were meant to be the main consumers of these new products.

¹⁴ Remarkable in this concern are Jackson Pollock’s paintings, representatives of Abstract Expressionism and Action Painting, and reactions to this changing climate. Impossible to forget are also Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian houses, term he coined to refer to the landscape of the United States, free from previous architectural conventions.



FIGURE 28. 'Bikini' swimming costume. Molitor swimming pool, Paris, 1946.

Its conception was also due to the need to conserve fabrics during the second world conflict.

Harper's Bazaar wanted to present itself as way to live comfortably in the 1950s, making appear the Cold War's dangerous tensions as surmountable or almost marginal. The aim was to affirm and confirm the ideology behind the magazine, American's ideology: the nation was powerful, almost untouchable, unbreakable. Winner of World War II, the United States had no intention to be subjugated, the two atomic bombs worked as demonstrators of the nation's supremacy, but they also hid the reality of Americans' lives: their profound fear of those destructive weapons. *Harper's Bazaar* heralded and maintained this ideology, the Cold War was not something relevant. Interestingly, whether the post-war climate and the recent on-going antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States succeeded in entering into the fashion field, molding its essence and shaping new tendencies; *Harper's Bazaar* didn't allow political forces to intrude into its pages, almost reminding that its purpose was to serve as an entertaining place for its audience, living above political discussions. Thence, Toni Frissell's photograph of a token sunning suit of green and Mallinson rayon is combined with Dorothy Hay Thompson's tips on tanning without damaging your body skin.



FIGURE 29. "The Bare Season". *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1947.

Clothing did not only function as the site of allusions and references to the 'iron curtain' conflict – as it was the case of the Bikini's name – but also as the mere battleground of US and USRR's discrepancies. Although *Bazaar* was not a promoter of this discrepancy, the difference between the two countries' fashion is clear and palpable in the magazines' issues. "Dress was a means by which two opposing ideological systems could be contrasted – the 'dowdiness' of Russian women, for example, was contrasted in the US press with images of American glamour and elegance" (Pavitt 23), (see Figures 31 and 32).



FIGURE 30. Soviet Fashion Magazine, 1953.



FIGURE 31. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1958.

On the other hand, socialists of the East deliberately attacked “the sartorial codes of the West” (Pavitt 23).

But still, what remains undeniably remarkable about the Cold War era’s fashion was the use of certain innovative materials: cellulosic, polynosic, polyamide, polyester, acrylic, polypropylene, polyvinyl, spandex – man-made, with a petro-chemical base, “controllable, uniform, predictable” (Pavitt 33).

Names such as: André Courregès, Pierre Cardin, Paco Rabanne and Rudi Gernreich were considered futurologists of fashion, introducing avant-garde clothes as well as forefront accessories.

The on-going, apparently veiled antagonism of the post-war time – as *Harper's Bazaar* presented, or rather, did not present it – fueled both the intense need of American people to feel liberated from the past as well as safe in the future, and, at the same time, the imagination of fashion designers: “the Cold War also had a radical effect on the ways in which fashion and design developed, leaving behind an imaginative array of fearful and hopeful visions of the future, some of which are still at play in fashion culture today” (Pavitt 112).

In the 1950s, the white middle class molded “the dominant political and economic institutions that affected all Americans” (Tyler May 15): McCarthyism, racism, segregation, homophobia, exclusion of singles and childless couples were commonplaces in the middle of the twentieth century. Since these people did not contribute to give prosperity to the nation, and did not conform to it, they were not well accepted. This dated ideological construction, which, as it usually happened during periods of crisis, was reintroduced, worsen the already difficult lives American people led. This was true for women as well as for men. Men couldn’t find satisfaction from their jobs, social interaction became to be always more sporadic, and, as David Riesman argues in *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, and Tyler May reports in her more recent work: “only in the intimate aspects of life could a man truly be free” (Tyler May 24). Fruit of this changing context was, thus, the blurring of social lines.

On the other hand, women had limited job opportunities. If they managed to work outside their homes, their jobs were menial and underpaid. There was an overall preference to work at home, as surveys indicate, where they could exercise autonomy and control. Home was women's realm and taking care of it their most important preoccupation. Again, in *Harper's Bazaar* women could find trustable alliance in their domestic mission. Seldom the journal presented outfits or garments for the working woman, the one who pursued a career outside her home – unlike *Charm*, for example, as mentioned in the first chapter.

Bazaar's readers were wealthy, privileged and educated women.

Yet, another thing surveys make clear was that for both women and men fulfillment and satisfaction came not from work, but from the family. As previously reminded, this reinforced Americans' beliefs. Home was the place of women social commitment. They were called to work there as they had been called to work outside during the global conflict. In the 1950s, their role within the house was deemed fundamental to strengthen the nation system and to fortify its balance.

During the 1950s, marriages increased, the average age of people going to wed decreased, and America saw strengthening its civic and moral ethos. "Summing up the feelings of many in his generation, one husband said that marriage:

Increased my horizons, defined my goals and purposes in life, strengthened my convictions, raised my intellectual standards stimulated my incentive to provide moral, spiritual, and material support; it has rewarded me with a realistic sense of family and security I have never experienced during the first 24 years of my life." (Tyler May 33)

Marriage proved to be the only way to find oneself and to feel accomplished: "They [Young people] claimed to have found their personal identities and achieved their individual goals largely through families" (Tyler May 33). It was therefore not hard to find pictures of "cozy nuclear families in soft focus surrounded by a hazy glow of intimacy and togetherness" (Tyler May 50) loving couples or engagement and wedding rings' advertisement on the magazine's pages, fostering the 'spirit of the times', where women – and men – had to maintain precise roles: the first as perfect housewives in comfortable houses, the second as breadwinning and caring husbands, with secure and stable careers. "In Sweet

Accord...When you're spoken for...choose an engagement ring that symbolizes beautifully the deep and lasting sentiment of your vows: one made of palladium, newest of the precious jewelry metals" (*Harper's Bazaar*, October 1951 87) reads Palladium's advertisement of issue October 1951. "Deep and lasting sentiment", the epitome of young Americans' happiness.



FIGURE 32. "Letter to a Young Actress". *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1957.



FIGURE 33. "Bergdorf Goodman". *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.



FIGURE 34. "In Sweet Accord..." by Palladium. *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1951.

At the same time, though, the magazine – and the United States system itself – encouraged women to be ambitious and independent. To do so, interviews and advices coming from Hollywood stars were inserted on many 1950s issues, their lives had to be taken as inspirational. "Female stars were frequently described, with admiration, as being 'abrupt, blunt, frank and stubborn'", Tyler May remarks (Tyler May 45) adjectives not easily combinable with 'ordinary' women. American female part believed in the nation's ethos, but they also believed that the home's maintenance had not to be detached from the concepts of elegance and posture: women could work at home, but always with a meticulous attention to their wardrobe, the more similar to the celebrities' ones, the better. Close-ups photos of Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe, Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn were masterfully placed together with the self-sacrificing and courageous stories of the actresses' struggles for success (see Figures 35, 36, 37 and 38).



FIGURE 35. "New Girls in Town". *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1957.



FIGURE 36. "Little Girl Alias Femme Fatale". *Harper's Bazaar*, 1956.



FIGURE 37. "The Hats of Paris, by Night". *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1955.



FIGURE 38. Cover. *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1956.

Their provocative poses and sensuality spoke to those homemakers who had never dare to abandon themselves to certain luxurious gestures. *Harper's Bazaar* remembered how Marilyn Monroe's name was the one which reverberated more among men. Cecil Beaton pays homage to this sex goddess on April 1956 issue, praising her absolute "lack of inhibition" (Beaton 74), which hided, according to him, an intense need of approval. "She will never die" (Beaton 74) concludes the British journalist, leaving space to his large photograph of this "canary blond nymph" (Beaton 74) whose body was partially covered by an off-white sheet. The 'pinup girl' became famous when *Yank* magazine published a picture of her working in a war production plant. Magazines and newspaper competed to have, at least, one photograph of her inserted in their issues. As actress, "Miss Monroe" (Beaton 74) featured many noir movies "that portrayed her sexuality as a destructive force" (Tyler May 62). *Harper's Bazaar* recognized that women's sexuality became central to their identities in those times.

Black and laced girdles, structured to mold women's body, to shape a "flaring princess" (*Harper's Bazaar*, March 1954 182), or coats pervading "the same softness felt in the air on a spring day" were inserted within the decade's issues. (*Harper's Bazaar*, February 1959 108).



FIGURE 39. "The Mold of the Princesse – Everything Black, and Lacy." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1954.



FIGURE 40. "Spring Jackets." *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1959.

These were the women to which the magazine was addressed, portraits of sensuality and sexuality, that acceptable sexuality, the one that laid the groundwork for a fertile marriage: "Sexy women who became devoted sweethearts or wives would contribute to the goodness of life; those who used their sexuality for power or greed would destroy men, families and even society" (Tyler May 63), stated Tyler May.

Therefore, American women stared at those beautiful Hollywood stars with admiration, yet knowing, regrettfully, that their own lives were different, still perceiving that the post-war time might have brought them something better than what they had experienced as children, powerless victims of the Great Depression.¹⁵ It was the outbreak of the Cold War, and to prevent any kind of social disorder – where Communists had to be blamed – and to reassert common American's principles, women had to stay at home. Home was their place,

¹⁵ 1950s American society lived not just of the remnants of the World War II, but also of the Great Depression. Those children of the tough 1930s were to become fathers and mothers in two decades, and, since they had experienced a reversal of their parent's roles, they believed in traditional power relationships, where wives' earnings "as well as domestic authority remained secondary to those of their breadwinner husbands" (Elder 102).

what they had to live for, and take care of. Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation J. Edgar Hoover in a 1944 article entitled “Mothers...Our Only Hope” was very adamant on this issue. He insisted that war jobs were not suited for women:

“She already has her war job. Her patriotism consists in not letting quite understandable desires to escape for a few months from household routine or to get a little money of her own tempt to quit it. There must be no absenteeism among mothers...Her patriotic duty is not in the factory front. It is on the home front!” (Hoover 69).

“Her duty [...] is on the home front!”. There is no way out for them, no possible escape. Otherwise they could be potential dangers for the order of the country, as Tyler May reminds: “with their new jobs and recently acknowledged sexuality, emancipated women outside the home might unleash the very forces that would result in a collapse of the one institution that seemed to offer protection: the home” (Tyler May 108).

Women belonged at home, they were called – as soldiers – to serve their Nation, thus to maintain given United States’ moral tenets, to cooperate for the equilibrium of the government. There lays the purpose of *Harper’s Bazaar* in the 1950s: it was an instrument of the aforementioned cooperation; it served as a marker, defining women’s role as being properly placed in the “home front”, where their “household routine” war took place.

The concept of domesticity evolved, but it evolved to reinforce the balance of the national system. That system had to be reinforced essentially because of one thing: Americans feared the Cold War and its possible outcomes. The two atomic bombs had proven their lethal force, Russia and Communism were threatening America.

This implies that behind *Harper’s Bazaar*’s conceptualization there is a very powerful science: communication. In fact, the third chapter of my thesis is centered on the intrinsic communicative nature of the magazine, to then bring into focus the communicative nature of the world of clothing itself. Fashion can be a very powerful language which speaks about us, and the conclusion of my thesis tries to prove this.

CHAPTER 3

HARPER'S BAZAAR AS READER OF SOCIETY

3.1 FASHION AS A LINGUISTIC SIGN: SEMIOTIC AND SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Investigations concerning fashion are varied and multicolored. This is true because fashion is a real and variable phenomenon which has to be considered for its inherent complexity and vitality. Indeed, it is a social phenomenon which functions as a product as well as a producer of certain dynamics and social relations. Fashion is a linguistic phenomenon, or rather, a non-verbal language – a means of communication thanks to which we can reveal our identity on a daily basis. Yet, it is also a cultural phenomenon related to gender issues, sexuality and power relations.

Since the aim of the present thesis is to give a reading of American society through *Harper's Bazaar*, the present chapter wants to conclude its itinerary by showing how much clothes, accessories, garments can reveal of people and of a given community.

Clothes are words, outfits are sentences, dressing is a language.

In his influential work titled *The Fashion System* the French semiologist and linguist Ronald Gérard Barthes points out that:

The dress is like De Saussure's concept of language: a heterogeneous mass, within which you can find everything; physical, technological, economical, aesthetical, psychological, sociological aspects, etc., each of them studied by the respective discipline. This heterogeneous mass has not to be diluted in the various disciplinary points of view that can examine it, and then make it disappear as a unitary object. The dress – as De Saussure's language – can find an internal point of view through which you can describe, so to speak, the specific.¹⁶ (Barthes xi)

¹⁶ Ronald Gérard Barthes centered some of his influential studies on fashion, or rather, on the intrinsic relation existing between clothes and language, combining linguistics rules with the Fashion System. His work provides a brief history of semiology – dress as sign, considering the language of fashion magazines as

If clothes are like language then dressing is communication, thus what we wear can say a lot of things about our identities and our personalities.

It becomes, therefore, interesting to analyze those theories which connect fashion to language, and fashion to society and communication. As promoter of these theories, Ronald Barthes gave an “analysis of women’s clothing as currently described by Fashion magazines” (Barthes ix). Thence, I deem it relevant to linger on these analysis, because the subject of this thesis – *Harper’s Bazaar* as a fashion magazine – happened to be central to Barthes’ studies as well.

Since common knowledge says that we are what we eat, can we also say that we are what we wear? Can garments define us? Could they define American society in the 1950s? The following chapter tries to answer these questions.

In the above mentioned *The Fashion System*, the French linguist and semiologist begins his work by setting the difference between image-clothing and written-clothing, and the instrument he uses to explain his ideas happens to be the subject of my thesis: the fashion magazine.

Barthes states:

I open a fashion magazine; I see that two different garments are being dealt with here. The first is the one presented as photographed and drawn – it is image clothing. The second is the same garment, but described, transformed into language; [...] In principle these two garments refer to the same reality [...] and yet these substances do not have the same relations with each other: in one the substances are forms, lines, surfaces, colors, and the relation is special; in the other, the substance is words, and the relation is, if not logical, at least syntactic. (Barthes 3)

Basically, what Barthes asserts is that even if the reference of the “two garments” is the same (the dress), the relations that these two have with the same object are different. The ‘written message’ introduces the dress verbally and grammatically, following its language rules; the ‘photographed’ or ‘drawn message’ presents it through images. Both of them reveal something, both of them speak to people in different ways, both of them are created

starting point. According to him, the main underlying reason for the luxuriant prose of fashion magazines is related to the economic sphere.

to be addressed to the same society. Therefore, the magazine is a sociologic product, and the reference to this science is inevitable:

The propagation of Fashion by magazines [...] has become so vast; half of all [French]-women read magazines at least partially devoted to Fashion on a regular basis; the description of the garment of Fashion (and no longer its production) is therefore a social fact, so that even if the garment of Fashion remained purely imaginary (without affecting real clothing), it would constitute an incontestable element of mass culture. (Barthes 9)

Even if Barthes postulated this theory at the end of the 1960s – when the world, and especially France, began breathing revolutionary air – it is easily applicable to the context of the present dissertation. Thus, if garments advertised in fashion magazines are “purely imaginative”, i.e. not real, these garments still remain an element of our culture, which speak to an audience. They are not tangible or concrete, but through the magazines’ pages, and through their description, they become a “social facts” – something that is inherently connected to our community. This is interesting because being Barthesian “social facts” implies being recognized within a given community. A community – as the word itself suggests – whose primeval need is the one of ‘communicate’ by the use of a language.

The language used in this case is the one of clothing, and – as a West African proverb said – “A person without clothes is a person without language.” Therefore, *Harper’s Bazaar* happens to be the perfect key to access the ‘language’ spoken by the 1950s’ society, that is to say to understand and to enter into that same society.

An average woman of the 1950s American high-class, opens an issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*, stares at the marvelous photographs it presents, and images herself as being one of those models so artistically photographed, and eventually she projects herself into that ‘fictional’ world, becoming part of the story it tells. That ‘story’ speaks of America, that ‘story’ recounts its people. “It just wasn’t about the clothes – it was about something more. It was about rejoicing on the clothes and saying, ‘I want that life.’” photographer Bruce Weber declared while speaking about *Harper’s Bazaar* and Vreeland’s achievements.¹⁷ (Vreeland 256)

¹⁷ Bruce Weber was an important American fashion photographer who is renowned for his collaborations with many famous magazines, as well as for his advertisement campaigns with luxury brands.

Clothes do say a lot about who we are, so much so that the human body becomes meaningful, a signs bearer – the moment in which it is dressed up. This is precisely what Barthes pronounces in one of his essays inserted in Gianfranco Marrone's work titled *// senso della moda: forme e significati dell'abbigliamento*: "il vestito è il momento in cui il corpo diventa significativo; in altre parole, il vestito è ciò attraverso cui il corpo diviene significante, e dunque portatore di segni, o anche dei suoi stessi segni" (Marrone 139).¹⁸ Those shapes that appear on *Bazaar*'s pages are dressed bodies, sign bearers, charged with meanings. Therefore, women attribute those meanings to what they decide to wear, or what they see other women wearing, when the conversation between the reader and the magazine takes place.¹⁹ According to the Russian semiologist Pëtr Grigor'evič Bogatyrëv, the dress, as language, has different functions, not just one – for example, magical, religious – and it can indicate the social condition, the gender of the person, etc. And, above all, it is the object which has the sign function. It can be worn in many ways, these 'ways' depend on the wearers whom – performing a particular interaction, or Barthesian "conversation" with their garments – activate the meaning of their own body through those powerful items with which they interact.²⁰ Here, in the context of *Harper's Bazaar*, the public of the magazine is given by those observers mentioned above by Bogatyrëv, who try to interpret all the given signs, so to absorb them. From the various inputs received, those active observers create an idea in their mind of what they see, restricting their possible future 'choices of dresses'.

Discussing these 'choices of dresses', Mariapia Bobbioni – current teacher of design at Milan Polytechnic – asserts:

¹⁸ In 2006 Einaudi published this collection of essays, fragments and articles edited by Gianfranco Marrone. Marrone is an Italian semiologist and essayist who tried, through this collection, to give relevance to the most noticeable theories of the French linguist.

¹⁹ This concept is connected to the reader-magazine dialogue proposed by Ronald Barthes, further analyzed in the second chapter. Basically, what Barthes asserted was that what takes place between the two protagonists of this dialogue is a conversation.

²⁰ Pëtr Grigor'evič Bogatyrëv was a member of the Moscow linguistic circle founded by Fedorovich Fortunatov in 1915. The group was active until 1924 and it acted as the counterpart of the St. Petersburg linguistic group. The two developed the Russian formalist literary semiotics and linguistics theories, whose studies influenced Ronald Barthes' works.

"The often unconscious decision to wear a certain material and color is significant for subjective reasons. Cristina Campo observed: 'In ancient times dress was a symbol or a combination of symbols; one could tell at a glance what fate it carried, or rather by what fate it was carried.' [...] the choice of a new dress, a sudden change in hairstyle: extending thoughts to the body and dress, the subject allows him/herself to be constantly *in formation*."²¹ (Bobbioni 11)

Dressing is, as we will later see, a perpetual movement towards self-definition.

Yet, what appears on the journal's pages, or the choice women make for their clothes, is something which follows some pre-established rules. These last ones are later studied, given and interpreted by fashion magazines. These 'fashion rules' tend to stress the equivalence impulse, the one that makes us homologate with the others, yet, at the same time, they stress the opposed impulse, the one of individualization, something easily detectable from *Harper's Bazaar*'s pages. There, the willingness of imitating and the desire of being distinguished, are at the center of the readers' role. If these two tendencies are not there, there is no fashion birthing or diffusion. *Harper's Bazaar* gives the input, but it's the active role of the reader which allows fashion to be passed on. This is what the German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel asserts in his successful book *La moda*, adding that:

Il debole evita l'individualizzazione, il basarsi oggettivamente su se stesso, con le proprie responsabilità e la propria necessità, il difendersi con le proprie forze. Soltanto la forma di vita tipica di una collettività gli assicura quella protezione che impedisce a chi è forte di utilizzare il sovrappiù delle sue energie. Mantenendosi sul terreno solido del costume, della media, del livello generale, le donne aspirano intensamente all'individualizzazione e alla distinzione della personalità che sono ancora relativamente possibili. La moda offre loro una felice combinazione: da un lato un campo di imitazione generale, un nuotare nella più ampia corrente sociale, una liberazione dell'individuo dalla responsabilità del suo gusto e delle sue azioni, dall'altro una distinzione, un'accentuazione, un ornamento individuale della personalità.²² (Simmel 40)

What *Harper's Bazaar* offers is what fashion offers as well. The magazine gives tips and suggestions to maintain a fashionable wardrobe, or to be considered 'trendy'. In the specific

²¹ Mariapia Bobbioni is particularly interested on the female body, and the questions of language and dress. Her books include *L'abito fa il personaggio: Nel guardaroba del romanzo moderno* and *Corpi arredativi*.

²² Georg Simmel analyzed historical and social events both for their origins development through people's lives, and to detect how social figures are constructed through people's interaction. He also connected these studies to the fashion system, producing some relevant theories inserted in the above-mentioned work, *Philosophie der Mode*.

case of the 1950s, *Harper's Bazaar*'s clothes, accessories, hairstyle, but also kitchens, cars, vacation spots... leaves the homologation procedure making inroads, restricting the possible application of the 'fashionable' epithet to women. You are, or you can be considered 'fashionable', if you wear what responds to the last-trend proposals. Yet, at the same time, what the same magazine wants to do – and what director Carmel Snow, photographers Alexey Brodovitch and Richard Avedon, editor Diana Vreeland undeniably did – was to allow women to start from those tips to create their own individual style.²³ As suggested in the first chapter, Brodovitch's generous use of white space had precisely that identical purpose, creating one's 'individual place of interpretation', leaving space to the readers' possible understandings and conceptualization of the same subject. The same can be argued about Snow and Vreeland's mission: their magazine was addressed to 'intelligent women', who were able to absorb their advices, and mold them to their own lives and bodies. It was as if they were saying: "I give you this...now it's up to you. Go and create yourself!". Behind clothing choices there is a sense of social and economic affirmation or, as in the younger generations, there is the need to respond to an aesthetical ideal. Each new trend means refusing to inherit from the past, it means subversion against the oppressive nature of the past way of life, promoting creativity. Since fashion – belonging to the world of arts – is the proof of humans' creativity and personality, that *Harper's Bazaar* encouraged.

Clothes are held responsible for the definition of one's self.

Behind this reasoning there is a clear realization: what we wear says a lot about who we are, what we are doing, where we are going to. It speaks about us, it tells our story, and, sometimes, it can define us, it's something related to clothes as language and communicative signs. In this respect, Malcom Barnard's theory about fashion and its inherent informative nature it is very interesting.²⁴ In his very influential book titled *Fashion and Communication*, the English semiologist wrote: "for the most part, and the most

²³ These names were the most relevant of the decade to which my thesis is centered. Other equally relevant personalities worked and are working nowadays with the same objective in mind.

²⁴ Malcolm Barnard studied Visual Culture at Loughborough University, and he is internationally recognized for his theories concerning this subject. Particularly relevant are also his studies about fashion and communication.

people, most of the time, fashion and clothing are not undecidable. The interpretation on meanings is largely reliable and finite" (Barnard 188). If one wants to consider fashion as inherently communicative one has to admit that fashion implies selecting things, choosing one thing instead of another and what you choose can have infinite number of semiotic possibilities, that is to say infinite number of meanings. This responds to what *Harper's Bazaar* intended to do through its pages, photographs, advertisements: present the reader with a number of possibilities, allowing them to interpret and come to a decision. This interpretation, and the related decision, depend on the implied individuals and on the context. In general, according to Malcolm, there exist two types of communal activities: on the one hand, there are people who go beyond appearances, thus considering fashion as a misleading obstacle, on the other there are people who, like *Harper's Bazaar*'s quartet did:

See fashion and clothing as evidence of creativity and cultural production, are those who realize that there is no such beyond and who are happy to enjoy the play of cultural difference as it is found in fashion and clothing. They are those who are happy with the idea that difference produces meanings, and who have no wish to see difference curtailed or escaped. (Malcolm 190-191)

Who sees fashion and clothing as proofs of creativity and cultural production, are those who are happy of playing with those cultural differences. These individuals are the ones who understand that difference produces meanings, and who doesn't want to see difference escapes or limits him/herself. Undeniably, in *Harper's Bazaar* 'these individuals' were Carmel Snow, Alexey Brodovitch, Richard Avedon and Diana Vreeland, who centered their work on the use of artistic imagination, and whose mission was to communicate this policy to the magazine's audience.

In fact, as previously remarked, fashion can have different meanings, but its function is unique: communication.

Communication is at the center of *Harper's Bazaar*, as *Harper's Bazaar* is communication, since fashion is communicative-centered.

According to the *Cambridge Advanced Learner Dictionary*, to communicate means: "to share information with others by speaking, writing, moving your body, or using other signals", or "to talk about your thoughts and feelings, and help other to understand them." (Cambridge Advanced Learner Dictionary n.p.). Indisputably, *Harper's Bazaar* shares

information with its readers through words but also through gestures, and helps them to understand what it tries to, again, communicate.

Harper's Bazaar communication's ends are many. One of the privileged is – the specific case of the 1950s – seduction. “The female figure on the magazine cover [...] a woman who *must* seduce.” (Bobboni 17). Yet, Bobboni’s quite argumentative attack on modern fashion magazines is more applicable to the contemporary press situation, since *Harper's Bazaar's* seduction was far more elegant and refined. It was more a matter of joy than an imposition, a rediscovery of oneself and of women’s femininity, rather than the “impossibility of accepting limits, the wish to wallow in omnipotence [...] to be locked in a small autistic notion of well-being and translated into a general idea of eternal beauty, in which a whole and incorruptible body triumphs, possibly, even over death.” (Bobboni 17). At the center of 1950s’ *Harper's Bazaar* issues was not the exploitation of the seductive nature of women’s body, but the performance of their embedded female charm. It was not a matter of ‘selling women’s body’, but of giving relevance and importance to it through gracious garments, emphasizing each woman’s characteristics. Because, the clear and tangible message *Harper's Bazaar* delivered was that it is not the dress itself what counts, but how it is worn, the attitude of the wearer. Vulgarity, bad taste, ostentation, commonness were not contemplated on the polished pages of the oldest of all American fashion magazines. The body gives fullness to the dress, it acts as a filler, rendering the dress unique and individualized. It is here personified, so much so that it establishes a dialectic relationship with its ‘filler’. But it is also suited to the wearer’s body, enhancing distinctive qualities.

According to *Harper's Bazaar* dressing is an art, and, as such, it requires openness to the infinite horizon of creativity. It wants to say that we change information with our way of dressing and with what we wear. It is not simply a matter of protecting ourselves from the world outside or a question of decency.²⁵ There is more than that. There is a linguistic analysis behind. Barthes takes as a reference the model created by the Russian structuralist

²⁵ See, again, Barthes’ approach on the matter in the repeatedly mentioned *Il senso della moda. Forme e significati dell'abbigliamento*: “Perché si sa che effettivamente il vestire non serve soltanto a proteggerci, ad abbellirci, ma anche a scambiare delle informazioni, e che quindi, con tutta evidenza, vi è in esso un linguaggio che si deve prestare, in teoria, a un’analisi di tipo linguistico, benchè la materia non sia il linguaggio articolato. (Barthes 117)

Nilolaj Trubeckoj who openly indicates the linguistic nature of clothes.²⁶ This model relates to Fernand de Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*.²⁷ Therefore, Barthes says:

I fenomeni di abbigliamento (di *parole*) comprenderebbero: le dimensioni individuali del vestito, il grado di usura, di disordine o di sporcizia, le carenze parziali di indumenti, le carenze d'uso (bottoni non abbottonati, maniche non infilate ecc.), i vestiti improvvisati (protezioni di circostanza), la scelta dei colori (salvo i colori ritualizzati: lutto, matrimonio, tartan, uniformi), le derivazioni circostanziali di impiego di un indumento, i gesti d'uso tipici dell'indossatore. I fenomeni di costume (di *langue*), sempre astratti, giustificabili soltanto mediante una descrizione verbale o schematica, comprenderebbe le forme, le sostanze ed i colori ritualizzati, gli usi fissi, i gesti stereotipati, la distribuzione regolata degli elementi accessori (bottoni, tasche ecc.), i sistemi apparenti ("tenute"), le congruenze e le incompatibilità degli indumenti fra loro, il gioco regolato degli indumenti interni e di quelli esterni e, per finire, i fenomeni di abbigliamento ricostituiti artificialmente per scopi significativi (costumi di teatro e di cinema). (Marrone 33-34)

Dressing phenomenon and costume phenomenon are always present in *Harper's Bazaar*, but sometimes, one rules over the other. As style promoter, the magazine gives relevance to some of the rules fashion imposes: ritualized colors, substances and shapes, stereotyped gestures, the regular distribution of accessory elements (buttons, pockets...). The magazine offers an open door to certain dictations promoted and distributed, that, if respected, build the 'fashionable persona'. At the same time, *Harper's Bazaar* demonstrates that the costume phenomenon is what feeds the fashion system – without the individual account, creativity would die. Yet, the personal element is sometimes partially considered, because if the grammar rule says that something is not allowed, doing so can subvert its balance.

Until now the mental focus of these studies has been centered on clothing in general, but since *Harper's Bazaar* – and with it many sociologists, semiologists, philosophers, journalists – gave relevance to the importance of accessories as message-sender I deem it relevant to discuss their reception and the related theories.

²⁶ Nikolai Sergeyevich Trubetzkoy is considered the father of morphophonology and his studies are defined as the core of the Prague School of Structural Linguistics, fundamental for the evolution of this science.

²⁷ According to Ferdinand de Saussure's Linguistics – founder of modern Linguistics and of Structuralism – 'langue' indicates the social-conventional component (Syntax, Morphology,...), whereas 'parole' the individual aspect, the free element of language (Pronunciation,...). Barthes transposes this distinction to the Fashion System.

For this reason, the last section of this chapter will be dedicated to this sometimes quite sidelined but equally relevant branch of fashion.

3.2 HARPER'S BAZAAR AND ITS 'TALKING ACCESSORIES'



FIGURE 41. 'Cover.' *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

Beautiful silk dresses, women in amazing poses, high-heels, perfumes, make-up, jackets, fur-coats: we are into the first pages of *Harper's Bazaar* April 1953.

The cover of this same issue presents itself as very inspiring. It is not just a fascinating green-hatted brunette with long and pointed red nails in a milk white dress partially hidden behind what seems to be an oriental style pleated bag. No, it is much more than that. It is a real example of sophisticated attitude and posture, connotative of elegance and cultural sophistication, outside the messy reality of everyday life, to which American women – of all classes – could be inspired by.

As previously reminded, it is not just the dress to be worth pondering on, but accessories in general, which – above all during the 1950s – continue to spread and to be widely used in

America (especially by the upper classes). Cristina Giorcelli dedicates two volumes of the collection *Abito e identità: Ricerche di storia letteraria e culturale* to the world of accessories and their intrinsic meanings.²⁸ In the presentation of the fifth volume she explains: “Questi capi di abbigliamento – che il dizionario descrive come ‘oggett[i] destinat[i] [...] ad accompagnare un abito’, in funzione, quindi, ‘complementare e subordinat[a]’ – sono, in realtà, difficili da definire, perché hanno uno statuto intrinseco assai aleatorio” (Giorcelli 7). Thus, it is not simple to define these ‘objects’ – often marked as peripheral, because of their ‘unintentional’ status. Accessories have always been part of the creative world, adding power and meaning to an outfit. Furthermore, they are, sometimes, essential to complete a look and they do say a lot of things about the wearer, as Giorcelli suggests:

Sia che debba considerarsi del tutto *sine qua non* (come le scarpe), sia che possa essere ritenuto voluttuario (come la fibbia, per esempio), l’accessorio ha finito – in quanto coronamento dell’abbigliamento (il cappello, per esempio), in quanto indicatore della classe sociale (i gioielli, per esempio), in quanto segnalatore dello stato civile (la fede nuziale, per esempio), in quanto adempiente una funzione di protezione da agenti esterni (il manicotto, per esempio), in quanto rivelatore di un’appartenenza religiosa e/o etnica (il copricapo, per esempio), in quanto indice di elegante informalità (*foulards*, per esempio) o di un giovanile gusto per l’avventura (la *bandana*, per esempio), in quanto contenitore di oggetti utili a se stessi ed altri (la borsa, per esempio), in quanto emblema paradigmatico di seduzione (lo Chanel N. 5 indossato di notte da una nuda Marilyn Monroe, per esempio) – per focalizzare su di sè l’attenzione della moda di mercato. (Giorcelli 8-9)

Thence, even if considered marginal – or subordinate as supply elements, accessories use and abuse is, and has always been, so spread within women’s fashion to subvert their supposed insignificant role into a revelatory instrument of investigation.

In the above presented image, an accessory physically relevant to ponder on is the hat, graciously covering the model’s head. Giorcelli stresses the fundamental role it plays in women’s outfits and points out that the function of this object was not just the one of protecting women’s faces from sunbeams, but also of hiding some body’s “blemishes”, and

²⁸ Cristina Giorcelli is an emeritus professor of North-American Literature at the University of Rome Tre. Since 1995 she has been editing the collection *Abito e Identità. Ricerche di storia letteraria e culturale*, composed of twelve volumes (I cite here the third and the fifth volume). Here, she presents her theories based on the connection between garments and identity, but she also gives relevance to other influential works and essays centered on the world of clothing.

to give focus to women's hair. Infact, in the section "*Tra costume e letteratura: I cappelli femminili negli Stati Uniti*" she explains:

Nelle donne, fino a quando uno dei loro requisiti è stato avere la pelle bianca, il cappello ha avuto anche il compito di ripararne il volto dagli abbronzanti raggi del sole. Non solo, ma il cappello femminile può svolgere l'ulteriore funzione illusionistica di nascondere i difetti del corpo: un cappello a tesa larga farà apparire i fianchi di chi lo indossa più stretti, il naso più corto, il volto più sottile. [...] il cappello femminile porta, inoltre, l'attenzione specificatamente sui capelli, che, mentre in certi periodi e in certe condizioni doveva nascondere – anche se, per la loro natura vitale e dinamica, a volte riuscivano a sfuggirgli – in altre epoche, quando le pettinature erano particolarmente elaborate e il cappello vi restava leziosamente posato sopra in precario equilibrio, si limitava a sottolineare. (Giorcelli 107)

The hat, remarking women's face and, in particular, that magical and mysterious vehicle which is the female's gaze, becomes an important indirect instrument of seduction. It is not a case that the same issue of *Harper's Bazaar* dated April 1953 contains a large number of forthcoming hats' trends advertisements.



FIGURE 42. "Paris-America news: dressmaker hats." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.



FIGURE 43. "Dior's Paris Hats – Forms and Fantaisie." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.



FIGURE 44. "Associated Haute Couture Fabrics." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

Christian Dior, Elsa Schiapparelli, Jacques Fath, Madeleine de Rauch, Cristobal Balenciaga – leading names of the mid-Twentieth Century's fashion – all include hats in their outfits and collections. Hats were essential accessories, forged according to the various circumstances

in which they have to be worn. Because either way, Christian Dior himself said: "I think in town you cannot really be dressed without a hat. It is really the completion of your outfit and in another way, it is very often the best way to show your personality."²⁹ (Dior 59). Besides, as previously quoted Anne Hollander comments, each garment "can suggest, persuade, connote, insinuate, or indeed lie, and apply subtle pressure" (Hollander 335) to which Perrot adds "Clothing is ambivalent. It reveals as it veils, and showcases the sexually charged body parts it conceals. Thus, it becomes a crucial tool in seduction and yet constitutes the ultimate obstacle to desire."³⁰ (Perrot 12). The hat becomes an instrument of seduction, attracting males' gazes and curiosity to discover what is hidden behind.

Diane Crane – professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania – makes the issue clear in her book *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*, adding that hats were also markers of social status, they did not just show people's position in society, but the one they longed for.



FIGURE 45. "Good Buys – for the next 6 months." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

²⁹ In 1954, Christian Dior wrote *Le Petite dictionnaire de la mode*. This little encyclopedia presents itself as a very useful guide for 1950s' women, explaining, for instance, how to knot a scarf or to walk with charm. Thanks to the couturier's experience and suggestions, every woman learned the tree secrets of elegance: simplicity, style and good taste.

³⁰ Philippe Perrot's studies are connected to culture's sociology. He explained how clothing cannot only reflect but also inculcate certain beliefs, values and aspirations.

Hats are here read as defining items, wearing them meant being recognized as belonging to a specific group, or striving to become part of it. Thus, these accessories are not just meant to be ‘reader’ of people’s status, but of something more intimate: their dreams.

If accessories, here – in *Harper’s Bazaar* pages, and there – in the “extradiegetic” background – are so charged with meanings, the importance of jewels is not so marginal as well. Pins, brooches, earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces...became part of the 1950s *Harper’s Bazaar*’s glossary, and essential motives of women’s fascination.



FIGURE 46. “The Jeweled Safari.” *Harper’s Bazaar*, June 1957

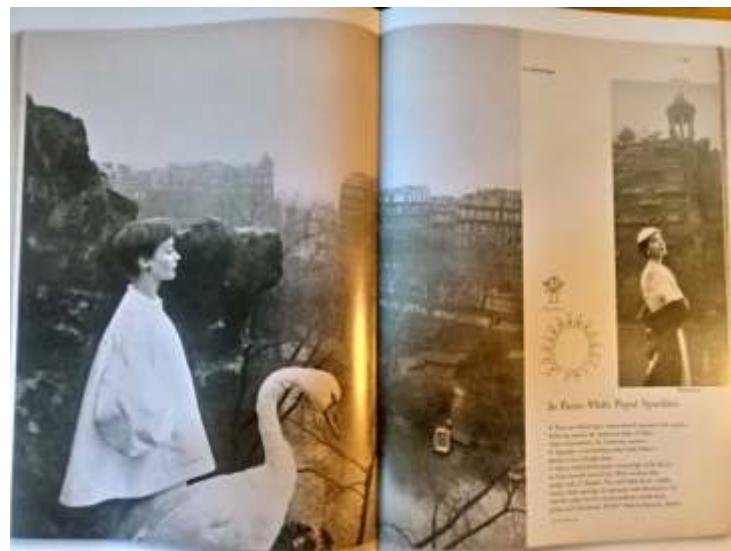


FIGURE 47. "In Paris: White Piqué Sparkles." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1953.

Derujinsky and Richard Avedon's photographs do justice to Balenciaga and Tiffany's collections.³¹ "Chalky, rococo white earrings" and "low-carved necklines" (*Harper's Bazaar*, March 1953 131) are thus epitomes of bourgeois' sophistication. "No matter how little it costs, the piece of jewelry must be thought about in relation to the whole outfit it accompanies, it must be subjected to the essentially functional value which is that of style, [...] the piece of jewelry is one item in a set of links that goes from the body to clothing." (Barthes 62-63) asserts Barthes in *The Language of Fashion*. Jewelry pieces act as a link, connecting the human body with clothing. Fake or real, that was not fundamental. Coco Chanel knew all about it: "She who, with her legendary mixing of real and fake pearls, paved the way for the use of glass and pinchbeck in the aristocratic empyrean of gold and gems" (Colaiacomo 49), defying the rules of the upper class.³²

In the 1950s, the proper and careful embellishment of women's face had to include these versatile and fascinating instruments of seduction: the dress by itself was not enough, jewels could beautify women's appearance and posture.

³¹Gleb Derujinsky's exquisite photographic talent signed many 1950s *Harper's Bazaar*'s advertisements. His visionary touch worshipped and honored the magazine's success from 1953 to 1963.

³² Paola Colaiacomo was professor of English Literature at Sapienza, University of Rome. Yet, her interests extend to the world of clothing and the fashion system.

Among the most powerful pieces of jewelry, in 1950s' *Harper's Bazaar*, earrings couldn't be left out. It is quite easy to leaf through the magazines' pages and find models wearing the most varied pairs of decorated earrings. Studs or pendants, ear wraps or hoops, earrings did belong to American women's jewel box in the 1950s.

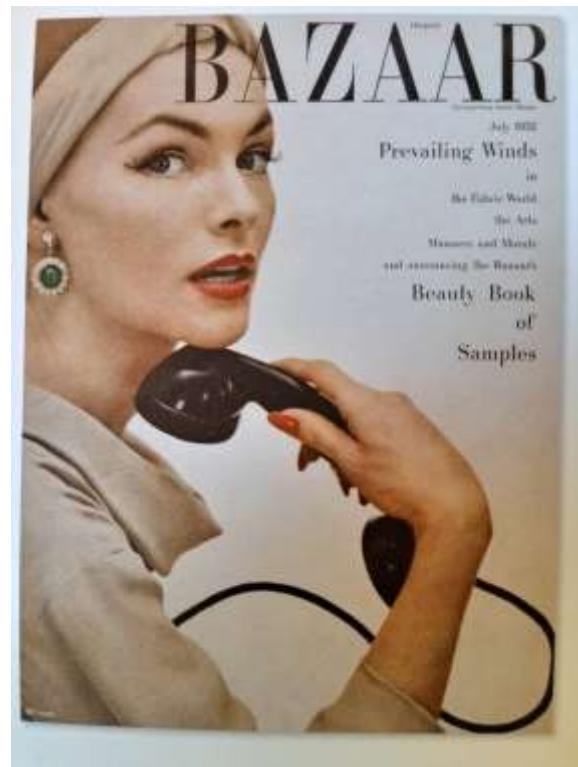


FIGURE 48. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, July 1952.



FIGURE 49. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1952.

Beautify women's face using cosmetics, trying to correct face's imperfections or exalting the color of eyes, lips, cheeks has always been part of female's embellishment routine. Wearing earrings as well. "Ears beautify the face by providing the proper support for earrings. Close to the face earrings are immediately visible and create the illusionistic effect of modifying its bone structure (a roundish face will profit from drop earrings; a longish face, from clasps or studs earrings) or of intensifying its colors." (Mauriès 25), writes the French literary critic and writer Patrick Mauriès, quoting Coco Chanel in the epigraph of his influential work titled *Les Bijoux de Chanel*. Earrings can modify the structure of the face, mellowing squared lines or accentuating certain qualities:

Pearl earrings may enhance the whiteness of teeth; coral ones may add to the color of lips and cheeks; when made of jet or onyx they may underline the color of dark eyes, or blue eyes when made of sapphires or aquamarines, or green eyes when made of emeralds, or, when made of amethysts, violet eyes, [...] Even earrings made of gold, silver, or platinum can enliven the face and make it more luminous: women with black hair and dark eyes often choose gold, whereas Nordic beauties underline their opalescent skin and blue eyes with white gold or silver or platinum. (Giorcelli 57)

There exist many studies related to earrings' design and combinations. Certain earrings are more apt to be matched with determined faces' colors, others have to be worn in specific contests, others, again, can give relevance to different women's peculiarities. Yet, what remains remarkable of these ears' ornament is their guaranteed presence in the 1950s *Harper's Bazaar*, and consequently in the 1950s' American fashion.

As we have seen – and previously remembered – jewels' use was quite spread in the 1950s. On *Harper's Bazaar*'s pages, relevance was not given only to earrings, but rings, bracelets, necklaces, brooches decorated with precious gems shared a great deal of popularity as well.

Bags, shoes, belts, gloves, perfumes and fragrances never had a marginal position on the magazine's pages.



FIGURE 50. "The Day Shift, the Night Watch." *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1952.



FIGURE 51. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1959.

As powerful allied of women's beauty, accessories undeniably act as a language: suggesting the wearer's role, attitude and status, but also giving relevance to their qualities.

Interestingly, Cristina Giorcelli titled her conversation with the Italian-Venezuelan fashion designer for *griffe* Gattinoni Guillermo Mariotto "An Accessory is a Gesture", in which she explains the real purpose of these interesting objects as continuum of our real human body – as gestures. After having discussed with the extravagant stylist, she writes:

He perceives accessories *differently* from the way they are generally perceived. They are not complements, supplements or external embellishments to clothing. They are not additions, albeit important ones, to clothes, but intrinsic features that make the clothes what they are. In fact, the details that comprise these finishing touches are the *sine qua non* of not just the *outer* but also the *inner* significance of the clothes. Thanks to his finely tuned sensitivity, they encapsulate the unique – and historical – identity of each woman. (Giorcelli 23-24)

Accessories are so meaningful to absorb the identity of the wearer: the condition of being oneself, and not another. They express uniqueness, as garments do. But not just this. Accessories also act as repository of the historical identity of the wearer. Therefore, thanks to them we have direct access to the moment in time in which they were worn, or they were considered fashionable, allowing us to reconstruct history. For this reason, I deemed it relevant to insert them in my thesis:

Garments as well as accessories are real source of information, historical treasures.

“Harper’s Bazaar’s Representation of American Style in the 1950s” is not just the title of my thesis, it is a hint provided before reading of the realistic way to present facts which fashion implies, of the power it owns, so immeasurable to speak about people before they open their mouth, before they walk, before any possible gesture made.

... “For clothing, its style is its essence.” (Hollander 159).

CONCLUSION

I have always thought that having an objective in mind, and trying to stick to it, is a good way to start an activity, especially an activity such as writing a thesis, which is all about that objective and how you ‘sell’ it.

When I began writing this thesis, I had an objective in mind. My initial ‘objective’ concerned fashion, but while writing it, something changed, because I realized that there was something more behind that needed to be brought to light.

Therefore, the core of this work is not just fashion, it is a magazine which deals with fashion, and happens to be the oldest of all – in the United States of America – to support this very interesting branch of social life.

Thus, my objective was to demonstrate how fashion is not just a matter of garments or accessories. It is a matter of individuality that transcends the mere dressed body. With this thesis I tried to prove that a fashion magazine, such as *Harper’s Bazaar*, can perfectly act as a key. A key to read the American society of the 1950s, a two-sided and contradictory one: proud for the victory of World War II, yet fearing the rising of the Cold War, and the power and destructive force of the atomic bomb.

In this historical context, and in my thesis, *Harper’s Bazaar* acts as the starting point to understand American society of the mid-Twentieth Century, where fashion reveals – through its ‘talkative nature’ – the essence of its people.

...*Harper’s Bazaar* as refined literature, *Harper’s Bazaar* as language: *Harper’s Bazaar* as a very powerful cultural key to get a glimpse of women’s reality in the middle of the Twentieth Century.

WORKS CITED

- Avedon, Richard, Truman Capote. *Observation*. New York: Simon & Shuster. 1959. Print.
- Bailey, Glenda. 'Harper's Bazaar': 150 Years: *The Greatest Moments*. New York: Abrams, 2017. Print.
- Barlett, Djurdia, Shaun Cole and Agnès Rocamora. *Fashion Media: Past and Present*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- Barnard, Malcolm. *Fashion as Communication*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. Foreword. *The Fashion System*. Trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983. Print.
- . *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*. Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1991. Print.
- . *The Language of Fashion*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- Beard, Alice. "Fun with Pins and Rope: How Caroline Baker Styled the 1970s." Ed. Djuria Barlett, Shaun Cole and Agnès Rocamora. *Fashion Media: Past and Present*. London: Boomsbury, 2013. Print.
- Beaton, Cecil. "Little Girl Alias Femme Fatale." *Harper's Bazaar*. New York: Hearst Corporation, April 1956. Print.
- . *Photobiography*. London: Odhams Press Limited, 1951. Print.
- Bobboni, Mariapia. "When Women Speak...Their Clothes Talk." Ed. Cristina Giorcelli, Paula Rabinowitz. *Extravagancies: Habits of Being* 4. New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Print.
- Brodovitch, Alexey. "What Pleases the Modern Man?" *Commercial Art*. August 1930: 60-92. Print.
- . "Ideas on Advertising". N.d. N.p. Print.
- Bunker, H. George. *Alexey Brodovitch and His Influence*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art Publications, 1972. Print.

- Cheang, Sarah. "To the End of the Earth": *Fashion and Ethnicity in the 'Vogue' Fashion Shoot.*" Ed. Djuria Barlett, Shaun Cole and Agnès Rocamora. *Fashion Media: Past and Present*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- Clark Jr., Clifford Edward. "How to Plan a Family." *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986. Print.
- Colaiacomo, Paola. "Wearing a Crown." Ed. Cristina Giorcelli, Paula Rabinowitz. *Extravagancies: Habits of Being* 4. New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Print.
- Dior, Christian. *Petite dictionnaire de la mode*. Trans. Eng. *The Little Dictionary of Fashion: A Guide to Dress Sense for Every Woman*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2007. Print.
- Dubois, Ellen Carol, Lynn Dumenil. *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015. Print.
- Elder Jr., Glen H. *Children of the Great Depression: Social Change in Life Experience*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1974. Print.
- Entwistle, Joanne. *The Dressed Body*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007. Print.
- Epictetus. Foreword. "Clothing, Dress, Fashion: An Arcade." Ed. Cristina Giorcelli, Paula Rabinowitz. *Extravagancies: Habits of Being* 4. New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Print.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton, 1963. Print.
- Giorcelli, Cristina. *Abito e identità: ricerche di storia letteraria e culturale*. Vol. V. Palermo: Renzo and Rean Mazzone Editori, 2004. Print.
- . "An Accessory is a Gesture. Guillelmo Mariotto". Ed. Cristina Giorcelli, Paula Rabinowitz. *Extravagancies: Habits of Being* 4. New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Print.
- . "Earrings in American Literature: A Showcase." Ed. Cristina Giorcelli, Paula Rabinowitz. *Extravagancies: Habits of Being* 4. New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2015. Print.
- Grundberg, Andy. *Brodovitch*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1989. Print.

- Harper's Bazaar.* "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*. New York: Hearst Corporation, November 1867. Print.
- . "You're of 1950 if..." *Harper's Bazaar*. New York: Hearst Corporation, October 1950. Print.
- . "Palladium." *Harper's Bazaar*. New York: Hearst Corporation, October 1951. Print.
- . "In Paris: White Piqué Sparkles." New York: Hearst Corporation, March 1953. Print.
- Hollander, Anne. *Seeing Through Clothes*. Berkley, California: University of California Press. 1993. Print.
- Hollein, Hans. "Alles ist Architektur." *Bau: Schrift Für Architektur und Städtebau*. Vienna, April 1968. Vol. 23. Print.
- Hoover, Edgard J. "Mothers...Our Only Hope." *Women's Home Companion*. Boston, January 1944: 69. Print.
- Howard, Richard, Matthew Ward. Foreword. *The Fashion System*. Trans. of *Système de la mode* by Ronald Barthes. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983. Print.
- Leach, William R. *Land of Desire. From the Department Store to the Department of Congress: The Rise of American's Commercial Culture*. New York: Pantheon Books. 1993. Print.
- Livingstone, Jane. *The New York School: Photographs 1936-1963*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1992. Print.
- Lynes, Russel. *The Tastemakers: The Shaping of American Popular Taste*. New York: Dover Publications, 1954. Print.
- Mauriès, Patrick. *Les Bijoux de Chanel*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993. Print.
- Marrone, Gianfranco. *Il senso della moda. Forme e significati dell'abbigliamento*. Turin: Einaudi, 2006. Print.
- Milford-Cottam, Daniel. *Fashion in the 1950s*. London: Shire Publications, 2017. Print.
- Miller, Sandra. "Taste, Fashion and the French Fashion Magazine." Ed. Djuria Barlett, Shaun Cole and Agnès Rocamora. *Fashion Media: Past and Present*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- Pavitt, Jane. *Fear and Fashion in the Cold War*. London: V&A Publishing, 2008. Print.

- Perrot, Philippe. *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie. A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. New Jersey: Princeton U.P., 1994. Print.
- Purcell, Kerry William. *Alexey Brodovitch*. London: Phaidon, 2011. Print.
- Ribeiro, Aileen. *The Art of Dress. Fashion in England and France, 1750-1820*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995. Print.
- Rosemberg, Harold. "The Fall of Paris." *Art in Theory, 1900-1990: An Anthology of Charming Ideas*. Oxford: Blackwood Publishers, 1993. Print.
- Simmel, Georg. *Philosophie der Mode*. Trans. It. *La moda*. Milan: Oscar Mondadori, 1996. Print.
- Sellers, Susan. "How Long Has This Been Going On? *Harper's Bazaar, Funny Face* and the Construction of the Modernist Woman." *Visible Language*. Rhode Island: Illinois Institute of Technology, 1995. Print.
- Snow, Carmel, Mary Louise White Aswell. *The World of Carmel Snow*. California: McGraw-Hill, 1962. Print.
- Söll, Änne. "Fashion, Media and Gender in Christian Shad's Portraiture of the 1920s." Ed. Djuria Barlett, Shaun Cole and Agnès Rocamora. *Fashion Media: Past and Present*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
- Szarkowski, John. *Looking at Photographs: 100 Pictures from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art*. New York: MoMa Press, 1980. Print.
- Tyler May, Elaine. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*. New York: Basic Books, 1988. Print.
- Vreeland, Alexander. *Diana Vreeland: The Modern Woman*. New York: Rizzoli, 2013. Print.
- Yusuf, Nilgin. "Caught on Camera: The Fashioned Body and the Criminal Body." Ed. Djuria Barlett, Shaun Cole and Agnès Rocamora. *Fashion Media: Past and Present*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.

SITOGRAPHY

- "1950s Fashion History: Women's Clothing." *Vintagedancer.com*. Vintage Dancer, 13 June 2016. Web. N.p. 28 July 2018.
- Augustyn, Adam. "The Cosmopolitan Magazine." *Britannica.com*. Encyclopedia Britannica. 17 August 2017. Web. N.p. 23 July 2018.
- Barbieri, Annalisa. "When Skirts were Full and Women were Furious." *Independent.co.uk*. Independent, 3 March 1996. Web. N.p. 18 August 2018.
- Blasberg, Derek. "How Richard Avedon Redefined Beauty with 'Dovima with Elephants' and What Happened Next." *VanityFair.com*. Vanity Fair, 16 June 2017. Web. N.p. 23 July 2018.
- "Charm." *Historygraphicdesign.com*. History Graphic Design, n.d. Web. N.p. 23 July 2018.
- Cambridge Advanced Learner Dictionary. "Meaning of Communicate in the English Dictionary." *Cambridgedictionary.com*. Web. N.p. 18 August 2018.
- Dwight, Eleanor. *NYMAG.com*. New York Store, 11 September 2009. Web. N.p. 19 July 2018.
- Douglas, Martin. "Dorian Leigh, Multifaceted Cover Girl of the 40s, Dies at 91." *The newyorktimes.com*. The New York Times, 9 July 2008. N.p. 23 July 208.
- Fine, Phyllis. "'Vogue vs. Harper's Bazaar': *Battle of the Fashion Icons*." *MediaPost.com*. Media Post, 25 April 2007. Web. N.p. 23 July 2008.
- Mooallem, Stephen. "150 Years of 'Harper's Bazaar'." *Harpersbazaar.com*. Harper's Bazaar, 21 November 2016. Web. N.p. 8 July 2018.
- . "The Best of 'Harper's Bazaar' in the 1950s." BAZAAR: The Definition of Fashion. *Harpersbazaar.com*. Harper's Bazaar, 11 May 2017. Web. N.p. 20 July 2018.
- Stiehm, Carleigh. "Celebrating 150 Years of 'Harper's Bazaar'." *Hearst.com*. Hearst, 24 October 2017. Web. N.p. 31 July 2018.
- Valenti, Laura. "The History of Women and Their Eyebrows." *MarieClaire.com*. Marie Claire, 2014. Web. N.p. 9 August 2018.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Page 6. FIGURE 1. "Cover." *Harper's Bazar*, November 2, 1867.
- Page 10. FIGURE 2. Castleton's porcelains. *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 10. FIGURE 3. "Shopping Bazaar..." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 15. FIGURE 4. Dorian Leigh, Carmel Snow, Suzy Parker and Richard Avedon, 1955.
- Page 16. FIGURE 5. "See Yourself in New Colors...A New Make-Up Art for Wearing Color."
Harper's Bazaar, April 1953.
- Page 18. FIGURE 6. "Dior's Sinuous Evening Line." *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1955.
- Page 19. FIGURE 7. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1956.
- Page 21. FIGURE 8. "Cover." *The Cosmopolitan*, March 1894.
- Page 22. FIGURE 10. "The Song" by Edwin Muir. *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1956.
- Page 23. FIGURE 11. "That Special Face" by Sidney Carrol. *Cosmopolitan*, May 1951.
- Page 23. FIGURE 12. "Cover." *Cosmopolitan*, April 1950.
- Page 25. FIGURE 13. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1950. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*,
March 1958. "Cover." *Vogue*, April 1953.
- Page 26. FIGURE 14. "Cover." *Vogue*, March 1950.
- Page 27. FIGURE 15. "Cover." *Charm*, April 1952.
- Page 33. FIGURE 16. "Cover." By Alexey Brodovitch. *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1952.
- Page 35. FIGURE 17. "Index." *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1931.
- Page 35. FIGURE 18. "Simpler Styles." *Harper's Bazaar*, January 1921.
- Page 46. FIGURE 19. Corsets and busts. *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1947.
- Page 47. FIGURE 20. "You're of 1950 if ..." *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1950.
- Page 48. FIGURE 21. Christian Dior's 'New Look', February 1947.
- Page 49. FIGURE 22. "Short, Shorter, Shortest". *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1950.
- Page 50. FIGURE 23. "The Afro-Hispanic Influence". *Harper's Bazaar*, June 1954.
- Page 54. FIGURE 24. "The Stirrup" by Ronay. Ronay Handbag, 1950.
- Page 54. FIGURE 25. "Heinz Tomato Ketchup," 1957.
- Page 55. FIGURE 26. "Shopping Bazaar...". *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.

- Page 57. FIGURE 27. "Daystrom's Coloramic!" *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1950.
- Page 59. FIGURE 28. 'Bikini' swimming costume. Molitor swimming pool, Paris, 1946.
- Page 60. FIGURE 29. "The Bare Season." *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1947.
- Page 61. FIGURE 30. Soviet Fashion Magazine, 1953.
- Page 61. FIGURE 31. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1958.
- Page 64. FIGURE 32. "Letter to a Young Actress". *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1957.
- Page 64. FIGURE 33. "Bergdorf Goodman". *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 65. FIGURE 34. "In Sweet Accord..." by Palladium. *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1951.
- Page 66. FIGURE 35. "New Girls in Town". *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1957.
- Page 66. FIGURE 36. "Little Girl Alias Femme Fatale". *Harper's Bazaar*, 1956.
- Page 67. FIGURE 37. "The Hats of Paris, by Night". *Harper's Bazaar*, May 1955.
- Page 67. FIGURE 38. Cover. *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1956.
- Page 68. FIGURE 39. "The Mold of the Princesse – Everything Black, and Lacy." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1954.
- Page 69. FIGURE 40. "Spring Jackets." *Harper's Bazaar*, February 1959.
- Page 81. FIGURE 41. 'Cover.' *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 83. FIGURE 42. "Paris-America news: dressmaker hats." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 84. FIGURE 43. "Dior's Paris Hats – Forms and Fantaisie." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 84. FIGURE 44. "Associated Haute Couture Fabrics." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 85. FIGURE 45. "Good Buys – for the next 6 months." *Harper's Bazaar*, April 1953.
- Page 86. FIGURE 46. "The Jeweled Safari." *Harper's Bazaar*, June 1957
- Page 87. FIGURE 47. "In Paris: White Piqué Sparkles." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1953.
- Page 88. FIGURE 48. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, July 1952.
- Page 89. FIGURE 49. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, October 1952.
- Page 90. FIGURE 50. "The Day Shift, the Night Watch." *Harper's Bazaar*, September 1952.
- Page 91. FIGURE 51. "Cover." *Harper's Bazaar*, March 1959.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Vorrei porgere un ringraziamento speciale alla prof.ssa Daniela Ciani, alla sua raffinata e meticolosa ricerca e cura del dettaglio. La ringrazio, inoltre, per l'attenzione e la cordialità dimostratami e per l'avermi insegnato che la letteratura è Arte.

Ringrazio il prof. Simone Francescato per la disponibilità accordatami nell'accettare di farmi da correlatore. Un sentito ringraziamento anche per il suo corso di North American Cinema, ottima chiave di lettura per accedere e conoscere la cultura popolare nordamericana.