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ETHICS, FASHION, AND FILM IN THE 1950s AND 60s

by

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Ethics, Fashion, and Film in the 1950s and 60s

Sara Miner

To truly understand the nature of identity, autonomy, and morality in the 1950s and 60s, one must look at what artifacts of humanity have been left behind. More specifically, clothes and fashion capture, represent, and immortalize the human experience through each stitch and seam. By analyzing clothing from an anthropologic lens, one can discover the socio-cultural reality of a time long past. Known for intense culmination of social and political movements, the 1950s and 60s contain many radical shifts. Ranging from social movements like Civil Rights, Women's Liberation, Black Feminism, and others, to the political metamorphosis as a result of post-war American life through the invention of credit, Vietnam War, and the first televised presidential debate, period is rich with symbols of change and evolution, much like many others in history. As a significant ideological machine in the articulation of notions of freedom, individuality, autonomy (which are each profoundly linked to commodification and consumerism), Hollywood fashions are deeply implicated in western cultural discourses around notions of individualism and free expression. Hollywood offers fantasies of freedom through the desire for and consuming of the images and materials of fashion. Notions of individualism and freedom were not invented by Hollywood, but reflect the Enlightenment traditions of individualism, autonomy, and self-determination. By understanding the economic effects of capitalism and consumerism, the societal effects of autonomy and gender, and the cultural effects of adornment and dress, one can see how clothing becomes a language of expression, access, conformity, and counterculture during this period. And although sometimes at odds with the public spotlight, through diamonds, ruffles, and stardust, clothing is a means by which one can declare identity and even fight for individual autonomy.

Acknowledgements

To truly understand the nature of identity, autonomy, and morality in the 1950s and 60s, one must take a look at what artifacts of humanity have been left behind. Although this list includes a range of things from memory to tea sets, one of the key factors of any society is its cultural manifestation through material goods. More specifically, clothes and fashion capture, represent, and immortalize the human experience through each stitch and seam. By analyzing clothing from an anthropologic lens, one can discover the socio-cultural reality of a time long past.

Known for intense culmination of social and political movements, the 1950s and 60s contain many radical shifts. Ranging from social movements like Civil Rights, Women's Liberation, Black Feminism, and others, to the political metamorphosis as a result of post-war American life through the invention of credit, Vietnam War, and the first televised presidential debate, period is rich with symbols of change and evolution, much like many others in history.

Due to the plethora of events and changes occurring during this time, it is best to begin by breaking down some of the major historical moments that lead to this time in history. Breaking down the origins of notions of autonomy and how it relates to human rights based social groups in addition to the origins of capitalism and its later manifestation of consumer culture takes us to the Enlightenment.

Fashion is a significant ideological machine in the articulation of notions of freedom, individuality, autonomy (which are each profoundly linked to commodification and consumerism), and Hollywood fashions specifically are deeply implicated in western cultural discourses around notions of individualism and free expression. Indeed, "involvement in fashion seems to become a strategy for re-creating the fragmented self," (Kaiser 391). Hollywood offers fantasies of freedom through the desire for and consuming of the images and materials of

fashion. Notions of individualism and freedom were not invented by Hollywood, but reflect the Enlightenment traditions of individualism, autonomy, and self-determination.

Although the Enlightenment shifted the worldview of the human experience, withs its emphasis on individualism being drawn out through a number of subsequent political ideologies, its implicit holism ultimately failed in its inclusion of minority populations, therefore compromising a holistic approach. The failures of the human rights discourse of the Enlightenment became undeniably clear and manifested in an age of counterculture, change, and a reexamination of morality as seen in the 1950s and 60s and its exploration of who was endowed power to address said failures. To better understand the environment from which activist groups emerge, one must turn to the history of human rights as we understand it today. As defined by Ishay, "Human rights are held by individuals simply because they are part of the human species. They are rights shared equally by everyone regardless of sex, race, nationality, and economic background. They are universal in context," (Ishay 3). Because of its multiplicity of origin, human rights are thus acknowledged as the result of a layered historical process.

However successful we believe this definition to be, it reflects years of behavior viewed as deviant, revolution, and influential activism in all its forms. Known for three primary shifts in social thought, the Enlightenment demonstrated changes in culture's definition, cultural manifestation, as well as major scientific innovation. Most relevant to our discussion about human rights discourse and the development of fashion was the Enlightenment's focus on the individual. Themes of individualist culture and a hyper focus on the individual experience recognizable in western culture today emerged from this period.

Although the Enlightenment is heavily associated with European history and a western worldview, the Enlightenment era was a period that extended over multiple generations,

impacting the entire world. Because of the increased focus on globalization during the Enlightenment, Ishay argues that modern morality "is in fact indebted to a worldview spectrum of both secular and religious traditions," (7). Because of this polarity of origin, modern ethical theories often carry themes of both secularism and religiosity. The period of Enlightenment resulted in power and resistance being simultaneously defined by revolutionary thinkers and conquerors alike.

One powerful thinker among the leaders of the Enlightenment was Immanuel Kant. Nearly alone in his opinions among the great philosophical thinkers of the time, Kant believed morality as being concerned with keeping strict rules and guidelines that dictate how we, as humans, should act. His most relevant arguments are summarized in two broad statements. His first argument explored the notion that morality can be dictated by any action, as long as it is morally permissible to allow that action to become a universal law. It is dictated as "act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law," (Kant 23). Kant believed that by making a rule universalizable, it is our duty, as moral agents, to therefore uphold it.

In the case of autonomy and self-determination, by applying Kant's ideology of universality, it would be the moral expectation that each and every rational being award others the same power of self-determination as they have granted themselves. Therefore, everyone who grants themselves power over their own life must also grant every individual the same power for themselves.

Kant's second key argument further supported his first. He believed both arguments were simply two different ways of arriving at the same conclusion: our ultimate duty as moral agents and our treatment of others. It is as follows: "act so that you treat humanity, whether in your

own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as means only," (Kant 28). This essentially established that all humans must be treated with respect and dignity. Anything less is treating them as a mere means to an end, and not as an end itself. This key argument, combined with Kant's belief that moral laws must be strictly abided and universal in nature, essentially defines his contributions to the human rights discourse.

Kant's arguments represent a major contribution to Enlightenment thought regarding our moral obligation to treat others with respect. However abstractly inclusive his arguments and other patterns of thought of the Enlightenment claimed to be, they rarely included consideration for "rational beings" beyond white men, (Mills). This systematic exclusion is ultimately *the* failure that led to the civil rights and women's liberation movements by setting a standard of exclusion and oppression.

Despite the Enlightenment's contributions to the discourse on morality and human rights, the success of the era is almost as uncertain as its influence is undeniable; the modern Western world was built upon many of the ideals reintroduced during the Enlightenment. Because of this, many argue whether or not the changes called forth were ever truly addressed, or even understood. Because of this lack of certainty regarding an ideological follow-through, many minorities continued to be oppressed and ignored.

Just as the social groups of the 1950s and 60s emerged in response to the changing world, the clothing displays changing trends influenced by the socio-political environment. Because of the theoretical nature of such social movements, other ways to study human development emerged. Many credit this crux of social change as a response to questions regarding the relation between clothing and human behavior (Roach and Eicher, 1973). The connection between clothing and morality was actively employed by a range of social movements as they used

clothing as a way to promote reformation of "social and ethical issues related to clothing," (Kaiser, 13). This led to the very important belief that clothes have social implications as well as physical ones, a radical realization for post-war America (Kaiser 1997).

The emerging institutionalization of culture led to rippling effects in areas of anthropology, sociology, and psychology alike as scholars continued research on where clothing as an element of humanity began. It is easy for us to think of clothes as ordinary, and even unconsciously employed. Many popular and familiar theories emerged, including those associated with basic human needs of modesty and protection, or others, like a potentially innate desire to adorn our physical bodies. Although credible, theories of protection and modesty did not explain the radical consumption of clothing as an artistic and individualistic medium. This latter theory, known as the adornment theory, is based on the idea that clothes are meant for decorative declarations of spectacle, attraction, or aesthetic expression (Rubinstein, 1995). When applied to our understanding of dress as a mode of social deviance or conformity for the sense of individualism, the connection to the 1950s and 60s is clear.

To better understand the connection between adornment and identity, one must turn towards the influence of capitalism in the consumption of material culture like dress. "Several factors contributed to the rise of fashion: city life, a class structure allowing for social mobility, the rise of capitalism, and industrialism all seem to have had a tremendous impact on fashion as we know it today," (Kaiser, 389). With most of these influences also emerging during the enlightenment, the creation of a middle class with disposable income was the result of rural or preindustrial societies becoming industrial societies. This shift occurred in Europe and the United States in the mid-18th to 19th century, paralleling the development of Enlightenment ideologies, including the work of Kant (Kaiser, 13). Fueled by Enlightenment ideals of individualism and

autonomy, dress became a manifestation of identity. In addition to societal and cultural factors, understanding gender as a major influence on clothing is also important. According to Kaiser, gender is "one of the most fundamental social meanings expressed and shaped by clothes…gender has also influenced who has pursued clothing and why or how they have done so," (13). By understanding the economic effects of capitalism and consumerism, the societal effects of autonomy and gender, and the cultural effects of adornment and dress, one can see how clothing becomes a language of expression, access, conformity, and counterculture.

1953 saw some significant and profound shifts in American society, not the least of which was the election of President Dwight Eisenhower. Known as being a supreme commander in many battles against Nazi-occupied Europe during the second world war, most notably leading the battle on D-Day, Eisenhower became a symbol of military power and American success. With Eisenhower's presidency, we begin to see the worlds of fashion and dress becoming increasingly aligned with the broader politics of a new postwar economy.

More than being an icon of political and military power, Eisenhower and his wife were also major fashion influencers of the time. Most notably known for the introduction of the "Eisenhower Jacket," Eisenhower influenced multiple generations of men's fashion after the war (see Fig. 1). With a cropped design intended to help further reduce fabric usage, the Eisenhower jacket is seen below in the picture of Eisenhower commanding the troops on D-Day, (Mills 2022). In addition to the bomber jacket silhouette, Eisenhower's jacket later inspired other iconic pieces of clothing as worn by military generals, movie stars, and Motown enthusiasts alike.

In addition to her support of soldier's welfare and civil rights, Mary Geneva "Mamie" Eisenhower, was a fashion icon known for her particular bangs and a specific color of pink often used in her dress and décor at the White House. Becoming known as "Mamie pink," a particular

blush color usually paired with frills, this color encapsulated domestic and political success and well as social elegance as Mamie became an icon by not only being the First Lady, but by being "an independent thinker rather than the passive wife" of President Eisenhower (Green 330). Her legacy, specifically her fashion tastes, became crucial in understanding Hollywood fashion of the period. Much like other public figures and celebrities of the time, we see a direct correlation between their stylish influence and the consumption of fashion (see Fig. 2).

An instructive example of the collision between politics and fashion, *Gentleman Prefer Blondes (1953),* captures many of these socio-political tensions. With star and fashion icon Marilyn Monroe playing the lead opposite Jane Russell, the movie is star studded and politically loaded. Monroe's background and emergence into film is part of what makes the film so historically interesting.

Emerging from a troubled and difficult childhood into decades of stardom, Monroe is an interesting study of women's roles and portrayal in early Hollywood. "Publicized, promoted, and received as an erotic female object, Marilyn Monroe's celebrity image represented both 'pure' femininity and 'immoral' female sexuality for post-war American culture," (Sheibel 10). This image has been broken down by many scholars of film and celebrity studies as a greater artifact of the condition of female roles during the time, instead of Monroe's ability to act beyond the "dumb blonde" role. Sheibel explains Monroe as "an embodied female subject, and the self-awareness, irony and contradiction in her roles often elicit sympathetic female identification," (10).

Having a greater understanding of the actress herself, meaning can be elicited from some of the fashion designs she wears in the film. Perhaps one of the most famous scenes in cinematic history, Monroe performing "Diamonds are a Girls Best Friend" in a beautiful, "Mamie pink"

dress is a key moment within the film. However, the dress itself speaks to far more than "square-cut and pear-shaped" stones. Beyond the suggestive lyrics, having this song performed by someone like Monroe, while wearing such an aggressive, even transgressive, color of pink, brazenly structures different notions of femininity.

Following a silhouette originally designed for war-time fashion, dresses and women's blouses followed a "close cut, military style top with a hyperfeminized features like an exaggerated bust and cinched or belted waist," (Hills). By designing women's clothes to be more form fitting, fashion could continue to design within rations on fabric and lining. After the war ended, the hourglass form continued to be popular for the better half of the 20th century. In this particular gown, we see the hourglass silhouette decked with fabric recently re-available after the war (see Fig. 3). Fabric is used exuberantly in this design with gathers around the waist and bust, the full-length skirt, and of course, the oversized bow on the back of the dress. Not only is the fabric usage abundant, but the entirety of Monroe's costume is in a bright, expensive shade of "Mamie pink." Topped off with elegant evening-wear gloves of the same shade, and accessories catered to the lyrics, Monroe is truly a sight, or rather a spectacle of projected femininity.

Although aesthetically impressive, this dress also speaks to the fetishized and highly restrictive nature of women's fashion after the war. Seemingly benign by themselves, these designs become problematic in regard to female autonomy when paired with quotes from the screen play that further demoralize women and their access to autonomy. In a conversation between the two main characters, Dorothy, played by Russell, and Lorelei, played by Monroe, Lorelei responds to comments on her behavior towards men with "you must think I was born yesterday." To which Dorothy replies "Sometimes I think there is no other explanation." Lorelei then retorts, "I can be smart when it's important, but I've found men don't like it." This

represents a philosophy that women should not, or rather cannot, be forward towards men, intelligent, or particular about what men they prefer if they want to fulfill their roles as "women." Indeed, Dorothy, a character described by viewers as tenacious and full of gumption, is only verbally regarded within the film as one who will "make some man a wonderful wife." Indeed, the film limits women's potential and intelligence to only being capable of securing a rich husband. This is noted in the later line: "If we can't empty his pockets between us, we're not worthy of the name 'woman,'" (*Gentleman Prefer Blondes* 1953). Although each quote is pulled out of context of the film, they stand as representative of the society from which they were created, and how women's autonomy and self-determination was regarded within said society. This attitude also demonstrates the self-awareness of women in this period. Although conforming to aesthetic and outward demands of femininity, these characters – from their fashion to their dialogue – also stand as symbols of rebellion: intelligent women working within the confines set for them by society.

First appearing on film in 1952, Kelly was launched into an incredibly successful, if not short career in film. Known for becoming the Princess Consort of Monaco, Kelly captures more than just beauty and grace. Along with her exceptional beauty, Kelly became a world-famous philanthropist as the Princess of Monaco. In addition to her work as President of the Red Cross in Monaco, Kelly continued to carry Hollywood stardom, despite her retirement to monarchy. "When it comes to Grace Kelly, it wasn't just the screen that caught the public's attention, it was also her timeless style," (Grace Influential). Indeed, Kelly became a fashion icon as a result of her public standing, Hollywood career, and, as noted by costar and friend, Cary Grant, her "serenity," (Nelson).

Going beyond mere elegance, Kelly was a symbol of otherworldliness (see Fig. 4). With graceful features, strong eyes, and a dignified voice, she embodied an ideal of femininity opposite that of actors like Monroe. Although Monroe symbolized the flashy, brazen, American show-girl personality, Kelly was instead portrayed as a feminine goddess of graceful sophistication and fantastic beauty.

Because of her position in society, Kelly's clothing and costume designs in *Rear Window* are indicative of more than Hitchcock drama. Capturing other post-war styles, Kelly's appearance in the famous black and white dress as advertised with *Rear Window*'s promotional photography represents the other prominent dress silhouette of the 1950s. This dress showcases the hyper cinched waist of 1950s style, paired with the boat V-neck and simple string of pearls, Kelly fulfills expectations of feminine beauty. Additionally, the skirt – with its many layers of tule and crepe with black embroidery – is symptomatic of a post-war reaction to fabric rationing (see Fig. 5). Officially ending in 1954, war-time rations limited the design and availability of many designs. With newly gained access, fashion began to utilize more expensive fabric and more layers than ever before. This is seen in this particular dress as Kelly embodies feminine beauty and grace.

While incorporating expensive and plentiful fabric, 1950's designs hyperfeminized the female body by introducing lower and wider necklines, cinched waists, shorter skirts, and poofy, petticoat like skirts. Because of this swing towards more fabric and less masculine silhouettes, pants disappear from female fashion and are widely unpopular until the late 60s, even early 70s. If pants were worn they were viewed as youthful and casual, and were typically a high-waisted snug fit, full length, and rarely seen outside of the home. Instead, the expectation was for women to be dressed in skirts that were just below the knee to tea length, and ready for any occasion.

Shoes also shifted away from the utilitarian oxford of the war era, to delicate ballet flats, Mary Janes, and strappy heels, as worn by Kelly (see Fig. 5). As fashion continued to progress through the 50s, skirt hemlines get shorter and shorter.

In addition to being highly feminized, women's fashion became more restrictive and less attainable for bodies outside those of celebrities and models alike. This is referenced by later women's liberation movements as needed reform to allow women greater autonomy over how their bodies "should" look. Beyond clothing, this included specific make-up and hairstyles that designated what was appropriate and expected of women. As commented by Kelly's character, Lisa, in the film, "A woman going anywhere but the hospital would take makeup, perfume and jewelry... it's basic equipment." This idealization of the image of Lisa, Kelly's character, further emphasizes her unattainability. To Jeff, to the viewers, and to women who wanted to be like her. Kelly's character was designed to be beyond achievable, beyond realistic of most, if not all viewers. This furthered the gap between the image set aside for women, and the attainability of such an image. Beyond aesthetic qualities, Kelly also represented a dimension of class separation, of the grotesque disposability of couture fashion and the otherworldliness it seemed to embody.

In addition how women should look, there was also a very specific mold for the ambitions of the "ideal woman." This included a hyper focus on marriage, domestic success, and romance. This usually resulted in men being portrayed as uninterested in commitment or romance until "the right woman came along." This is seen in conversations between the main character, Jeff, played by James Stewart, and his caretaker Alma, played by Thelma Ritter in *Rear Window*.

Jeff: She expects me to marry her.

Alma: That's normal…

Jeff: I don't want to.

Alma: That's abnormal.

The disinterest continues as Jeff is portrayed as craving independence, freedom, and an interesting life. Although understandable, marriage is therefore portrayed as the opposite of such aspirations for a man, while being the only achievement worth a woman's ambition. This stratification of gender in regard to marriage is ubiquitous within Hollywood cinema and often appears in other films of the time.

Kelly's character further represents women's access to acknowledgment and autonomy as her insights and intelligence are disregarded as feminine intuition. At one point in the film, Jeff's friend and detective, Thomas Doyle, played by Wendell Corey, comments "That feminine intuition stuff, it sells magazines, but in real life it's still a fairytale." This captures societal expectations of women's ability to function in "real life." In addition to disregarding female intelligence, it was expected for women to succeed in domestic circles only.

Although there is an intended ironic tone in many of these comments (as Lisa's intuition is ultimately correct), the dialogue helps us understand the nature of the feminine condition in the early 1950s. And yet, Lisa paradoxically represents a central and autonomous agent in the film. In some ways, Jeff tries to limit her actions, and yet she is the one who ultimately solves the mystery. This action layers Jeff's incapacitation and his dependence on Lisa. This dual dependence and dismissal is symptomatic of the society view of women.

Autonomy, and the Civil Rights Movement

1954 brought many changes, most notably that of Martin Luther King and the beginning of his public fight for Civil Rights. The United States of America embraced some of the core

ideas of the Enlightenment in establishing a country and constitution founded on the complex ideals of liberty and freedom of the oppressed. However, the United States of America as an institution also failed to apply these laws of liberty liberally and equally. As a result of this failure, the civil rights movement emerged. This lack of equality in granting self-determination and autonomy to all individuals allowed for systematic oppression. This was manifested in a history of slavery and oppression, and more recently in Jim Crow and segregation laws. These laws allowed a worldview of independence and freedom that maintained the belief that marginalized individuals were incapable of *full* self-determination, rationality, and autonomy. This failure of application demanded reparation as prominent thinkers of the civil rights movement began to fight against the institution of oppression.

In addition to many doctrines and values shared within activism, Martin Luther King Jr. was a philosopher and revolutionary (see Fig. 6). Despite his heavily philosophical writings, King's writings are often written off as activist speeches and Christian sermons. However, when examined more closely, one can come to appreciate King's writings as a radical view of moral philosophy. Much like Kant's writings, Dr. King's writings carry a form of moral law. Said law, or rather, moral argument, is most famously explained in King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Although describing an approach to nonviolent civil disobedience, King's arguments closely follow the structure of ethical argument. "In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: (1) collection of the facts to determine whether injustices are alive, (2) negotiation, (3) self-purification, and (4) direct action," (King 290). Indeed, King outlined an approach to understanding civil disobedience and its place in moral discourse. He breaks it down by first recognizing and acknowledging when injustices or immorality is occurring. Followed by negotiation of justice: is this law, or moral principle just? This approach is addressed

consistently throughout King's writings. A common critique of civil disobedience is that it often requires the breaking of laws. King addresses this counterargument later by suggesting that "the answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are *just* laws and *unjust* laws," ("Letter from Birmingham Jail," 293). He goes on to explain that breaking unjust laws is in fact just, and moral, as it brings deceit and oppression to the forefront of the discussion. This aligns with his approach to nonviolence as well. King further advocates for self-purification which implies change as well as introspection. King was careful of hypocrisy and recognized the importance of acknowledging and addressing injustice within oneself, before it can be expected of the law. Direct action is where the civil rights movement gained the most success and experienced the greatest hardship. King's philosophy inspired millions to participate in and support the civil right movement as we know it today.

King believed in the words of Kant regarding the treatment of all people, even if Kant would not have included King in his assessment. It is also in this analysis that we can better contextualize predominant civil rights thought with human rights discourse across time. This exclusion and refusal of the acknowledgment of black people as human and equal was a keystone of anti-civil rights thought. Dr. King believed one of the ways to acknowledge and condemn that argument was to be clear in stating the truth. "The Negro must boldly throw off the manacles of self-abnegation and say to himself and to the world, 'I am somebody. I am a person. I am a man with dignity and honor. I have a rich and noble history. How painful and exploited that history has been,'" ("Where Do We Go From Here, Chaos or Community," 246). Indeed, King worked to expose the humanity of the oppressed. By allowing people a better view of the humanity of the oppressed individuals, King was successful in humanizing the oppressed and mitigating violence towards peaceful protest.

In addition to proposing new approaches to the designation and creation of moral law, Dr. King also wrote extensively on the condition of black Americans before and during the civil rights movement. "The tendency to ignore the Negro's contribution to American life and to strip him of his personhood is as old as the earliest history books and as contemporary as the morning's newspaper," (246). He expressed again and again the nature of the black man's experience in early 20th century America, and what would be required to reverse it.

In addition to this acknowledgment of autonomy, Dr. King argued for power. Power for black men across the country to regain their status as "a man" in the eyes of the law. Although clear in purpose, Dr. King also acknowledged the kind of power that would be necessary for the civil rights movement to succeed. He defined power as "nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change," (246). He mightily represented and inspired this power to thousands as he spoke on many battlegrounds of the civil rights movement. These illustrations of power stand as a manifestation of self-determination and autonomy

Similar to Kant's designation of strict rules, Dr. King stated his own beliefs in regard to unbending rules of non-violence in civil disobedience. "I am concerned about a better world. I'm concerned about justice. I'm concerned about brotherhood. I'm concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about these, he can never advocate violence," ("Where Do We Go From Here, Chaos or Community," 249).

If Kant is associated with an unbending universe, strictly aligned with moral law, King is known for his belief in a strong law, and a consistent way of life. "Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends towards justice," (King, "Where Do We Go From Here, Chaos or Community," 252). King argued for all to live up to the promise that *all* men are treated

with dignity and respect. Although equally susceptible to exceptions and fallacies, King's arguments carry the same powerfully inspirational weight as the arguments of Kant. When aligned, their voices echo our responsibility to one another, and to a higher, moral way of living that demands all people are treated with dignity and respect.

With civil right ideologies permeating cultures, racial divisions became a central perspective within popular culture. Noted by scholars as one of the first years where this change is evident, there also began to be a clear racial divide between the styles of pop music. Instead of simply being "pop" we begin to see the introduction of Rock and Roll with artists like Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley, and the separation of Rhythm and Blues (RB) music with artists such as Ray Charles and Ruth Brown (see Fig. 7). This change was viewed as problematic by the "white" American public as "black" music was popularly consumed by white audiences.

These cultural changes were in part, a response to a growing demographic of postwar America: teenagers. Unique to the post-war era, this group represented a new market for consumerism with a demographic hyper focused on messages of conformity and identity. In other words, "kids had money in their pockets, and in every sense, bigger was better," (Burton 32). Quite literally seen in fashions such as the poodle skirt, and flashy leather jackets (remarkable similar to the Eisenhower jacket first introduced post war), fashion developed a new style for teenagers.

Seen in the development of movie stars such as James Dean and Sandra Dee, the silver screen turned it's eyes of the stories of rebellious youth and star crossed teenagers. Most notably, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) captured all the angst and trial of growing up. Following the trend of other movies, during this time "Screenplays typically depicted teenage angst and rebellion, and the trials of growing up. Invariably the influence of these films spilled onto the streets,

attracting gangs of young free-thinking and sometimes unruly teenage fans who hung out on street corners, acting out scenarios they had just seen at the movies, all vying for attention," (Burton 32). Clothing was used to further emphasize the hierarchal nature of teenage social groups, with specific pieces of clothing worn by celebrities defining leaders and followers within groups.

Following previously established trends, "clothing endorsed by famous movie stars and singers meant guaranteed sales to teenage fans, and the influence of fashion seen in movies at this time," (Burton 27). This, in part, led to the mass production of poodle skirts, blue jeans, and other symbols of teenage development. Following the innate psychological need to belong, "fashion changed on the basis of such social-psychological factors as overcoming boredom, craving for diversity, striving for personal uniqueness, expressing rebellion, imitating others or obtaining companionship," (Kaiser 14). Each of these social-psychological factors is directly seen in teenage-oriented Hollywood productions like *Rebel Without a Cause*.

Known for integrating many fashions of the time, *Rebel Without a Cause* captured much of the teenage condition as it related to the development of fashion (see Fig. 8). Blue jeans, in particular, became an interesting symbol of teenage rebellion. Typically employed in Western's and strongly associated with cowboys, blue jeans were a sign of informality, rebellion against the system, and individuality. From cowboys to rebels, denim on movie stars brough its own wave of counterculture.

Paired with rebellious and misunderstood characters often played by James Dean, the identity forming after movie stars became so strong, some worried about the extent of Hollywood influence on the lawless behavior of teenagers. So much so that "filmmakers were soon being pressured by the authorities to present storylines with moralistic endings that

highlighted the perils of juvenile delinquency and covered everything from illicit drug use to reckless driving, with the inevitable consequences of fast living," (Burton 37). This moralistic emphasis is shown in *Rebel Without a Cause* as the tragic and preventable deaths of Plato and Goon are seen as the consequences of main characters actions towards recklessness and conformity (see Fig. 9). Even with worries of lawless influences and moralistic endings, teenagers continued to model their lives and themselves after the heartthrobs of the silver screen.

While movies focused on the teenage experience, entertainment surrounding the demographic continued to grow. With the production of *Gidget,* we see a consistent shift in Hollywood. Seen wearing the popular fashions of the day, Gidget, played by Sandra Dee, symbolized American teenage fashion. Poodle skirts, sweater sets, and pastel based designs, teenage fashion directed towards young women was symptomatic of the changing view of women while representing traditional thought (see Fig. 10). "The skirts which were worn cinched in tight with a thick belt to form a wasp-like waist, and were often decorated with embroidered applique motifs; such as clowns, musical notes, poodles and dancing figures highlighted with fur and rhinestones," (Hills). Because of their shared introduction into popular culture with pop music, these "circular skirts [became] an essential part of rock'n'roll attire around the world," (Burton 32).

Employing these fashions without directly referencing anything so "liberal" as rock and roll, *Gidget* embodies classic teenage fashion. With highly feminized silhouettes, girlish charm, and innocent features, Gidget is seen as the ultimate teenager. Capturing "the age where nothing fits," *Gidget* follows Francie Lawrence through her summer of teenage growing pains. From learning to surf, to falling in love, Francie (nicknamed "Gidget by the boys teaching her to surf at the beach for being "somewhere between a girl and a midget") embodies all of the ideal traits of

a teenage girl. "She acts sorta teenage, just in-between age. Although she's not king size, her finger is ring-size, Gidget is the one for me," (James Darren 1960). Further capturing feminine ideals of marriage based ambition and male oriented identity, Gidget is far from revolutionary. Instead, it is symptomatic of the increasing sexualization of young girls and teenagers. From fashion grooming to limiting autonomy, girls were taught younger and younger that an marriage-oriented future was life's purest ambition (see Fig. 11).

Although harmless in plot and benign when compared to movies like *Rebel Without a Cause, Gidget* still carried a moralistic model of identity for teenagers. As explained to Gidget by her mother in the film, "to be a real woman is to bring out the best in a man," (*Gidget* 1959). The implications of adulthood being the cure to teenage rebellion are often saturated in period based understandings of what is "good, pure, and moral." When compared to James Dean, Sandra Dee ("Gidget") becomes a symbol of conformity rather than counterculture for this demographic. Teaching youth true happiness is found when conforming to societal image, *Gidget* takes "moralistic endings" to a whole new level. Even so, Hollywood continued to influence the development of identity, understanding of gender, and the application of autonomy as teenagers "modelled themselves on famous Hollywood movie stars," (Burton 50).

Although not reducible to the influence of Hollywood fashion alone, the images set before the youth of the late 50s and early 60s was as moralistic as it was powerful, continuing our understanding of the power of the curated image and influence of fashion.

The line between entertainment and political news continued to be blurred as television and film became major sources for American audiences. Not only was the televised debate between Nixon and Kennedy chalk full of presidential potential, but many credit Kennedy's win

to his aesthetic appeal on television. A famous study conducted directly following the debate showed that radio listeners predicted Nixon as the winner, whereas TV watchers thought it would be Kennedy (see Fig. 12). Although some assert this particular debate was unaffected by television and its recent introduction to American family rooms, the correlation between image and power is undeniable (Druckman 565). The introduction of image as a political power tool was influential in how aesthetics and film worked within representational expectations. When studying the use of art and image in film, one is immediately directed to *La Dolce Vita.* Although *La Dolce Vita* was not a product of Hollywood, it is emblematic of the beginnings of the globalization of fashion trends as the culture and economies of western liberal democracies became increasingly aligned. As a result, many Hollywood movies began to be filmed abroad, specifically within Italy. *Roman Holiday, Three Coins in the Fountain,* and others brought the international stage to the American living room.

In addition to being considered one of the best films ever made due to it's rich artistry and focused elements of cinematography, *La Dolce Vita* also represents the complex relationship between Rome and Hollywood in the 1950s and 60s. After the war, Rome and Italy represented the bloody and destructive consequences of War, and yet "there were signs of vitality and even sparks of brightness around that rubble…[filmmakers] painted them with vigorous respect for realism honesty and empathy." (Levy 6). Additionally, because of Italy's economic position post-war, Italy continued to live in a state of war-time economic depression until long after the war had ended. This transformation of Rome consequently launched a new type of cinema that became an integral part of film history. Additionally, Italian cinema had a fascination with American culture and society and often consciously commented on it within Italian films.

Following journalist and writer, Marcello, *La Dolce Vita* follows his life as he engages in what he sees as the sweet life. Woman, alcohol, and cultured society fill the frames of *La Dolce Vita* as Marcello and his photographer friend, Paparazzo, chase headline after headline through the streets of Rome. Although glamorous in aesthetic, *La Dolce Vita* seems to highlight all of the grotesque that elegant society has to offer. From shiny cars to well-fitting suits, *La Dolce Vita* first appears to be a celebration of the suave and savvy. However, as viewers follow Marcello through his seemingly empty life, one can begin to understand the depth, or lack of, that Marcello lives for.

In a thematic sense, *La Dolce Vita* combines many elements to create a blend of neorealism and Art House film. Employing Neorealist styles of on-site shooting, and a focus on present day morality, the film seems to depict, if only on the surface, "the poverty and malaise of a postwar Italy in shambles," (Fabe). In addition to being an incredibly long and aesthetically dense film, *La Dolce Vita* captures much of the political nature of Italy, and the nature of the world on a larger scale. "The production of *La Dolce Vita* was so complex and involved such an investment of resources that it can easily be termed an art film colossal or spectacular," (Bondanella 68). The spectacle heavily relies on fashion, art, and "power of visual images to move" the viewers along the plot of the film. (Bondanella 69).

Viscerally shown in Marcello's fashion throughout the film, the movie begins showcasing a black suit coat with a stark white waistcoat and classic black bowtie (see Fig. 13). Representing all things classy and presentable, Marcello seems to be living his best life. By the end of the film, Marcello is shown in a black button up with a white suit coat, symbolizing the loss of purity, wholeness, and life in Marcello, all tastefully concealed under a white sports coat (see Fig. 14). This stands as a clear reversal in Marcello's outlook and situation. Although this is only one

example of Marcello's transformation, the viewer feels a pointed sense of grief by the conclusion of the film, with little to no love lost on the characters.

As a fashion icon in and out of the film, Sylvia, played by Anita Ekberg, is a character heavily represented through fashion. Most notably, Sylvia's black and white evendress captures the evolving fashion of the late 50s and early 60s, while also representing expectations of feminine objectification and grace (see Fig. 15).

The dress echos the hyperfeminized sweetheart neckline of Monroe's dress in *Gentleman Prefer Blondes* (1953) while being highly representative of modernity and evotion. The gathered neckline with the sloping low back is often associated with Monroe's personal style. Similarities between Ekberg and Monroe are undeniable as both capture of the blonde busty archetype that become more prevalent after Monroe's launch to stardom in American film. The dress utilizes a dilayered skirt, one a pencil wrap silhouette with a daring mid thigh slit, and the other a high contrast train made of layered white and black crepe. Tastefully accented with a diamond dangle broach on the left hip, and a white mink wrap, Ekberg personifies elegance, extravagence, and all of the best fabrics of the 1950s and 60s. Employing lower necklines and higher hems than anything found in the 50s, Ekberg's dress represents the evolution of style and women in film.

In addition to following fashionable expectations of a swedish celebrity, this dress has greater ethical implications when understood on Sylvia's character. "The paradoxical nature of Sylvia's role in *La Dolce Vita* is that she serves both a highly symbolic function in the film, bearing the weight of a number of key ideas that inform the entire work, and she is also a shallow figure, a bubble-head actress whose interviews underscore her ignorance and her complete naïveté," (Bondanella 83). This somewhat shallow and unintelligent representation of a blonde actress is far from original, while representing common projections of femininity. This can be

problematic when paired with the recognition that women's fashion was evolving faster than women's rights.

This contrast between beauty and emptiness is aesthetically represented and captured in the contrasting pigments of Sylvia's dress and the film at large. In addition to relying on stark gradient in costumes and shot composition, *La Dolce Vita* itself seems to only deal in extremes. Health and sickness, decadence and decay, love and sex, morality and corruption, the list goes on. This polarity of experience demonstrated in *La Dolce Vita* is part of what creates a sense of easygoing dread. This polarity is further emphasized in the high contrast, black and white mise-e-scene of the film. "The combinations of those strains of culture – high and low, official and illicit, elegant and crass – was a unique and in many ways unprecedented blend…Rome was, once again, the capital of…a new world, built on stardust and chic clothes and the titillation of scandal and the flash of camera bulbs," (Levy 13). Italian film, and Rome as the face of it, therefore, became the birthplace of a modern world "where innovations in fashion and social manners" came together for the first time, (Levy 13).

La Dolce Vita, in all of its visual spectacles, also represents the power of sight in granting autonomy. To look at somebody is to grant them agency and individualism. This power of looking, indeed beholding, is captured within the film as Marcello's sight grants the viewer a specific perspective into the world in which he lives. However, characters seen by the audience are only individualized because of Marcello's view of them. This idea captures the essence of *La Dolce Vita* while also warning viewers of an aesthetically perfect life. Contrasted with the philosophy discussed in *Rear Window* (1954) that having a perfectly composed image (an expectation heavily associated within society's view of women), this notion carries with it the dark truth that nothing true or real is ever seen or accepted by society. This idea is beautifully

captured in the dialogue between Marcello, played by Marcello Mastroianni, and Steiner, played by Alain Cuny, as they talk at Steiner's soiree (see Fig. 16). "The most miserable life is better, believe me, than an existence protected by a society where everything's organized, and planned for, and perfect." Symbolizing the idolized and incomplete view Marcello has of Steiner, Marcello is too busy craving the life of intellectual fulfillment he believes Steiner represents, to fully appreciate the emotional state of his friend. Steiner's words ring true in understanding the state of aesthetic precedence that often-impeded efforts of social justice for activist groups of the period.

Hollywood continued to be a major source of popular movements, with television rapidly gaining popularity and accessibility. "Some films would continue to influence fashion, and fashions influence films, well until the 1960s, when TV took over the lead as a new, more immediate source of inspiration," (Burton, 38). Despite the rumors of radicalism, Hollywood, in many ways, maintained its conservative and traditional view of the world. Specifically, a world in which women were encouraged to marry, look their best, and embody all things good and graceful. This attitude is displayed satirically in *How to Marry a Millionaire,* being created in 1961. With ironic and humorous undertones suggesting there may be more to a woman's life than marrying rich, *How to Marry a Millionaire* captures evolving fashion while paying tribute to traditional outlines of the post-war era in fashion.

Although the dialogue demonstrates some of the failures of first-wave feminism in the way women are supposedly perceived and respected, the comical nature of the film, paired with the trending and changing fashion, *How to Marry a Millionaire* grants us a unique perspective into the nature of the American life. With a continued emphasis on formality in fashion, the necktie is semiotically associated with a man's morality, maturity, and understanding of the

world. Likewise, part of the likeability of the main characters is due to their cleverness in working within the aesthetic expectations of their sex. From seeking elite suitors to grocery shopping without a wallet, the main characters seem fully conscious of the power associated with their beauty (see Fig. 17).

Following three models in their pursuit of wealthy husbands, the film has an understandably heavy emphasis on marriage. "Of course, I want to get married again… who doesn't. It's the biggest thing you can do in life," shares Schatze, played by Lauren Bacall, the main protagonist and driver of the plot. "Ever since I was a little girl, I've always had the same dream. To marry a zillionaire," comments Pola, played by Marilyn Monroe, in return. However, even with its hyper-tradition display of women through plot and dialogue, the movie does include some of the more radical fashions of the time, including skirts above the knee, women in pants, and the new fashion, skorts. Even so, *How to Marry a Millionaire* captures, in essence, the women's condition in which women's liberation movements emerged. By understanding this condition, one can develop a greater appreciation for the efforts made within Women's liberation by authors, protestors, and celebrities alike.

With the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963 began with a major moment in the women's liberation movement. Author of *The Feminine Mystique,* Betty Friedan is arguably one of the most well-published feminist thinkers who not only researched the condition of the feminine in the 1950s and 60s but also lived through it (see Fig. 18). Because of that, her research and writings explore many case studies and arguments for feminism; how it succeeded, and often, how it failed. Friedan chose the title "The Feminine Mystique" to point to the idea of "femininity" as a social construct. She believed the requirements therefore designated by society

made women miserable and trapped within their own lives by limiting self-actualization and autonomy.

Closely following, Martin Luther King Jr.'s prophetic "Letter from Birmingham Jail" was published a short 3 months later. Illustrating the crux of each social movement, these two publications were closely related due to their address to the masses with the following demand: change for a better future. Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights movement punctuated this message with the March on Washington in August of the same year (see Fig. 19).

Marching in support of civil rights legislation in congress, the March on Washington became the site of King's renowned "I have a Dream" speech. In addition to protestors' posters and support, the fashion of the protestors was also significant.

Although many protestors came to Washington displaying their "Sunday best," others used the protest as a platform for multi-faceted social reform. Assembled on a humid July evening in 1963, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed as an active student-led organization created for black women and their rights and the rights of their communities. In addition to their shared beliefs with the Civil Rights movement, SNCC believed that part of demanding autonomy meant demanding acceptance of the black image, including, among other characteristics, the wide acceptance of natural hair. Understanding the power of image, Gloria Wade-Gayles, a member of the SNCC said the following: "Our appearance had to speak the truth before our lips stretch to sing the songs…In it's natural state, my hair would be a badge, a symbol of my self-esteem, and racial pride," (Wade-Gayles 157). In addition to natural hair, SNCC women "used casual clothing to make a statement about their gender politics," (Ford 83). Refusing to conform, SNCC women showed up in denim and other work-related attire. In addition to the historical connotation of denim in black and white fashion, denim represented

counterculture that was as historically layered as the fabric itself (see Fig. 20. "Using dress to challenge conventional constructions of gender, denim overalls…demonstrated that women could literally and figuratively 'wear the pants.' Laying the groundwork for a soul style that resisted normative constructions of gender and respectability," (Ford 84).

In addition to protesting their gender politics and civil rights beliefs, SNCC women displayed a new form of counterculture, as compared to the "old-guard civil rights organizations…attempting to project the respectable black body to the American public," (Ford 83). With Martin Luther King Jr. included in this group, many younger members of the civil rights movement saw showing up "respectable" as dressing "white" and therefore conforming to public image expectations and sacrificing autonomy of image. Images of the SNCC women were not included in the coverage of the protest.

From revolutionary texts to revolutionized denim, the 1960's contained a range of important historical events, each directly or indirectly tied to the power of image. Ending with the tragic assassination of John F Kennedy in November, many felt uncertain about the future of American politics. Although not the first President to be assassinated, Kennedy was the first in the world of modern communications. In addition to his assassination being filmed and televised, the death of accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald was also caught on television. With news coverage dominating TV and radio for weeks, Kennedy's assassination further illustrated the use of television and the visual image in political communication.

Feminism and Self Determination

Prevalent during the 1950s and 60s, what is commonly known as "second-wave" feminism was addressing needs unmet by Enlightenment thinkers. Following "first-wave"

feminism which was primarily focused on women's right to vote, "second-wave" feminism was rooted in the idea that women deserved a self-determined space in the public sphere. In addition to continued suffrage for autonomy and self-determination, "second-wave" feminism focused on giving women greater control within their own lives.

To better understand the nature of feminist thought, Friedan explores the environment in which women found themselves. She describes how women were taught two extremes. The feminine and the unfeminine. In addition to generous designations and descriptions of each, girls and women were taught to structure themselves, their lives, and their futures around the attainment of the feminine. Because of this polarization, sometimes women themselves were the greatest inhibitors to feminism. Friedan explains that women "were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents," (Friedan 9). The pity worked twofold as it distinguished what was "right" and "wrong" for women, much like moral law, while singlehandedly calling feminist success outside the home as un-feminine. Because of this hatred of the un-feminine and endorsement of the feminine, social trends surrounding domestic pursuit became the executor, judge, and jury to second-wave feminism.

By the end of the 1950s, the average marriage age of American women dropped to twenty, with the majority of girls getting engaged in their teens. The proportion of women attending college inversely dropped from 47% in 1920 to 35% in 1958. In addition to fewer women becoming educated, the education of women was seen as stripping the desirable femininity from them. Friedan explains this with a case study of a young girl refusing a science fellowship at John Hopkins University to work as a secretary in a real estate office. The girl felt that by working a job more "feminine," she was closer to getting "what every other American girl wanted – to get married, have four children, and live in a nice house in a suburb," (Friedan

11). Although there is nothing inherently anti-feminist in living a domestic life, unsupported education, limited opportunity, and degradation of intelligence and excellence are indeed anti-feminist.

Another hindrance to the feminist movement of the 1950s and 60s was the refusal of acknowledgment by society that a problem existed at all. It wasn't until Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* in 1953 that feminism was seen as unresolved. Not only was her work influential, but many credit, including Betty Friedan herself, *The Second Sex* as the catalyst to second-wave feminism. Even with de Beauvoir's radical efforts, she was dismissed in the American worldview. "She was talking about French women," they would say. "The 'woman problem' in America no longer existed," (Friedan 12). Some believed that women's rights were simply a matter of being able to vote. This attitude continued until 1960 when the image of the happy housewife burst into the public sphere. Suddenly, it was being reported on. Articles, books, and journals suddenly wrote that there was a problem in which women were being forced to live.

This momentum quickly turned sour when American thought attributed "the problem" to women's education and involvement in the political vote. "A male humorist joked in *Harper's Bazaar* that the problem could be solved by taking away women's right to vote... 'today a woman has to make both the family and the political decisions, and it's too much for her,'" (Friedan 16). Indeed, Friedan states that by 1962, the "plight of the trapped American housewife had become a national parlor game," (18) with theories running amok about why perfectly comfortable women were dissatisfied, or more specifically, physically, emotionally, and mentally unwell. "Even so, most men and some women still did not know this problem was real," (18), Friedan explains. They viewed it as a trendy conversation topic, instead of an acknowledgment

of sexism. Although nearly entirely dismissed, some began to realize the visceral reality of the problem itself. But instead of contradicting popular thought, many waited until the right questions would be asked to find the answer.

At this point, the 19th amendment allowing women to vote had only been in place for 43 years, merely two generations, yet many felt that first-wave feminism failed to establish any kind of worldview focused on the equality of women. "If the cage is now a modern plate-glass-and-broadloom ranch house or a convenient modern apartment, the situation is no less painful than when her grandmother sat over an embroidery hoop in her gilt-and-plush parlor and muttered angrily about women's rights," (Friedan 20). Although women had the right to vote, they felt it was not sufficient in rectifying women's position in society. Ironically, the leading women of this wave of thought were predominantly college graduates, most having completed a master's degree; who were, nevertheless, recognized only for their roles as housewives.

In addition to the limited dialogue surrounding the potential problem of women's rights, another, more serious pattern began to take place among women. Friedan shares her own experience growing up in the decades before feminism came to the forefront of the public mind. "When we were growing up, many of us could not see ourselves beyond the age of twenty-one. We had no image of our own future, of ourselves as women," (Friedan 55). She attributes this to the fact that no one told them of any other destiny for women than the great American dream of "all women."

Friedan shares the experience of a mother navigating the late 1950s. "The tragedy was, nobody ever looked us in the eye and said you have to decide what you want to do with your life, besides being your husband's wife and children's mother. I never thought it through until I was thirty-six," (Friedan 56). The women that were raised before and during this period of unrest

were deprived of the knowledge of their own power and control over their lives. They knew so little about the opportunities available outside of expected domestic bliss, few realized the fight required to participate in said opportunities.

Self-determination was being taught to women through the public image, making it unthinkably powerful. "American women are so unsure of who they should be that they look to this glossy public image to decide every detail of their lives…They were afraid to grow up. They had to copy in identical detail the composite image of the popular girl - denying what was best in themselves out of fear of femininity as they saw it in their mothers," (Friedan 58). Some began to realize the emptiness, lack of purpose, and overall death of self in their mothers but unintentionally assigned it as a result of not following social image. When in fact, the adherence to social dictation and the role of women was the very thing draining women of individuality, personality, and life itself. "Whatever they told us, we…knew that their lives were somehow empty. We did not want to be like them, and yet what other model did we have?" (Friedan 60). Autonomy began to be swallowed and dictated by the social image.

In an effort to fight this, girls originally sought to better align themselves with the public image. Friedan saw this in case study after case study as girls would describe "rounding themselves out" to match an image so that they would have a place to belong, only to find themselves hollow and void of purpose and passion. "Public images…defy reason and have very little to do with women themselves have had the power to shape too much of their lives," (Friedan 60). This truth seems to hold true even today, as the public image of women continues to focus on objectification above autonomy.

Friedan was well-known for her writings during this time which sought to counteract the fear and confusion of young women wanting more than what their mothers had, yet unable to

define what the original cause and the ongoing problem even were. "What if the terror a girl faces at twenty-one is the terror of freedom to decide her own life, with no one to order which path she will take, the freedom and the necessity to take paths women before were not able to take?" (Friedan 61). Friedan closes her renowned book with the following challenge:

> Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves? Who knows what women's intelligence will contribute when it can be nourished without denying love? Who knows of the possibilities of love when men and women share not only children, home, and garden, not only the fulfillment of their biological roles but the responsibilities and passions of the work that creates the human future and the full human knowledge of who they are? It has barely begun, the search for women for themselves. But the time is at hand when the voices of the feminine mystique can no longer drown out the inner voice that is driving women on to become complete, (Friedan 313).

Although progressive and effective in unearthing the lack of equality found in women's rights, second-wave feminism was only as successful as the first. Women were granted back some opportunities and rights, yet in some ways, it failed much like the first wave. By firmly establishing the "women problem" as the systematic oppression of women by men, the public image, the capitalist model, and even other women continued to degrade and belittle feminist thought to that of inferior of worth and acknowledgment. Much like others, feminism fought to regain self-determination and autonomy lost to systematic exclusion and sexism.

Among the revolutions of the "swingin 60's" was the invention of the mini skirt (see Fig. 21). Arguably one of the most enduring artifacts, the mini-skirt emerged out of the rebellious youth culture of the 60s. Building on the momentum established by teenage icons in the 50s, the youth

of the 60s became more than rebels without a cause. Instead, youth culture was fueled by rebellious attitudes recognizable today as Counterculture. Although disputed, Mary Quant is credited with its invention and introduction to London fashion in 1964. Highly influential in the late 60s, London-based fashion began to appear on the streets of America during the "British invasion of fashion," (Hills). Naming the skirt after her favorite car, the mini cooper (BBC.org), Quant's design symbolized the beginning of the sex revolution of the 70s, and the radical development of available contraception during the 50s. "The mini car went exactly with the miniskirt; it did everything one wanted, it looked great, it was optimistic, exuberant, young, flirty, it was exactly right," (Quant). Putting to shame the "progressive" hemlines of the 50s, the mini skirt went far above the knee, some only extending 8-10 inches in length.

Calling to styles worn by flappers in the 20s, the skirt weaponized objectification by using it as a symbol of sexual autonomy and independence (see Fig. 22). Developing throughout the 20th century, the miniskirt continues to be a symbol of youth, teenage rebellion, and, in some ways, freedom itself.

Conformity is often a sure sign of insecurity or trouble, from personal choices to societal changes, fear and war are sure to create a reversion to the gender politics, fashions, and focuses of the past. Conformity is also employed in efforts to reenter normality, directly following periods of stress. Fashion is therefore also employed as a tool of conformity, a tool with which most conform visually to societal expectations (Barr 1934). Even so, there are always cultural tensions surrounding periods of change that usually have multiplicities of influences, impacts, and origins.

Echoing plots of wartime films of escapism, *Charade* and *How to Steal a Million* capture the historical mirroring of movies made during unrest. Although differing from classical

Hollywood in some regards, both films seemed to return to Hollywood's primary objective: entertainment. In this case, this included heavily comedic plots, traditional gender politics, and flashy fashion to create a true sense of otherworldliness in their films.

Following widow Regina Lampert, played by Audrey Hepburn, in uncovering the mysterious nature of her husband's death, *Charade* offers audiences mystery, comedy, and romance. Playing opposite Cary Grant, *Charade* is thoroughly coated in stardust and Hollywood majesty through fantastic costumes, a star-studded cast, and foreign intrigue (see Fig. 23).

Likewise, *How to Steal a Million* is comparable to the "Telefoni Bianchi" a genre of Italian film modeled after the "white telephone" American romance: boy meets girl. Although closely conforming to gender roles between Nicole Bonnet, played by Audrey Hepburn, and Simon Dermott, played by Peter O'Toole, the film seems to hint at changing public opinion about women and the surrounding fashion. Indeed, the relationship between Nicole and her Father is reversed, in the sense that Nicole often compensates for her Father's clumsiness with her intelligence. That said, Nicole is also very maternal in her care towards her Father, therefore fulfilling old and new generational expectations of Nicole within the film. This demonstration of female intelligence is present throughout the film, as Nicole's interactions with nearly every character are either delightfully witty or satirically traditional, hinting towards the absurdity of some traditional views of women.

Also strongly demonstrating the global influence on fashion, Hepburn is dressed in the height of 60's fashion, which in itself displayed French and British styles. For nearly the entire film, Hepburn is shown in a knee-length British Shift Dress, a fashion that moved "across the pond" in the early 60s after being incredibly successful in British fashion (see Fig. 24). Typically worn with a matching blazer, jacket, and/or patterned tights, the British Shift Dress captured the

geometric modernity of evolving contemporary fashion. Beyond the clothes themselves, we also see a radical shift in how women's hair and makeup are fashioned, shifting from the curled secretarial look of the late50ss to the beehive of straight hair. Paired with heavy eyeliner, bright eyeshadows, and dark mascara, Hepburn's fashion in both *Charade* and *How to Steal a Million* capture the evolving fashions and perspectives of feminine autonomy. "Hence, clothes not only serve individual, social-psychological, and physical needs but also are cultural representations and art forms," (Kaiser, 22).

With the late 60s focusing on themes of autonomy, the development of fashion, and a hyper fashion of international politics, this brief shift in American history seems to call back to the Enlightenment in more ways than one. In understanding the coming historical changes and the soon-to-blossom age of counterculture, this comparison deepens into a historical parallel.

In his last, and arguably most radical address, "Where Do We Go from Here?" He explains: There is nothing wrong with power if power is used correctly. You see, what happened is that some of our philosophers got off base. And one of the great problems of history is that the concepts of love and power have usually been contrasted as opposites – polar opposites – so that love is identified with a resignation of power, and power with a denial of love…Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love, (247). Part of what made his speech so radical was the designations he makes about power itself. It is not enough, he argued "to advocate for Negroes the same destructive and conscienceless power that they have justly abhorred in whites… [it] is precisely this collision of immoral power with powerless morality which constitutes the major crisis of our times," (247). This distinction sets him apart from historical revolutionaries, as he was seeking

power different than that of the system he was trying to change. In this quote, he single-handedly acknowledges the dysfunction of power, and advocates for a new approach, while still fighting for equal access to power itself. This powerful combination was a successful application of moral law. It creates space for justice to be served while fighting against hundreds of years of tyranny and oppression of all the oppressed.

In addition to the speech that lead to his Nobel Prize laureate book, Martin Luther King was not alone in his position as a public figure and influence. By this time, we see a clear slippage between genuine radicalization, and the radicalization of cultural style. The discourse of political and racial equality and freedom became embodied in clothing, in a way the moves beyond demands for equality into consumer based appropriation.

Taking the American public by storm, Sonny and Cher released their first song, beginning their career as fashion icons and symbols of social change (see Fig. 25). Beyond their spot in the public eye, this couple represented far more in the world of morality and fashion. Sporting long hair, low-rise bell-bottom jeans, turtlenecks, afro and oriental patterned textiles, and Nehru vests within both men's and women's fashion, Sonny and Cher became fashion icons of the face of the counterculture movement in America. A fashion often employed by counterculture, "the Afro look was a liberatory style that blended local textiles and beading and threading techniques with popular western silhouettes. Yet it also liked these garments with a hip, jet-setter lifestyle that appealed to urban [people] with middle-class aspirations," (Ford 161). With their position within the public eye fashion and political icons, Sonny and Cher influenced far more than music. That said, fashion, to some extent allows for the participation in fantasies of resistance and radicalism without challenging the underlying structures of inequality and discrimination. An example of these tensions seen in Hollywood is Stanley Kramer's *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner.* Tapping

directly into the tensions of radical experience and its anodyne appropriation by popular culture, the movie seems to point to the surrounding historical context without compromising conservative approach.

Paired with both political and popular superstars in history, Hollywood's release of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* displayed more than dramatic fashion. From the radical display of biracial romance and marriage to the liberal perspectives of women and men in the home, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* seems to take on the politics of fashion, gender, and race in a single storyline.

Following the introduction of Joey Drayton's (played by Katharine Houghton) finance, John Prentice (played by Sidney Poitier), to Joey's parents (played by Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn), the film takes on the complicated social environment of biracial relationships and post-civil right mentalities all while being dressed to the height of counterculture fashion.

Dealing directly with the politics of a couple coming from different backgrounds, the film seems to acknowledge the complicated and unexplored nature of a changing world. With layered gender politics between the approval and disapproval of the marriage, women are shown to be far more understanding and open-minded regarding the couple's marriage than men.

On the other side, the film depicts the somewhat gendered politics of the black man and woman's experience. Contrasting the highly educated and open-minded Dr. John Prentice with the Drayton's black maid Tillie (played by Isabel Sanford) who openly disagrees with the marriage as a betrayal of black identity, the film displays a seemingly divided understanding of black autonomy within the black community (see Fig. 26).

In addition to the radical plot focuses, the film displays fashion that would have been openly rejected the decade before. With Houghton wearing pants in formal settings, to her shockingly bright pantsuits, Houghton's character seems to capture "the rising generation" in mentality and fashion (see Fig. 27). Although far from politically accurate and historically poignant, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* is crucial in understanding the curated nature of popular media and its societal implications on issues such as politics. An example of this blend is seen as other characters of Hollywood are seen wearing the pants, even when the period of the movie does not demand it.

Capturing all of the charms of a Western while disregarding common elements in the name of postmodernism (a movement seen in visual art and film, one with focused on the creative reuse or repurposing of known images and symbols), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* is an icon for its adherence to the requirements of a box office hit and for its cultural articulation of a specific movement. Although postmodernism itself was not politically weighted, it was a symptom of cultural change, a visual disruption of the accepted and orthodox. Differing from counterculture in the way postmodernism was not a way of life, postmodernism did carry similar themes of symptomatic circumstance.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid captures the essence of postmodern thought and practice. Although Butch and Sundance (played by Paul Newman and Robert Redford respectively) are much like any other criminals, there seems to be a level of innocence and purity ingrained into their characters. Even though Butch and Sundance are no saints, audiences leave feeling that they are the best "bad guys" the western world has to offer. The movie instead comments on the corruptive nature of the system. In this case the banks, or government, or trains,

the heroes are the ones who work within it, or defy its demands. This shift from villains to systems is a self-conscious disruption of modernism.

Although Westerns were not entirely out of style by the time *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* was made in 1969, there are many times the film clearly reworks traditional elements of the Western. Although the film contains iconic and even stereotypical elements of the Western, there are many contemporary, or postmodern elements equally pronounced in the film.

Seen throughout the film as maternally caring for Butch and Sundance, Etta (played by Katherine Ross) fulfills typical female archetypes in westerns as either the mother or lover. However, this is once again contrasted with Etta's taste for unlawfulness herself, her indulgence with Butch and Sundance's recently acquired earnings, and even her love for both men. Seemingly aware of the immorality of their actions, Etta stands as an interesting character within the film. Classically beautiful and often objectified in the film, Etta seems to be everything a cowboy could want. And yet, her quick temper and high intelligence are often pointed to in the film. Additionally, in the depiction of her as the "Bonnie to their Clyde," Etta is shown not only condoning lawlessness but participating in it. This duality of character is part of what makes Etta a postmodern and rather liberal element of the film. Indeed, Etta is a significant character within the film, while being untethered to the plot. Given enough space to develop independently from her relationships with Butch and Sundance, Etta's fate is not determined by the men in her life. An incredibly liberating notion for society, and a critical element of the film itself (see Fig. 28).

The fashion in the film contributes an additional pastiche, postmodern element to the film. Although parallel in cut and color to late 19th-century clothing, the fabric, and accessories are often displayed outside of historical expectations. Most clearly distinguished in the styling of

Etta's hairstyle and makeup, the heavy mascara and straight long hair of the late 60s are evident throughout the film (see Fig. 29).

Interestingly, the film captures many of the postmodern fashion trends of the late 60s themselves. Gunne Sax, an influential and fashionable design brand, notably brought back elements of 18th and 19th-century women's fashion with high collars and lace accents (see Fig. 30). So even in its correctness in depicting period-based fashion, the clothing equally captured contemporary fashion trends of the time (compare Fig. 29 with Fig. 30). These fashion trends are further depicted in the fabric of both Butch and Sundance's costumes. As Sundance is famously depicted in a corduroy suit jacket, the deviance from traditional western is evident, yet tastefully disguised in the period-appropriate cut, length, and color of the fabric (see Fig. 31).

With stars filling the main roles of Butch, Sundance, and Etta, the film seems to follow the aesthetic demands of traditional filmmaking in many ways. That said, its camp use of parody and humor to illustrate a micronarrative of the American West that deems it as a film heavily influenced by postmodernism. From straight hair to corduroy, the film tastefully deviates from expectations of a Western genre film, while bringing one more cherished story of bank robbers and cowboys to American audiences. This dynamic tale seems to capture the possibilities of postmodernism, parody, and pastiche in a single film. This film was equally impactful for it's ability to exist within the mainstream while having elements of counterculture or resistance to the norms of Hollywood cinema.

In contrast to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*'s call back to a dying genre, the release of *Cactus Flower* seems to illustrate the birth of a new one. A classic romance soaked in radical fashion, counterculture, and liberal understandings of sex and romance, *Cactus Flower* stands as a true artifact of an evolved Hollywood.

Playfully contrasting old and new Hollywood with debut actors and old-timer Hollywood stars, the film seems to openly comment on the changing nature of Hollywood. Actors such as Walter Matthau and Ingrid Bergman playing opposite Goldie Hawn and Rick Lenz creates a feeling of change and juxtaposition within the film.

With the main character Toni Simmons (played by Goldie Hawn) the epitome of a 1969 woman, Hawn sports the radical fashion of society up to its neck in counterculture. Described by fashion historians as a turning point, "by 1969 the [counterculture and bohemian] movements had risen to their peak, with massive numbers of people throughout the world finally waking up to its passive power," (Burton 244). This is seen in Hawn's costumes of fabrics such as velvet, suede, wide-wheeled corduroy, and black leather, Toni Simmons' character captures the modern styles of low-rise jeans, turtlenecks, mini skits, platforms, and afro prints (see Fig. 32).

This radical shift in fashion captures in equal parts the changing environments of politics, globalization, gender norms, equality, representation, and even autonomy as the ideology of American Hollywood arrived at a state of change. Unrecognizable when compared to the fashion of the 1950s, media and television inadvertently captured the changing of a nation in fashion frills and fads. However insignificant platform pumps and high-collar shirts are individually, when weaponized as tools of change, fashion becomes a means by which we communicate to the past, present, and future.

Liberty and Black Feminism

Consciously absent from this fashionable understanding of the period is the black woman. The struggle for black feminism began to emerge in the mid-1960s and was a direct

result of insufficient representation by both Civil Rights and women's liberation movements of the period.

Part of what made black feminism unique is what is described by many scholars as Triple Jeopardy: "Black women experience a special kind of oppression and suffering in this country which is racist, sexist, and classist because of their dual racial and gender identity and their limited access to economic resources," (Guy-Sheftall, 2). Because of this unique layering, the black women of history found themselves making and creating their own intellectual agendas, as they were not entirely welcomed in other's reform organizations (see Fig. 33).

It is believed that black feminism emerged when it did due to the failure of both the Civil Rights and women's liberation movements to address the needs and rights of black women. Many were at the forefront of this discussion, including Francis Beale, Mary Ann Weathers, and Linda La Rue.

Francis Beale was a journalist and civil right activist who openly dealt with problems regarding the double burden of race and gender that black women confronted. Disappointed by the lack of inclusion of women in the civil rights pursuit of "brotherhood," Beale wrote that "black women in America can justly be described as a 'slave of a slave.' By reducing the black man… the black woman are used as the scapegoat for the evils that this horrendous system has perpetrated on black men," (Beale). She goes on to describe how black men, in pursuit of their place in society, inadvertently told black women to step back into a domestic space. Beale found this ideology counterrevolutionary. "If we are talking about building a strong nation, capable of throwing off the yoke of capitalist oppression, then we are talking about the total involvement of every man, woman, and child, each with highly developed political consciousness," (Beale). She believed that although domestic pursuits were important, in order to wage a revolution, educated,

powerful, and professional black women were needed to lead the cause. Beale believed simply being at home was not enough.

In her writings, Beale acknowledges the need for women's liberation. "The economic system of capitalism finds it expedient to reduce women to a state of enslavement. They oftentimes serve as a scapegoat for the evils of this system…Women are systematically exploited," (Beale). She emphasized that it is crucial to understand that the exploitation of women and black people is a disadvantage to all. Beale believed that the liberation of those two groups of people would be an unstoppable catalyst for the liberation of all oppressed people, everywhere.

In addition to acknowledging the grounds on which women's liberation was fought, she is undeniably clear as to who the enemy is. "If the white groups do not realize that they are in fact fighting capitalism and racism, we do not have common bonds… If they do not realize that the reasons for their condition lie in the system and not simply that men get vicarious pleasure out of 'consuming their bodies for exploitative reasons,' then we cannot unite with them around common grievances or even discuss these groups in a serious manner because they're completely irrelevant to the black struggle," (Beale). This was a common opinion among black feminists, as they acknowledged the possibility of a shared revolution. However, the specific rights of black women were not to be overshadowed by any cause not dedicated to their liberty.

Beale is also responsible for the powerful ideology associated with "living for a revolution." She explains, "To die for the revolution is a one-shot deal; to live for the revolution means taking on the more difficult commitment of changing our day-to-day patterns," (Beale). She was an invaluable leader of the black feminist movement and greatly contributed to human rights discourse in relation to the liberation of all oppressed people, not just those found within

her experience as a black woman in the 1960s. Beale speaks to the difficulty of living through change, as opposed to dying for it.

Similar to Francis Beale is the work of Mary Ann Weathers. She is uniquely known for her challenge to black liberation movements to embrace women's liberation. She believed this to be the only way to respond to the violated human rights of oppressed people. Although supportive of the civil rights movement, Weathers warned of ideology based on liberating the black man first. She believed it was not only unreasonable but impossible for black women to liberate black men when they themselves are not free. Weathers believed it would take all liberation movements, regardless of previous success, to truly free the oppressed.

In addition to being clear on her stance on civil rights, Weathers was careful to distinguish the true essence of black women's liberation. "Let it be clearly understood that the black women's liberation is not antimale; any such sentiment or interpretation as such cannot be tolerated. It must be taken clearly for what it is – pro-human for all peoples," (Weathers). This view was unique, as some felt it was necessary to itemize human rights in the order in which they were to be fought. Weathers echoes Beale in the way that they both clearly state, fighting for the oppressed is a victory for all oppressed, regardless of alignment. "If we are going to bring about a better world, where best to being than with ourselves?" (Weathers). Pointing back to King's methods of self-purification, Weathers believed it would take liberated souls to free those in need.

Similar to the writings of Martin Luther King Jr., Weathers believed the key to success was with the familiarization of love. "We women must begin to unabashedly learn to use the word 'love' for one another. We must stop the petty jealousies, the violence, that we black women have for so long perpetrated on one another…we must turn to ourselves and one another

for strength and solace," (Weathers). She believed it was only through a sense of sisterhood that women's liberation, black or white, would be possible. "This means that we can begin to talk to other women with this common factor and start building links with them and thereby build and transform the revolutionary force we are now beginning to amass… We, women, must start this thing rolling," (Weathers). Weathers believed unification in love would be the most powerful tool against racism, sexism, and classism.

Linda La Rue did not share those beliefs. La Rue represents a belief among black women that the women's liberation movement had eclipsed the black movement. "The surge of 'common oppression' rhetoric and propaganda may lure the unsuspecting into an intellectual alliance with the goals of women's liberation, but it is not a wise alliance. It is not that women ought not to be liberated from the shackles of their present unfulfillment, but the depth, the extent, the intensity, the importance – indeed the suffering and depravity of the *real* oppression blacks have experienced – can only be minimized in an alliance with women who heretofore have suffered little more than boredom, genteel repression, and dishpan hands," (La Rue). La Rue directly attacked arguments for white women's liberation by calling for an unfair comparison between the rights of white women and the rights of black women. She believed that the women's liberation movement only attached itself to black feminism to gain shared momentum, with little consideration for its cause.

She clarifies by distinguishing between the white and black experiences. "Blacks are *oppressed* and that means unreasonably burdened, unjustly, severely, rigorously, cruelly, and harshly fettered by white authority. White women, on the other hand, are only *suppressed,* and that means checked, restrained, and excluded from conscious and overt activity. There is a

difference," (La Rue). La Rue felt this difference made women's liberation and black liberation unrelated – a departure from the unified beliefs of Beale and Weathers.

La Rue believed that the only thing women's liberation had rightly defined as the nature of femininity in the social sphere. She agreed that roles are not inherent but rather adopted and changeable. She felt that acknowledging the social construction of female inferiority and male superiority was key to breaking down social oppression against women. "Unless we realize how thoroughly the American value of male superiority and female inferiority has permeated our relationships with one another, we can never appreciate the role it plays in perpetuating racism and keeping black people divided," (La Rue). White or black femininity became toxic as it was defined by the social environment.

Despite her protests that women's liberation was fighting against the wrong enemy, La Rue extended her call to arms to all. "I maintain that the true liberation of black people depends on their rejection of the inferiority of women, the rejection of competition as the only viable relationship between men, and their reaffirmation of respect for general human potential in whatever form – man, child, or woman – it is conceived," (La Rue). True liberation requires all to work to free the oppressed. This is, in its purest form, honoring the promises of self-determination and autonomy of the Enlightenment.

Additional black feminist voices are heard in the writings of Patricia Haden, Donna Middleton, and Patricia Robison. In their co-authored article, *A Historical and Critical Essay for Black Women,* Haden, Middleton, and Robison parallel themes put forth by Beale, Weathers, and La Rue. However, they seem to agree with Beale and Weathers in the justification of the women's liberation movement. That said, Haden, Middleton, and Robison do not deny the uniqueness of the black women's experience. "We are separated from black men in the same way

that white women have been separated from white men. But we are even less valued by white and black males because we are not white," (Haden et al.). They believed it was wrong to turn the frustrations of the civil rights movement into the women's liberation movement. They clarify with the following argument: "Oppression of unacceptable people…is also a constant struggle between those who oppress and those who are oppressed. The oppressed, like oppressed feelings, rise into the open and freedom. This is an example of the movement of opposites and contradiction," (Haden et al.). They believed that although the black woman's experience is unique, disregarding women's liberation was not a productive solution.

Haden, Middleton, and Robison parallel the words of Friedan with their belief that it would take women thinking and working together to re-establish the right of women to decide for themselves. Similarly, they echo the words of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mary Ann Weathers seemingly uniting the causes of civil rights, women's liberation, and black feminism. "We are going to have to put ourselves back to school, do our own research and analysis. We are going to have to argue with and teach one another, grow to respect, and love one another," (Haden et al.). All people must work together to regain self-determination and autonomy.

Haden, Middleton, and Robison were some of the only black members of the women's liberation movement as well as being some of the only women in the civil rights movement. Because of their involvement with all three groups, they seemingly represent and capture the purpose, the call to action, and the fight for human rights. They close their resounding article with an argument that seems to surpass movement designation and even time, as they connect with a chorus of human rights activists, speaking the words of history: "All revolutionaries, regardless of sex, are the smashers of myths and the destroyers of illusion. They always died and lived again to build new myths. They dare to dream of a utopia, a new kind of synthesis and

equilibrium," (Haden et al.). This call to action requires all of us to face systematic oppression, fighting to regain the rights of life, liberty, and self-determination.

Although sometimes at odds with the public spotlight, each social group fought for the right to self-determination and autonomy. This fundamental human right that allows people to act freely, in accordance with universal moral law. Just as Kant believed morality to be universal and equally applied to all rational agents, self-determination should be a right adequately granted to the individual. These powerful voices of history speak of autonomy as an impossible dream, a subjective opinion, and even a utopia. And yet all agree that autonomy demands that each of us fight for a better, more hopeful future for the oppressed, the disregarded, and the ignored. Fashion and film are both critical languages of expression at a personal and societal level. By seeing fashion as an outward expression of identity and film as representative of society as a whole, one can generate meaning and understanding about the nature change throughout history. By understanding the economic effects of capitalism and consumerism, the societal effects of autonomy and gender, and the cultural effects of adornment and dress, one can see how clothing becomes a language of expression, access, conformity, and counterculture during this time period. And although sometimes at odds with the public spotlight, through diamonds, ruffles, and stardust, clothing is a means by which one can declare identity and even fight for individual autonomy.

Word Count: 15,706

Fig. 1. Eisenhower's D-Day Speech, 1944, BBC.org

Fig. 2. Stephens. *Mamie Geneva Doud Eisenhower.* 1950.

Fig. 3. Monroe in *Gentleman Prefer Blondes,* 1953.

Fig. 4. Silver Screen Collection. *Grace Kelly,* 1955.

Fig. 5. Sunset Boulevard. *Grace Kelly on the set of* Rear Window, 1954.

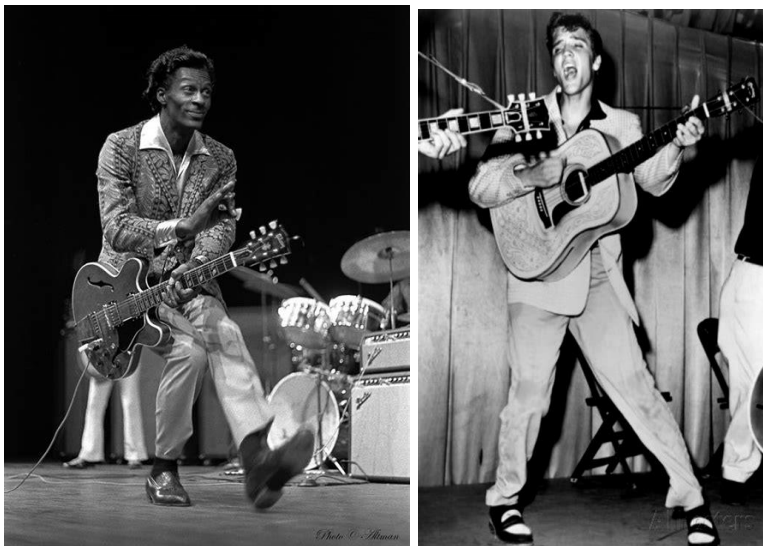Fig. 6. Seattle Times. *Martin Luther King Jr.,* 1956

Fig. 7. (left) Robert Altman. *Chuck Berry,* 2005. (right) Micheal Ochs. *Elvis Presley,* 1956. Memphis, Tennessee.

Fig. 8. James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause,* 1955.

Fig. 9. Scene from *Rebel Without a Cause,* 1955

Fig. 10. Scene from *Gidget,* 1959.

Fig. 11. James Darren and Sandra Dee in *Gidget,* 1959.

Fig. 12. Nixon vs. Kennedy Presidential Debate on Television, 1960.

Fig. 13 Marcello Mastroianni in *La Dolce Vita,* 1961.

Fig. 14 Marcello Mastroianni in *La Dolce Vita,* 1961

Fig. 15 Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita,* 1961.

Fig. 16. Alain Cuny and Marcello Mastroianni in *La Dolce Vita,* 1961.

Fig. 17. Grable, Bacall, and Monroe in *How to Marry a Millionaire,* 1953.

Fig. 18. State Journal-Register. *A portrait of activist Betty Friedan,* 1974.

Fig. 19 Warren K. Leffler. *March On Washington*, 1963.

Fig. 20 Ivan Massar. *Joyce Ladner at the March on Washington*, 1963.

Fig. 21 Shutterstock. *60's Mini Skirts,* 1965.

Fig. 22 Tribupedia. *Flappers Dancing the Charleston,* circa 1920.

Fig. 23 Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn in *Charade,* 1963.

Fig. 24 Audrey Hepburn in *How to Steal a Million,* 1966.

Fig. 25 Photoshot. *Sonny and Cher in London,* 1965.

Fig. 26 Isabel Sanford and Sydney Poitier in *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner,* 1967.

Fig. 27 Movie Poster for *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner,* 1969.

Fig. 28 Katharine Ross in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,* 1967.

Fig. 29 Paul Newman and Katharine Ross in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,* 1969.

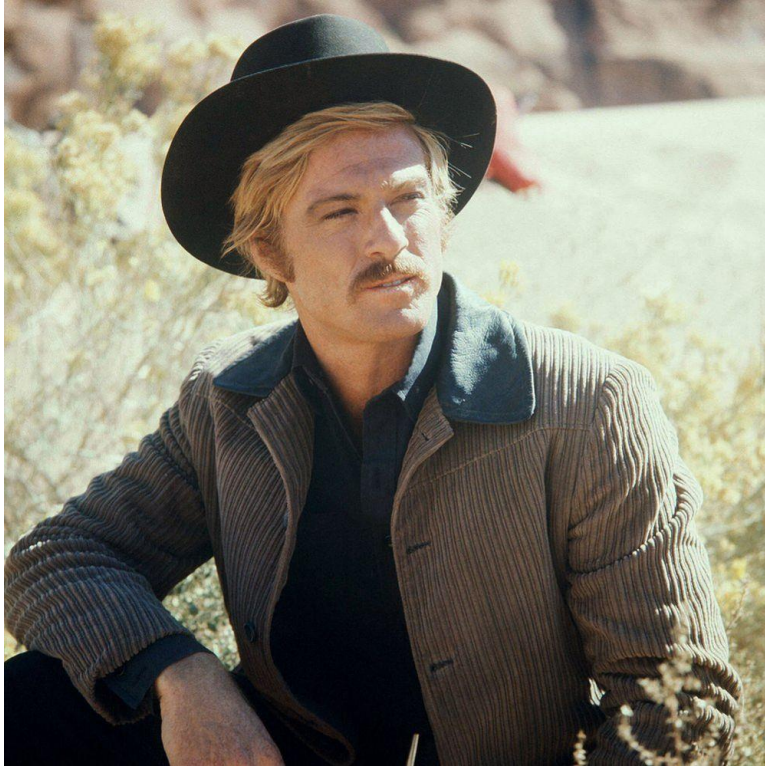Fig. 30 Gunne Sax Fashion Dress from 1969 Catalog.

Fig. 31 Robert Redford in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,* 1967

Fig. 32 Rick Lenz and Goldie Hawn in *Cactus Flower,* 1969.

Fig. 33 Bettman Archive. *Angela Davis addressing a rally in US,* 1974.

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Project Reflection

Not only did my capstone celebrate the interdisciplinary nature of my degree, but it allowed me to explore interdisciplinary research in an unprecedented way. Through deep diving into the nature of morality and understanding the philosophical arguments for autonomy and self-determination, I found my understanding of philosophy to have immensely grown, specifically in regard to its historical and relevant application. This research was then contextualized with understanding material culture and the cultural manifestations of changing periods in history, including the unconscious artifacts left behind by popular trends and fashions. Overlaying an understanding of film as a vehicle for fashion and an indicator of entertainment trends, my final capstone project became an interwoven approach to understanding a period of history. Perhaps the most surprising thing I discovered was the cyclical nature of the development of popular culture. Although trends change as a result of societal evolution, popular trends are equally influential in changing the views of society. I chose the 1950s and 60s in part because of its unprecedented amount of change and social movement. Additionally, I felt that the issues addressed socially and politically during the 1950s and 60s are incredibly relevant to our current socio-political environment, while having multiple resources on historical significance.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of my capstone, I felt the best approach would be achievable through multiple mentors on my committee, each specializing in one area of study. For me, this meant a mentor specializing in Philosophy, one in Film, and an increased awareness of other experts outside of my college and department that would have experience researching or practicing any of the disciplines. With my key mentors coming from the Art and Design and Communications and Philosophy departments, I asked for additional mentorship from the theater

department, specifically seeking professors with experience in fashion, costume design, and historical fashion development.

In addition to my passion for each of the disciplines I incorporated, I tried to apply the concepts I was studying in a way that made my claims highly relevant, regardless of historical period. I did this by studying overall trends of human development, deducing the common themes found within fashion and film that continue to be true in society's development today. Furthermore, I chose case studies based on popular taste, resulting in claims regarding popularity and its effect on consumerism, accessibility, and the spread of information. This made my research incredibly period specific, while being applicable to any popular trend in material culture.

I took a chronological approach to my research methodology to understand trends and patterns across time, being able to attribute specific trends to previously discussed historical events. Choosing ten films from the top box office hits between 1953-1969, I then contextualized the films within the social and political happenings of the time. All the while, following trends of autonomy and self-determination as defined by Enlightenment philosophers. This included analyzing the origins and evolution of social movements including Civil Rights, women liberation, and counterculture, gaining a greater understanding of their positioning when compared to popular cultural trends. Going so far as to create parallels between the Enlightenment as a social period and the social changes in the 1950s and 60s, I found there were many similarities in social understandings of morality and the worth of the individual. Additionally, I strengthened my research with studies completed within cultural studies speaking to the power of fashion trends to capture and immortalize the socio-political trends of a period.

Furthermore, by analyzing a post-war American economy, one can deduce changes that came about as a direct result of the changing economic condition of the United States directly following the Second World War. Increased trends towards consumerism and capitalism, paired with increased notions of individualism and divine right, I was able to create a well-rounded understanding of the social understanding of the human condition within the time period. Additionally, because of the vast increase in globalization of culture and influence after the war, my claims surrounding American ideologies and identity were equally applicable to a global audience during a period of such global interdependence within popular thought.

In addition to gaining a greater understanding of the different academic disciplines I researched, I gained a greater understanding and appreciation of humanity; of the strong and courageous people who went before us, carving their own path and making way for a better future. Although I acknowledge the limited application of my specific claims, I want to credit the incredible applications of the greater trends of my research. The power of humanity to change for the better, to fight for individual rights at a community level, and to face the future with a certainty of flourishing, despite countless unknowns. I am proud to echo the voices of incredibly strong women and men, all revolutionaries, who looked at the world before them and fought for a better one.

Most of all, in addition to giving me valuable research skills and a broadened scope of the subject, my capstone led me to fall in love with my discipline all over again. I have always known I would study the humanities, but the capstone was a personal opportunity to explore niche subjects. Choosing some of my favorite subjects, I spent my capstone learning more than I would have ever thought possible. Additionally, it gave me a greater appreciation for the process of in-depth research. I know I could not have completed my capstone nearly as well without the

generous support of my mentors, the creative spaces allowed by the Honors Department, and the standard of excellence set by the University for all of its students. It has been a privilege and an honor to complete a project I am so proud of.

If there was any advice I could give it would be to choose your topics well and your mentors deliberately. Most of all, chase whatever topics bring you joy. Valuable research always has valuable applications, regardless of where the road initially takes you. Find a topic you're crazy about, fight to finish, and represent your discipline well, even if its in different ways than you would expect.

Thank you.

Author Bio

Sara Miner completed a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts with a minor in Art History. Graduating

with Honors and Magna Cum Laude, Sara's undergraduate was defined by multiple club

leadership, study abroad, and interdisciplinary research experiences. After graduation, Sara is

planning on pursuing a Master of Arts in Historical and Sustainable Architecture at New York

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