This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights and duplication or sale of all or part is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for research, private study, criticism/review or educational purposes. Electronic or print copies are for your own personal, non-commercial use and shall not be passed to any other individual. No quotation may be published without proper acknowledgement. For any other use, or to quote extensively from the work, permission must be obtained from the copyright holder/s.

Politics *en Vogue*: an exploration of entanglements of US consumer capitalism, feminisms, and environmental concerns

Chloe Suzanne Dawson

A thesis submitted to Keele University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Sociology

This electronic version of the thesis has been edited solely to ensure compliance with copyright legislation and excluded material is referenced in the text. The full, final, examined and awarded version of the thesis is held by the University Library

June 2024

Keele University

Abstract

An entanglement, a lack of self-contained existence, between feminism and neoliberalism emerged in the 1990s in popular media and consumer culture. Since, feminist scholars have attempted to describe and explain postfeminism. Postfeminism emphasises women's empowerment rather than emancipation, and the ability to consume alongside pressures to have a disciplined, beautiful body. Critical appraisal of postfeminism has remained underexplored in two ways: 1) the history of the entanglement between feminism and neoliberalism and 2) how 'consumption as empowerment' can be threatened by environmental concerns and harm towards non-humans. Fashion magazines are a site of women's consumption based in pleasure and expression, the salience of the female body and sexuality, and against an ethics of care for non-humans. The thesis presents an analysis of US *Vogue* magazine from its inception (1893-2023), focusing on moments of tension within fashion. The tensions include: 1) the 'modern' corset, 2) the miniskirt, 3) questioning the fur coat, and 4) (un)sustainable fashion. The corset and miniskirt are situated in moments of change in women's social position, whereas the fur coat and sustainable fashion showcase moments where fashion is critiqued from environmental ethics. Using a visual discourse analysis of US *Vogue* magazine, and sociological theories of consumption, the research reveals how women's subjecthoods are constructed as free to consume and reveal the body. *Vogue* use environmental concerns as an opportunity for the cultural omnivore to discover exotic cultures that are more 'connected' to nature and new technological (human centred) solutions to fashion's unsustainability or non-human harm. The findings show that *Vogue* translates values of feminisms and environmentalisms into modern, stylish subjecthoods for women, but is also shaped *by* the tensions and entanglement with wider politics and consumer capitalist values. Overall, this contributes to research on the gendering of consumption through time and a deeper understanding of contemporary postfeminism.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT I

TABLE OF CONTENTS II

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES VI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS VII

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT 1

1.2 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS 8

1.3 OUTLINE 11

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 17

2.1 UNDERSTANDING POSTFEMINISM 18

2.1.1 Feminisms and Consumer Culture *24*

2.1.2 Neoliberalist Values *27*

2.2 UNDERSTANDING 'CONSUMER CULTURE' AND 'THE CONSUMER' 29

2.2.1 Consumption *30*

2.2.2 Consumer Culture and 20th Century Developments *31*

2.2.3 'The Consumer' *37*

2.2.4 Consumer Society and Consumer Capitalism *40*

2.2.5 The Sociology of Consumption and Cultural Studies *42*

2.3 LINKING FEMINIST AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS TO CONSTRUCTIONS OF WOMEN AND CONSUMER CULTURE 47

2.3.1 Considering the Environment and Ethical Consumption *49*

2.3.2 Ethics of Care *53*

2.3.3 Non-Human Theory *56*

2.4 RESOURCES FOR ANALYSIS 60

2.4.1 Ahistoricism and Generational Challenges *61*

2.4.2 Reconsidering Materiality *65*

2.4.3 Absenting Environmental Concerns *68*

2.4.4 The Non-Gendered Consumer *72*

2.4.5 Fashion and Women's Magazines *74*

2.4.6 Tools for Analysis *80*

2.5 CONCLUSION 81

3. METHODOLOGY 82

3.1 CULTURAL AND FEMINIST MEDIA STUDIES 84

3.1.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis *85*

3.1.2 Subject, Subjectivity and Construction *87*

3.1.3 Entanglement and Tension *93*

3.2 CASE STUDIES 97

3.2.1 US Vogue Magazine *99*

3.2.2 The History of US Vogue *102*

3.2.3 Vogue US Editors *104*

3.3 DATA COLLECTION 106

3.3.1 Key Word Searches and Quantitative Analysis *106*

3.3.2 Full Reads of Magazines *108*

3.3.3 Coding *109*

3.3.4 Sampling *109*

3.4 CONCLUSION 111

PART I 112

4. THE 'MODERN' CORSET 114

4.1 EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY CONTEXT 115

4.1.1 First 'Wave' Feminist Values *115*

4.1.2 The History of the Corset *117*

4.2 THE MODERN WOMAN AND THE RETURN OF THE CORSET 121

4.2.1 Movement, Modernity, and Youth *130*

4.2.2 A Modern Lifestyle *134*

4.3 A CORSET FOR EVERY BODY 138

4.3.1 Moulding the Body 142

4.4 A 'FEMINIST' SUBJECT..144

4.5 CONCLUSION..149

5. THE MINISKIRT 152

5.1 MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY CONTEXT..153

5.1.1 Second 'Wave' Feminism..*153*

5.1.2 Rising Hemlines and Youth Subcultures *155*

5.2 THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MINISKIRT..158

5.2.1 Age Anxious..*168*

5.3 FOCUSING ON THE BODY.. 171

5.3.1 The Nude Body..*174*

5.4 FEMINISM IN *VOGUE* 186

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS..193

PART II 196

6. QUESTIONING THE FUR COAT 197

6.1 RESCUING THE FUR COAT 200

6.1.1 Defending Bourgeois Subjecthoods..*200*

6.1.2 Animal Rights Activism..*206*

6.2 REBRANDING THE FUR COAT 210

6.2.1 Casual Fur.. *211*

6.2.2 Faux Fur *217*

6.3 THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE ANIMAL 219

6.4 THE RETURN OF REAL FUR.. 225

6.5 CONCLUSION 234

7. (UN)SUSTAINABLE FASHION 236

7.1 THE ECO-CHIC CELEBRITY..240

7.1.1 Gisele Bundchen *241*

7.1.2 Stella McCartney *246*

7.1.3 Livia Firth *248*

7.2 YOUTH AND CLIMATE ACTIVISM IN *VOGUE*..251

7.2.1 Indigenous Women Climate Activists ... *252*

7.2.2 Youthfulness, Femininity and Hope ... *262*

7.3 CAPITALISM CAN SAVE THE WEST! ... 266

7.3.1 Sustainable Production ... *266*

7.3.2 A Problem for the 'Other' ... *269*

7.3.3. Sustainable Travel ... *275*

7.4 FASHION AND POLITICS IN *VOGUE* ... 276

7.5 CONCLUSION ... 280

8. CONCLUSION ... 283

8.1 SUBJECTHOOD AND THE FASHIONABLE WOMAN IN US *VOGUE* ... 285

8.2 TENSIONS AND THE NORMS OF GENDERED CONSUMPTION ... 292

8.3 POSTFEMINISM, CONSUMER CULTURE, AND MORE-THAN-HUMAN ETHICS OF CARE ... 300

8.3.1 Ahistoricism ... *300*

8.3.2 More-than-human and Gendered Attentiveness ... *307*

8.4 MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS ... 311

BIBLIOGRAPHY ... 315

APPENDIX ... 335

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: 'Modern' and 'Choice' Key Word Search 107

Figure 2: 'Corset' Key Word Search 124

Figure 3: 'Brassiere' and 'Bra' Key Word Search 128

Figure 4: US *VOGUE*, The New Silhouettes Bring Back The Corset, OCT 1921 133

Figure 5: US *VOGUE*, MME FRÉNE Corset, MAY 1925 136

Figure 6: US *VOGUE*, Comfort Corset CO., MARCH 1926 141

Figure 7: Suffrage Terms Search 145

Figure 8: US *Vogue*, The New Romantics, Aug 1966 162

Figure 9: US *Vogue*, Max Factor, May 1965 166

Figure 10: US *Vogue*, Australian Surfing, May 1964 177

Figure 11: US *Vogue*, The Story of Ohhh, May 1975 184

Figure 12: Fur Coat and Faux Fur Key Word Search 200

Figure 13: US *Vogue*, Fast Track Furs, Sept 1985 203

Figure 14: US *VOGUE*, FASHION FURS: A NEW BEAT, AUG 1987 204

Figure 15: 'Fur Lined Coat' Key Word Search 213

Figure 16: US *VOGUE*, FAKING IT, SEP 1990 215

Figure 17: US *Vogue*, Gaining Ground, Oct 2021 233

FIGURE 18: 'SUSTAINABLE' KEY WORD SEARCH 238

FIGURE 19: *VOGUE* YOUTUBE THUMBNAIL, 'BILLIE EILISH AND 8 CLIMATE ACTIVISTS GET REAL ABOUT OUR CLIMATE', 4 JAN 2023 256

FIGURE 20: US *VOGUE*, WEAR DO WE GO FROM HERE?:ON THE UP, SEPT 2019 271

FIGURE 21: US *VOGUE*, CHANTECAILLE, JAN 2018 273

Table 1: SOLEY AND REID (1988) FINDINGS 179

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my thanks to all the people who have helped me create and develop this thesis. Most importantly, to my supervisor Prof. Lydia Martens for your tremendous support and knowledge, from start to finish. The thesis would not be what it is today without your insights and dedication. Thank you for your patience, unlimited wisdom, and guidance. To my co-supervisors, Prof. Mark Featherstone and Dr. Ben Anderson, your subject specific knowledge helped me build and construct this interdisciplinary thesis, your ideas inspired me throughout this journey. A special thanks to my annual review panel, Dr. Sam Weston, Dr. Siobhan Holohan, and Dr. Eva Giraud who steered the ideas into a manageable project and inspired the novel methods of analysis. A big thank you to everyone in the Sociology department at Keele for your advice and support over the years. Finally, to all my family, friends, and my partner who have kept me going, given me over a million pep talks and cups of tea. And a small thanks to my noise cancelling headphones that blocked out the sound of my chihuahua's snoring while I was writing. The thesis would not be what it is today without the wonderful people around me, and I can never thank you all enough.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Over the last decade, a type of feminism has entered mass media discourse with celebrities, social media, and consumer culture adopting a language of 'empowerment', 'choice', and promoting the freedom of women's sexual expression. Scholars termed this type of feminism 'postfeminism' as it was a movement that began during the 1990s, and at a time when feminism was deemed to be 'no longer needed' (Banet-Weiser, 2018, Rottenberg, 2014). Postfeminism represents an entanglement of feminist neoliberal values and an adoption of both feminist and anti-feminist themes (Gill, 2007, McRobbie, 2004). It can be considered a type of 'sensibility' that emphasises the centrality of the female body, a shift from the objectification of women to subjectification; a focus on individuality, choice, and empowerment; self-surveillance and discipline, a sexualisation of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism (Gill, 2007: 147). The rise of postfeminism is also due to a neoliberal rationality that has become increasingly hegemonic, making the ability to discuss feminist concerns such as equal rights, liberation, and social justice difficult. This is especially challenging due to the neoliberal shift from an emphasis on the 'management of the state' to the 'inner workings of the subject' (Rottenberg, 2014: 6). As a result of this shift, 'liberation' is replaced by narratives of individual 'empowerment' and 'choice', which focuses on self-esteem and entrepreneurialism, as the solution to sexism and misogyny. Feminist collective activity turns into self-care, a management of the self, and 'leaning in' at work to solve structural inequality. Postfeminism does not critique neoliberalism and, although it claims to include all women, refuses intersectionality and erases women of colour, working-class women, trans women, and non-heteronormative women (Banet-Weiser, 2018: 14). Neoliberal feminist values entered the language of contemporary marketing and appeared in both high-end and high-street fashions as popular slogans (Banet-Weiser, 2018). The adoption of this type of feminist language in consumer culture has been recognised as 'femvertising' or 'empowertising' (Zeisler, 2016). However, the inclusion of feminist values in consumer culture is not new or limited to the late 20th and 21st centuries. In fact, it has also been termed 'commodity feminism' (Goldman et al., 1991). Commodity feminism was an advertising strategy developed in the early 1980s to validate the image of the 'new woman' who was equal to men and reframed the male gaze into a self-sexualising powerful woman (ibid.: 334). The 'self-fetishizing female body' was increasingly understood as a form of 'empowerment'. Since the late 1970s, women's magazines have attempted to connect the meaning of women's emancipation to corporate products and therefore redefine feminism and depoliticise it (p.336). "Feminist *social* goals [become] individual *lifestyle*", Rapp (1988: 32) argues, and are framed by ideologies of individualism and free choice, whilst no longer critiquing unequal social, economic, and political relations (Goldman et al., 1991: 336). Scholars who critique contemporary postfeminism highlight that it is distinct from commodity feminism due to its entanglement with contemporary neoliberal values. It is this body of literature on postfeminism and commodity feminism where the motivation for this thesis originated.

Another inspiration for the thesis was the analysis of postfeminism as an entanglement. McRobbie's (2004) and Gill's (2007) work analyses the way postfeminism combines both feminist and antifeminist themes, it is not simply a backlash against second-wave feminism or a rigid epistemological perspective (in Giraud, 2019: 147). In McRobbie's (2004) analysis, postfeminism is a contemporary 'double entanglement' of neoliberal values in relation to gender, sexuality, and family life, and a feminism that is part of common sense yet also feared, hated, and fiercely repudiated" (in Gill, 2007: 161). Gill (2007) supports this idea, stating that postfeminism's entanglement distinguishes it from "pre-feminist or anti-feminist" media culture (ibid.). Liberal feminism is treated as common sense, but feminists are "constructed as harsh, punitive and inauthentic, not articulating women's true desires" (p.162). Feminism, in postfeminist discourse, is set up as a policeman that restricts women from the pleasure of traditional femininity (ibid.). Viewing postfeminism as an entanglement allows tensions to be drawn out and the complexities analysed. By doing so, it reveals the contradictions of an ideology that supports the 'empowerment' and 'choices' of all women, yet continues to push a certain, slim body type, a culture of plastic surgery, and sexual subjectification. It highlights how many postfeminist heroines use their 'empowerment' to make problematic choices, such as white weddings or giving up work, repackaging pre-feminist ideals as postfeminist freedoms (p.162).

In a Baradian sense, an entanglement is not a "straightforward tangling of – or messy relations between – competing tendencies (that could potentially be disentangled)" (ibid: 149). To be entangled is to lack a "self-contained existence [...] which is not to say that emergence happens once and for all, as an event or a process [...] but are interatively reconfigured through each intra-action" (Barad, 2007: ix). Ultimately, it is impossible to differentiate "in any absolute sense between "creation and renewal, beginning and returning, continuity and discontinuity, here and there, past and future" (ibid.). Using this definition, the entanglement of postfeminism can extend beyond its feminist and anti-feminist values and postfeminism can be considered as something that cannot be separated from neoliberal and consumer capitalist values. However, entanglement considers that this is an ongoing process that does not happen "once and for all". It raises questions about a long history of the entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist values that takes place in mass media discourse.

Historical research into women's history reveals that feminism as an ideology "developed out of the doctrines of individualism and individual rights, and cannot be understood apart from them" (Fox-Genovese, 1991; in Delhaye, 2006: 94). Kowaleski-Wallace (1997: 157) states that: "In the end there is no western understanding of femininity that is not already embedded in the discourses of consumerism". The relationship between women and consumerism is therefore contradictory, troubling, but ultimately unavoidable (Andres & Talbot, 2000: 1). By adopting a historical analysis, the entanglement of feminist/anti-feminist values and consumer capitalist values can be investigated over time, and aid the understanding of contemporary postfeminism. Viewing feminisms as complex and difficult to untangle from consumer capitalist values inspired an interest in the history and development of this entanglement. Due to the analyses from historians, the thesis investigates the history of this entangling with an emphasis on consumer capitalist values that may shape the entanglement, rather than an overemphasis on neoliberalism as the main set of values and projects that has entangled with feminist values.

As previous research on commodity feminism focused on 'second wave' feminist influences in the late 1970s and across the 1980s, I am interested in how other types of feminist politics may have been overlooked during periods that fall out of traditional feminist 'waves'. For this reason, the thesis investigates case studies in the early 20th century and across the mid to late 1960s and early 1970s. Inspired by previous research on commodity feminism that explored women's magazines, fashion is a useful site of study where the tensions between feminist politics and consumer culture come to construct women's subjecthoods and constructions of women's freedom, but also aspects of materiality and matter that are a part of consumer practices. Parkins (2008) draws upon Barad's theories of entanglement and agential realism to connect feminist theory and fashion studies. She argues that clothing and fashion are "simultaneously material and discursive phenomena that are relentlessly interpretive and that, precisely because of their intimacy, as 'objects', with human bodies, call into question dualism of subject and object" (p.502). She elaborates that fashion is a site of "intimate encounters between consuming subjects – ideologically associated with women – and material things: garments, fabrics, accessories" that attend to the small moments that constitute the consumption of fashion. Therefore, it is a site of study that brings together the interests of this thesis. It captures the analysis of the cultural constructions of women and notions of freedom that are impacted by wider feminist and environmental politics, but also a focus on consumption and consumer culture that involves materials and production. The materiality of fashion is an important aspect of the tensions between fashion and environmental politics that criticise the damage of producing and consuming fashion.

Fashion can give insight into different kinds of 'freedoms' and 'choices' for women in consumer culture shaping norms of women's sexuality and notions of what it means to be a 'modern' woman. These constructions are important in understanding how wider feminist and environmental politics can be reconfigured in consumer capitalism to emphasise individuality and empowerment through consumer capitalism. Analysing the history and contemporary articulation of these values of 'freedom' in women's consumer capitalism aids the understanding of postfeminist sensibilities. Modernity and freedom underpin values in Western fashion and consumer capitalism. The construction of 'the consumer' "has been related to the core modern values of reason, freedom, and social progess" (Slater, 1995: 5). However, the 'freedom of choice' that is offered to consumers represents a *freedom to* rather than a *freedom from*. The understanding of freedom in a consumer society is based on the freedom to choose objects rather than a freedom from oppressive structures or exploitation (Varman & Vikas, 2007: 121-3). Bauman also acknowledges that this 'freedom' is an elitist privilege (ibid.). He states that: "the consumer solution to the systemic problems of some societies is more than contingently linked to the milking of other societies' resources" ([1988] 1997: 94). This theoretical understanding of freedom under consumer capitalism informs the analysis of *Vogue*'s construction of women's freedom across the 20th and 21st centuries. It also informs how *Vogue* comes to entangle wider political values of feminisms and environmentalisms with the projects of consumer capitalism that translates a freedom *from* (the patriarchy, imperialism, or the destruction of the planet) into a freedom *to* consume as a modern, liberated woman or choose to consume 'ethical' or 'sustainable' products that can help the planet.

The thesis is a case study analysis, it includes four cases of fashion changes. I will begin by explaining the first two case studies that analyse two key changes in women's fashion, both of which capture constructed notions of freedom for women due to wider feminist politics or cultural changes. This includes a case study on the ‘modern’ corset in the early 20th century and a case study on the miniskirt styles introduced in the mid-1960s. Both changes in feminine fashions were constructed as a part of ‘modern’ subjecthoods for women and inspired by youth subcultures, such as the flapper and the mod. US *Vogue* magazine is the document selected for the investigation due to the focus on fashion, consumer culture, and a postfeminist sensibility that centres on white, middle-class women. The fashion magazine runs consistently through the periods of investigation and constructs itself as ‘modern’ and ‘at the forefront’ of fashion. The main aim of this historical investigation is to understand how *Vogue* engages with tensions from feminist politics and rewrites notions of women’s freedom to align with the projects of consumer capitalism. Over time, this entanglement creates a landscape for postfeminist ideas to develop before the dominance of neoliberalism.

The thesis does not only investigate historical feminist politics but also environmental politics. In addition to understanding how an entanglement between feminist politics and the projects of consumer capitalism develop constructions of women’s subjecthoods, I also explore how critiques of consumer capitalism from wider environmental politics can complicate postfeminist sensibilities. The next two case studies explore animal fur coats and the promotion of sustainable fashion. The case study on fur takes place in the 1980s and 1990s, at the height of animal-rights protests against the use of animal fur in fashion. The final case study explores (un)sustainable fashion and how eco-conscious clothing is navigated in *Vogue* in the contemporary, 21st century period. *Vogue* emphasises what it means to be a ‘modern’ woman as an aspect of Western freedom. Latour’s (1991) work on ‘what it means to be modern’ finds that central to these ideas, there is a split between nature and culture. More specifically, humans who consider themselves ‘modern’ also view themselves as separate from the natural world. From this thinking, I analyse how postfeminist discourses or sensibilities (that promote individualism, commodity consumption, and pleasure as 'empowerment') can continue to operate under threats of climate emergency, global warming, and environmental activism, all of which raise tensions for gendered consumption norms promulgated in the fashion industry. This industry has been critiqued for the amount of waste and planned obsolescence it creates. For instance, Shein, H&M, Zara, and Mango (EuroNews, 2023) are among the fast fashion brands targeted for their highly unsustainable production of cheap clothing with a short lifespan. Although recycling initiatives have been encouraged and clothing waste collection has increased from 2010 to 2021, the European Commission argued that less than a quarter of Europe's 5.2 million tonnes of clothing waste is recycled.

Fashion has also come under threat due to the harm it causes to some non-humans, specifically those used for their fur (e.g. Lynx 1984 anti-fur campaign, see V&A Museum, 2019). The twentieth century featured new laws protecting animals from hunting and protests against the use of fur on high fashion runways. The protests resulted in a decline in fur coat sales. Fashion house Calvin Klein banned fur in 1994 and between 2017 and 2019, , Gucci, Versace, Burberry, Chanel, and Prada banned fur. In 2023, the September fashion weeks were disrupted by PETA's new campaign against leather, including London, Paris, and New York shows, showing the ongoing tensions raised by animal rights groups (The Guardian, 2023). Extinction Rebellion staged a funeral at the 2019 London Fashion Week final as they called an end to the international fashion events altogether (ibid.). However, this tension between an ethics of care towards animals and the fashion industry is underexplored in academic research. For these reasons, the thesis investigates the controversial fur coat and new 'sustainable' fashion practices as a site of tensions for the fashion industry and US *Vogue* magazine which targets middle- and upper-class stylish women.

The body of postfeminist cultural critique provoked questions about a longer history of commodity feminism and the future of postfeminist discourses. From an interdisciplinary inspiration between history and sociology, understanding the deeper entanglement of feminist values in women's consumer capitalism created the foundation of the research. Hollows and Moseley (2006: 7) state that postfeminism is often discussed in cultural studies but rarely investigated in sociology. Due to this, postfeminism is more commonly associated with an exploration of media and consumer culture (Adriaens & Bauwel, 2011). However, within the sociology of consumption, sustainable or ethical consumption are key areas of research. The research from the sociology of consumption brings insights into the construction of citizen-consumers and the challenges an environmental emergency poses for consumption norms and values. From these dual interests, the thesis is structured in two parts to investigate the history of the entanglement in *Vogue* and how it operates under wider environmental politics in a contemporary climate and comes to create new tensions from the ways in which women's freedom is constructed and conceptualised within consumer capitalism. Part I explores periods prior to postfeminism and Part II explores those that come under postfeminism.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

This thesis aims to develop a historical investigation of the entanglement between feminist politics and the projects of consumer capitalism in the domain of American women's fashion and shed light on the contemporary tensions from the pressures of wider environmental and ethical concern towards non-humans. The entanglement between feminist, environmental politics, and consumer capitalism in *Vogue* constructs conceptualisations of Western, middle-class women's 'freedom' and how this creates new tensions for wider politics. The thesis utilises a visual discourse analysis of US *Vogue* magazine to explore the entangling of politics and constructions of women as consumer subjects and projects of consumer capitalism. Due to the focus on commodities and a language of empowerment in women's consumption, fashion is a sphere of gendered consumer capitalism that features freedom through consumption, the female body, sexualisation, and pleasure. US *Vogue* is, therefore, a useful document for exploring values of postfeminist sensibilities including sexualisation, the female body, choice, individualism, and consumer culture. Also, *Vogue* has been attacked for a pro-fur stance and is under pressure to represent the fashion industry to keep up with environmental concerns. The four case studies include 1) the modern corset in the early 20th century; 2) the miniskirt in the mid-1960s; 3) the controversial fur coat from the 1980s; and 4) the 'solutions' of unsustainable fashion in the 21st century. The first two case studies investigate periods of pre-postfeminism and analyse tensions and changes concerning feminist politics and the constructions of women's freedom. These cases stem from the ahistorical issues within postfeminist critical studies and aim to illuminate the long-standing entanglement of feminist values and the projects of consumer capitalism. The case studies take place around times considered liberatory for women. The first case study, on the corset, coincides with the period when American women gained the right to vote in 1920. However, the analysis extends beyond 1920 to explore discourses of freedom following women's suffrage. The latter two case studies, on the other hand, explore more contemporary moments marked by tension surrounding broader environmental or ethical concerns, particularly regarding non-humans. These instances illustrate how political issues intersect with emerging postfeminist discourses surrounding women's freedom. The case studies do not rigidly adhere to specific decades or periods; instead, they engage with the complexities and nuances of history.

The cases are divided into Part I and Part II; however, they do not strictly delve into either feminist politics or environmental politics separately, as they inform each other. For instance, while the 1980s witnessed animal rights protests targeting the fashion industry's use of fur, the investigation extends beyond this decade to encompass both preceding and subsequent periods. This approach avoids confining the analysis within specific temporal boundaries, enabling a comprehensive examination that does not assume a "lack of politics" throughout the 20th century.

The thesis is inspired by previous studies of women's magazines, commodity feminism, and postfeminist critique, but additional understandings of posthuman theory and sociologies of consumption shape the analysis. The thesis not only seeks to explore the history of a postfeminist entanglement within women's consumer capitalism but also the contemporary tensions with the environment and non-human relations. Alongside the rising popularity of feminisms in mass media, the threat of the climate emergency also proliferates contemporary discussions and consumption concerns. Environmental politics and animal rights groups have a long history, but the current crisis has led to a direct critique of consumer capitalism, especially in the fashion industry. As a result, a postfeminist sensibility that emphasises women's 'freedom' or 'empowerment' through consumption or individuality is ruptured and challenged. Considering the posthuman in this work allows the thesis to incorporate other tensions in the entanglement of feminisms, neoliberalism, and consumer capitalist values. Before this, the fashion industry was also attacked by animal rights groups for the use of animal fur in making women's coats. Since this attack, many high fashion brands have ended the use of real fur and switched to faux fur. Therefore, the thesis analyses case studies that explore tensions between women's consumer culture and wider political issues that challenge or are challenged by middle-class, hegemonic, feminine fashionable practices.

To explore the thesis aims, the following four research questions will be addressed:

1. What subjecthoods are constructed for women in *Vogue* during the 20th/21st centuries in relation to a) feminist politics and b) environmental/ethical concerns?
2. How do wider political and cultural issues come to inform definitions of what a fashionable woman is?
3. What tensions arise between the values of consumer capitalism and a) feminist politics, and b) environmental politics during the periods of liberation and environmental/ethical concern?

4. How do the tensions between values of consumer capitalism and wider political issues entangle and impact gendered consumption norms and values?

The research questions reflect the aims of the analysis and the overall thesis. The first question includes 'subjecthoods' to capture how *Vogue* is a cultural intermediary that constructs feminine subjecthoods as a part of the process of entangling wider political issues with the projects of consumer capitalism. The second question explores definitions of a fashionable woman to reflect that not every subjecthood in *Vogue* is fashionable, but the fashionable woman is the most successful subjecthood in the magazine. This woman is usually young, slim, and adopts 'modern' fashions, she keeps up with what the magazine deems as the correct way to partake in gendered consumption and middle-class femininity. Research question three reflects on the tensions that arise between the values of consumer capitalism and feminist/environmental politics during the periods of liberation and environmental concern. This helps to identify the tensions for the final question. Finally, question four analyses how *Vogue* responds to the tensions and how they come to impact gendered consumption norms and values.

1.3 Outline

The thesis presents the visual discourse analysis in two parts; Part I focuses on the research questions on feminist politics and women's freedom whereas Part II engages with the environmental and ethical concern for non-human analysis. However, Part II continues to engage with postfeminist discourses that are adopted or rejected within discussions of ethics towards animals or the environment. Chapter 2, the literature review, is larger due to the interdisciplinary focus of feminist cultural media studies on postfeminism and the sociology of consumption theories that offer insights into consumer capitalism. The literature review provides an overview of postfeminist critique and sociological understandings of consumption but is followed by sections that outline some of the drawbacks of each approach and the tools the thesis will use from the literature in the analysis.

In Chapter 3, *Methodology*, the visual discourse analysis approach is discussed but also expands on how theories of posthumanism, understandings of entanglement, and Actor-Network Theory provide the study of women's magazines with new insights and analytical tools. Key concepts such as subjecthood and the Poststructural, Foucauldian theories that underpin the understanding are also outlined in this chapter. The search strategies for the case studies and how the US *Vogue* archive was utilised are explained, showcasing the method of keyword searches and full reads of the magazine issues to provide specific and wider contextual research methods.

The first two case studies feature in Part I of the thesis and investigate a change in women's fashion that is linked to a feminine subculture and explore entanglements with notions of feminist politics and values of consumer capitalism. In Chapter 4 *The 'Modern' Corset* explores how *Vogue* constructs the modern, newly enfranchised American woman to continue traditional corset-wearing practices. The 'modern' corset is a shift from the 'traditional' hourglass corset of the 19th century towards a slim, straighter silhouette that is associated with modernity and the early 20th-century flapper subculture. The chapter explores how the corset was reimagined as a 'modern' practice that invited women to partake in modernity through consumption. The adverts emphasise women's ability to move in the new corset, engaging with women's new gender relations as they could take part in sports and new dancing styles. *Vogue* highlights 'uncorseted' women as unfashionable and translates the changes in the corset due to fashion changes rather than wider feminist politics or women's need for movement due to cultural and social changes.

The chapter builds upon previous historical work on women's fashion, adding to Delhaye's (2006) sociological work on the individualisation of women's subjecthoods and gendered consumer culture. The research highlights that the modern, fashionable woman is constructed as slim and entangled with consumer capitalist values that diversify women's undergarments and create new 'needs' for the corset. Women's movement is also constructed in *Vogue* as a quality that makes a woman look young and youthfulness becomes a key part of feminine values of consumption and brings to female body under scrutiny. Therefore, the chapter adds to the analysis of consumer capitalism as a site for Western women's expression and inclusion in modernity and individuality. However, I argue that the construction of a slim and youthful body as a norm embeds the construction of women's freedom with patriarchal values. Overall, the feminist critiques of the corset are adopted by *Vogue* and help create the 'modern' corset and narratives of comfort and movement in marketing. However, in this entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist values in *Vogue*, consumer capitalist values of diversification and categorising women's bodies develop alongside the adoption and tensions with feminist politics.

In Chapter 5, *The Miniskirt* is introduced in the mid-1960s as a part of youth culture and is constructed as a garment for specifically young women. One of the subjecthoods in *Vogue* centres on a young woman who is free from domestic or family responsibility, and who can engage in leisure pursuits, dating, and buying the latest trends as a part of her modern lifestyle. The emerging 'second wave' of feminist politics is entangled with and translated in *Vogue* as a reconsideration of young women's lives, away from the responsibility of the home and marriage, and closer to the values of consumer capitalism. Here, there is an emphasis on revealing the body, both in fashionable clothes and to the camera as nudity appears in the magazine which is similar to the postfeminist sensibility of centralising the female body. The research shows how *Vogue* reconstructs what is acceptable for middle-class sexuality alongside the casualisation of romantic relationships. The chapter engages with Bourdieu's theories of class and builds on Warde's (2016) and Hilton's (2009) insights from consumption. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) is also considered as an example of how feminist values are translated in *Vogue*, where a *freedom from* domesticity is reconstructed into a *freedom to* consume. Overall, a new category of gendered consumption is located in *Vogue*, where young women are granted access to pleasure through consumer capitalism, free from the responsibilities or confines of domesticity.

In Part II, Chapter 6, *The Questioning of the Fur Coat* explores how *Vogue* navigated the tensions raised by animal rights activists against the use of animal fur for women's fur coats. The fur coat was symbolic of bourgeois femininity and values of luxurious, conspicuous consumption, both the use of animals and the image of wealth came under scrutiny from wider activism throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The analysis shows how *Vogue* attempted to rebrand fur as casual and youthful, to oppose the symbolic bourgeois status and their direct tensions with PETA, the animal rights activist organisation. It also reveals how, in the 21st century, the concerns around the lack of durability in clothing are used as a way to rebrand fur as a natural, free-from-plastic, durable garment that biodegrades. *Vogue* struggled to resolve the tensions between a wider ethics of care with values of consumer capitalism that are entangled with concepts of luxury fashion as a right for Western women across the late 20th and into the 21st century. The analysis engages with Wouter's (2004) theories of civilisation as a part of the process of the demise of fur as fashionable. It also provides insight into the contemporary engagement of fur in fashion and how Indigenous women's cultures are adopted as a part of cultural omnivorousness (Peterson & Simkus, 1992) and supports an emerging narrative that fur is 'sustainable'. It shows how aspects of women's empowerment through consumer capitalism is challenged and how *Vogue* navigates and develops postfeminist discourses under wider political criticism.

In Chapter 7, how *Vogue* engages with *(Un)Sustainable Fashion* is explored.[1] The magazine constructs eco-conscious clothing antonymous with style and modern fashions which creates a deep tension for *Vogue*. However, to remain relevant and appear 'modern', the magazine must engage with concerns for the environment. To resolve this tension, *Vogue* constructed a new subjecthood for women through environmentalist celebrities: the eco-chic woman. Unlike some feminine eco subjecthoods that are constructed in the magazine as unstylish, the eco-chic celebrity combines an ethics of care for the environment with values of consumer capitalism that support the fashion industry. These women include supermodel Gisele Bündchen, fashion designer Stella McCartney, and founder of 'EcoAge' Livia Firth. All three women are mothers and active in the fashion industry, so they create an opportunity to engage with wider environmental issues in ways that uphold the fashion industry. McCartney and Firth are entrepreneurial women who have formed businesses of 'ethical' fashion, viewing the unsustainability of fashion as a gap in the market to fill. These celebrities therefore entangle postfeminist themes with issues of environmentalism and promote the continuation of consumer capitalism. Bündchen, on the other hand, supports existing fashion brands that align with her eco values. The eco-chic celebrity interviews are embedded within postfeminist discourses and an emphasis on individuality and consumer choice. *Vogue* also include young climate activists who support the fashion industry to uphold their commitment to youth cultures and retain their relevancy. However, the 'sustainable' fashion alternatives and subjecthoods serve the cultural omnivore (Peterson & Simkus, 1992) to engage with more categories of consumption, a 'sustainable' ethics of care (Godin, 2022) and the environmental celebrity (Murphy, 2021). The chapter aids the understanding of gendered 'ethical consumption' in fashion and stylistic approaches to the climate emergency that entangle postfeminism and the projects of consumer capitalism.

---

[1] The chapter title use of (Un)Sustainable reflects the ambiguity of the fashion industries sustainable claims and the proliferation of greenwashing in US Vogue.

Overall, the analysis showcases how tensions between feminist and environmental politics shape what is fashionable for women and constitute norms and values of gendered consumption and constructions of women's subjecthoods. Finally, Chapter 8 responds to the research questions and concludes how the analysis has contributed to knowledge in both postfeminist critical studies and consumer cultural understandings of ‘the consumer’. The work aids current postfeminist critique by considering the deeper historical entanglement between feminist politics and consumer capitalist values. The emphasis on the projects of consumer capitalism that are entangled with feminist politics, rather than an emphasis on neoliberalism, allows the study to consider other politics that can be influenced by postfeminism or come to challenge postfeminist values. The analysis also develops a gendered understanding of ‘the consumer’ over time to highlight the importance of feminist work on consumer culture. Therefore, the thesis shows how insights from cultural postfeminist critique, the sociology of consumption, and posthuman considerations can offer new insights into the gendered norms and values of consumer capitalism and aid a nuanced understanding of feminist entanglements, with the projects of consumer capitalism, over time.

2. Literature Review

The introduction chapter provides a summary the current academic critiques regarding postfeminism's engagement with neoliberal, individualist ideologies, and values of consumer culture. Section 2.1 delves into scholarly debates surrounding postfeminism, aiming to unpack its contradictions and complexities. Here, the contradictions and complexities of postfeminism will be unpacked. The body of work features feminist cultural theorists, including Angela McRobbie, Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill, and Catherine Rottenberg. Subsequently, section 2.2 offers an overview of historical constructions of 'the consumer' figure and defines consumer culture and consumption. Drawing from sociology of consumption, this section references the works of Alan Warde, Daniel Welch, Roberta Sassatelli, Matthew Hilton, and Daniel Evans. Additionally, it touches upon the cultural turn in consumption studies and the subsequent practice theories. In section 2.3, the interconnectedness of feminist and environmental studies with the constructions of women in consumer capitalism is explored. This section elucidates why this intersection is a crucial area of study for contemporary understandings of postfeminism and gendered consumption. Section 2.4 critically examines the scholarly discourse surrounding postfeminism and consumer culture, highlighting gaps in knowledge. The discussion expands on the ahistoricism of postfeminist studies, the lack of engagement with environmental concerns, and the absence of gendered analyses within consumer culture theories. I also highlight the lack of gendered analyses within consumer culture theories. Additionally, I explain how fashion and women's magazines provide a valuable site of analysis that brings together the key aspects of the research aims. In the final section, I outline how the literature will be used for tools of analysis, especially studies on the history of fashion, women's consumption, ethical consumption, and advertising.

2.1 Understanding Postfeminism

Academic discussions of postfeminism are central to this thesis as they critique the contemporary popularity of feminism in the mass media, on social media, and within marketing and consumer culture. Postfeminist cultural critical studies reflect on the integration of feminisms into consume capitalist discourses and their entanglement with neoliberal values, particularly the notion of 'empowerment through consumption'. Various terms are employed to articulate this complex relationship between feminist values and consumer capitalism, including feminist/anti-feminist values, commodity feminism, postfeminism, popular feminism, and neoliberal feminism. I draw on an array of terms and their insights throughout the thesis and will explore these terms in this section.

Postfeminist critiques offer insight into the contemporary complexities of gendered notions of the citizen-consumer, and how 'the consumer' is constructed. I argue that, though this work highlights useful critiques of contemporary feminism(s), neoliberalism, and popular culture, there is an overemphasis on neoliberalism that prevents further critical understanding. By exploring US *Vogue*, the way feminist values have been adopted, manipulated, reconstructed, and rejected in a popular fashion magazine for middle-class women across the 20th century will showcase a deeper history of the entanglement between values of consumer culture and values of feminisms. The terms 'feminisms' and 'feminist politics' are used loosely in this work as I capture the many different forms of feminism and recognise that they are contextual to time and place.[2] I also argue that contemporary environmental crises raise new questions for postfeminist ideologies that challenge narratives of consumerism. This is an opportunity for furthering an understanding of contemporary postfeminism. The increasing concern over clothing waste presents a significant challenge to postfeminist notions that encourage Western women to seek empowerment or notions of freedom through consumption. This intersection between environmental concerns and postfeminist ideologies offers a compelling site for further contemporary critique within the field.

---

[2] Discussed in section 2.4.1

The exact definition of postfeminism is not always agreed upon. Postfeminism sometimes refers to a movement that began in the 1990s with 'girl power' and celebrating women's accomplishments (Gill, 2020; McRobbie, 2009). Banet-Weiser defines this contemporary feminism as 'popular feminism' as she emphasises its popularity in popular media (2020: 4, 2018). Rottenberg argues this feminism is distinctly entangled with neoliberal values, and therefore terms it 'neoliberal feminism' (2020: 4, 2014). In Gill's work, this 21st-century feminism builds on the 1990s emergence of postfeminism, and she views it as a kind of postfeminist *sensibility* (2020: 4-5, 2016). Informed by the variation of terms, I refer to this body of academic critique of contemporary popular feminism as 'postfeminism' as this is the term most appropriate term.

One thing scholars agree on is that postfeminism is a distinctly contemporary feminism that has become popular in the 21st century and has blended with neoliberal values. Postfeminism is also marked by its popularity in mainstream media and entanglement that features in advertising campaigns and, more generally, values of consumer capitalism that speaks a language of 'empowerment' and 'choice' over 'liberation' and 'equality'.[3] Rottenberg (2018: 10) noted a transformation in the mainstream cultural landscape in 2012 where feminism was 'in' again, and self-proclaimed feminists appeared in cultural and political arenas. Examples include the COO of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg's best-selling book *Lean In* and Mary Slaughter's

---

[3] Liberation and equality are terms associated with second wave feminism and focus on structural gender critique.

Why Women Still Can't Have It All. Celebrities were also involved in this popularisation, such as Beyoncé's 2014 MTV Award show with the background 'FEMINIST', and Emma Watson's UN #HeForShe campaign. Although feminist themes have been mainstreamed, they have "also become increasingly compatible with neoliberal and neoconservative political and economic agendas" (p.11). Banet-Weiser (2018: 1) notes that "it feels as if everywhere you turn, there is an expression of feminism – on a T-shirt, in a movie, in the lyrics of a pop song, in an inspirational Instagram post, in an awards ceremony speech". She argues that feminism is 'popular' in three senses: it manifests in discourses and practices that are circulated in popular and commercial media, such as blogs, Instagram, as well as broadcast media (ibid.). It is not confined to academic or niche groups. Secondly, the popularity can be signified by the social acceptance of popular feminism or the ability to be admired by like-minded people and groups. Finally, 'popular', as Stuart Hall (1998) argued, is a terrain of struggle, a space where competing demands for power battle it out (ibid.). Banet-Weiser highlights the complexity of contemporary feminisms as many different versions exist and circulate in popular culture, and some become more popular than others. It is this popular type of feminism in mainstream media and news outlets that feminist scholars are critical of. The most problematic postfeminist values are those that have a specific 'post' narrative and emphasise a language of women's 'choice' and 'empowerment'.

Postfeminism is sometimes defined in relation to other feminist and 'post' movements. Firstly, postfeminism can be seen as a "political position in light of the feminist confrontation with difference" (Adriaens, 2009). It can be understood as a feminism that moves beyond binary thinking and essentialist notions of identity, following other 'post' theories in this manner.[4] Secondly, it can be seen as a historical shift within feminism. Thirdly, as a backlash against feminism, especially second-wave feminism, because a "celebration of neoconservative traditional values becomes prominent" (2009: 1). In later work, Adriaens and Bauwel (2011: 3) argue that postfeminism can be rearticulated as a 'third wave' of feminism in the 21st century that focuses on a new form of 'empowerment'. This prioritises women's "agency, freedom, sexual pleasure, consumer culture, fashion, hybridism, humour, and a renewed focus on the female body". Adriaens' work encourages a move beyond simplistic definitions of postfeminism and highlights its pluralistic and contradictory meanings. Rather than a backlash against feminism, postfeminism is viewed as the feminism 'of today' (Brookes, 1997; in Adriaens, 2009) and must be situated in a contemporary context of consumer culture, neoliberal late capitalism, individualism, postmodernism and decreased interest in politics and activism. For these authors, postfeminism is a distinctly 21st-century movement and tied to wider shifts in 'post' theories which moves it beyond second-wave feminist values. As a result, there is a recognition that postfeminism rearticulates the meaning of feminist politics in the contemporary period and shows how feminist values can be contradictory, complex and can change over time. However, this view risks uncritically engaging with neoliberalist values and normalising aspects of postfeminist's anti-feminist narratives.

---

[4] Other examples of 'posts' include postcolonialism, postmodernism, and poststructuralism.

Other scholars highlight more specific values of contemporary postfeminism and remain critical of the entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist values, such as Gill's (2007) analysis of a postfeminist sensibility. This considers postfeminist features such as: femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring, and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference; a marked sexualisation of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference (p.147). The sensibilities identify a specific sexualisation of culture that postfeminism transforms into 'empowerment' for young women, as they can use their sexual power to distract men. Alongside this, women are situated in a world where they no longer wear things to please men but out of their own free will. This makes postfeminism a shield with which young women can defend themselves against feminist critical thinking of patriarchal systems of oppression. For instance, a woman no longer wears a thong or makes her body hairless to succumb to wider images of beauty and 'sexiness' but does so for herself and makes it empowering. However, this postfeminist sensibility comes with an increased sense of self-surveillance and self-discipline as women are encouraged to reflect on their ability to please men in heterosexual relationships. It should be noted that by attempting to avoid feminist critiques it subverts sexual abuses that are linked to these 'empowering' acts such as the sexualisation of children and paedophilia, rape culture, and the reduction of women to objects of pleasure for men.

The origins of postfeminism can be traced back to the culture of 'girl power' that existed alongside the intense sexualisation of women during the 1990s; this is seen as a catalyst for many postfeminist values. The 1990s witnessed a 'crisis in girls' (Hains, 2012) that stemmed from the exclusion of girls in maths and science subjects, the rising numbers of white, middle-class girls with eating disorders, and the reports of low self-esteem (in Banet-Weiser, 2018: 46). Postfeminism came to prominence as a way of "making sense of paradoxes and contradictions in the representation of women" (Gill, 2020: 4). The 'girl power' movement also recognised girls as valuable citizens, especially their power to consume and influence their parents' consumer choices (Banet-Weiser, 2018: 47). The late 1990s and early 2000s was a period that celebrated 'girl power' and women's success but also an intense scrutiny of women in the media (Gill, 2020). During this time, gender equality was seen as 'accomplished', but the cultural landscape was still fraught with misogyny and a rising 'lad culture'. Assertions of sexual difference and the redundant need for feminism became popular discourses (Gill, 2017: 607). Feminism was 'taken into account' yet 'repudiated' at the same time (McRobbie, 2009; in Gill, 2017: 607). As a result, postfeminism "takes the sting out of feminism" by confusing "lifestyle, attitudinal feminism with the hard political and intellectual work that feminists have done and continue to do" and discards the structural analysis of patriarchal power (Macdonald, 1995: 100; Dow, 1996: 214; in Genz, 2006: 336). It is criticised for "not just being apolitical, but for producing, through its lack of organised politics, a retrogressive and reactionary conservatism" (Genz, 2006: 336).

However, McRobbie (2009: 1) argues that postfeminism cannot be understood as a simple backlash against the feminist movements of the 1970s and 80s. Instead, she highlights that some elements of feminism have (unexpectedly) been incorporated into political and institutional life but have been transformed into more individualistic discourses under the hailing of terms such as 'empowerment' and 'choice'. The new terms feature heavily in popular culture and media, and substitute for a feminist emphasis on liberation. These terms constitute new 'modern' ideas about women (and specifically young women), with a clear purpose to ensure there is not a re-emergence of a women's movement (ibid.). However, this is a depoliticisation of postfeminism that runs the risk of "oversimplifying the complex position that contemporary feminisms take up with regard to Western politics and its intrinsic relationship with media structures" (Genz, 2006: 337).

Patricia Mann (1994: 115) argued that "given the chaotic state of individual motivations and responsibilities in this scenario, it may be wholly unrealistic to expect anyone to worry very much about establishing firm social identities – feminist, feminine, maternal, or otherwise". From this understanding, postfeminism is recognised as a movement that reaches beyond a 20th-century audience or strict feminist audience. Postfeminist discourse, for this reason, has the ability to enter the mainstream and be articulated in politically contradictory ways (Genz, 2006: 337). It is from this complexity that postfeminism offers the ability for problematic and contradictory (both conservative and subversive) political terms, while also repudiating 'traditional' activist strategies (ibid.: 338). Despite operating in a postmodern age of social confusion, which demands a broader definition of political action, postfeminism emphasises consumerist, middle-class values and aspirations (ibid.). It is the consumerist and middle-class emphasis that is a main focus of the thesis.

2.1.1 Feminisms and Consumer Culture

Feminist values being adopted in consumer culture marketing is not a distinct feature of contemporary postfeminism as scholars note that 'commodity feminism' occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when women's magazines attempted to connect the meaning of women's liberation to corporate products (Goldman et al., 1991: 336). Therefore, a translation of feminisms into individualist discourses in consumer culture has been recognised in earlier decades. However, it is the distinctly neoliberal values of feminist translations that makes postfeminism different from commodity feminism and highlights the specific contexts of the entanglement between feminisms and consumer culture.

Hollows and Mosely (2006) state that postfeminism raises the tensions that exist between feminism and femininity, as lipstick, high heels, and glamour do not conflict with female power under this contemporary popular feminism (p.97). In the media, postfeminist discourses are characterised by an emphasis on the world of work, which allows female success but "beauty, fashion and adornment remain highly prized as part of the arsenal of the high-achieving woman" (Whelehan, 2010: 156). Postfeminism entangles values of feminine consumption (that were previously critiqued by second-wave feminism as problematic) with notions of empowerment and female capability (ibid.). In postfeminist media texts, Whelehan argues that feminism is constructed as a force that gave women social equality, choices, and freedoms, but these come with a burden as they must be relentlessly balanced and resolved by the individual. Postfeminism "works to commodify feminism via the figure of women as empowered consumers", it is white and middle-class by default and "anchored in consumption as a strategy (and leisure as a site) for the production of the self" (Negra and Tasker, 2007: 2). McRobbie (1994: 259) also emphasises consumer culture in her definition of postfeminism as she argues “like postmodernism, postfeminism involves a particular relationship to late capitalist culture and the forms of work, leisure and, crucially, consumption”. Therefore, for these scholars, consuming feminine commodities is a driving force of having a professional career and the means of empowering and developing the self under neoliberalism.

Consumer culture also highlights the aspect of postfeminist sensibility which centres on the disciplined female body, albeit as a means of empowerment independent of the male gaze. Here, the emphasis is on working on the body for oneself rather than for external validation. The postfeminist female gaze is characterized by “increasingly quantifying the female body and experience but has also evolved into an internal surveilling gaze, judging and commodifying both the visible and the invisible” (Luna Mora & Berry, 2021: 418). Cultural studies shed light on the ways women's bodies are (re)presented in advertisements and the media. These studies reveal that postfeminist discourses pervade consumer culture through narratives of self-love that defend the disciplined body and frame cosmetic surgery as an empowering act.

The female body is an important site for “understanding women’s embodied experiences and practices, and cultural and historical constructions of the female body in the various contexts of social life” (Davies, 1997: 7). Many practices are embedded in consumer cultural representations of women, including routine beauty practices (Chapski, 1986; Bartky, 1990), fitness regimes (Radnar, 1995), fashion (Wilson, 1985), dieting (Bordo, 1993), and cosmetic surgery (Wolf, 1991). Academic feminist scholarship highlights the importance of practices in women's gendered consumption norms and values, while also emphasizing the central role of the female body in understanding the complexities of freedom and empowerment. For instance, Young’s (1990) ‘Throwing Like a Girl’ exemplifies how in Western societies the female body is constrained and the full use of the body, its mobility and speciality, is limited (Davies, 1997: 9). French feminisms highlight the dual nature of the body which can operate as a site of oppression, be heretical, or even empowering (e.g. Cixous, 1976; Irigaray, 1985; Kristeva, 1980; in Davies, 1997: 9). Women in Western cultures are caught between “the tensions of consumer culture, the cultural ambivalence toward female appetite and the backlash against women’s power”, influenced by Cartesian legacies of mind-over-matter and discourses of bodily control (Bordo, 1993). Consequently, women strive to regulate their bodies and desires to conform to consumer culture's standards, sometimes adopting traits traditionally associated with masculinity, such as self-mastery and control, to feel “empowered or liberated by the very bodily norms and practices which constrain or enslave them” (ibid.). The body is critical within feminist and postfeminist theory, and embodied practices capture how constructions of women’s freedom can be entangled within consumer culture and women’s practices. Therefore, feminine fashions and women's magazines serve as valuable arenas for exploring the historical entanglement between feminist values and capitalist ideologies.

Banet-Weiser argues that the 1990s positioning of girls as vulnerable or ‘in crisis’ led to this need for ‘empowerment’, and combined with their power as consumers, has helped create a market for empowerment (2018: 47). The power of girls has previously been policed, regulated, and sometimes ridiculed, but this new celebration of girls should not be taken at face value (McRobbie & Garber, 1991, Banet-Weiser, 2018). The type of girl that is often celebrated belongs to a particular race and class, one who is wealthy enough to participate in the latest trends and has the privilege to access power (Banet-Weiser, 2018: 47). The emphasis on a particular type of girl or woman has consequences for the way the West positions itself as ‘modern’ in relation to the way women are treated. Feminist values are adopted by Western governments to incorporate women into their definition of freedom, bringing ideals up to date (McRobbie, 2009: 1). From this, clear boundaries can emerge between the West and the Rest through the granting (or lack) of sexual freedoms. Importantly, for McRobbie, postfeminism offers women a contract that provides them access to education, employment, wage-earning capacity and participation in consumer culture and civil society, as long as they rebuke a feminist politics (p.2). Gill and Toms (2019) state that “there may be a ‘feminist zeitgeist’, yet the tenacity of anti-feminist ideas remains striking [...] sexism and misogyny are also trending now”. The authors note interesting shifts in contemporary feminism(s), but they also argue that while some feminist values are ‘accepted’ in some mainstream areas of mass media, policymaking and women’s right to work and education, there is a constant undercurrent of misogyny and sexism.

2.1.2 Neoliberalist Values

For many feminist scholars, it is the postfeminist entangling with neoliberal ideologies that makes it problematic and distinct from the former adoptions of liberal feminism in consumer capitalism, such as commodity feminism (Rottenberg, 2018: 3; Banet-Weiser, 2018: 48).[5] For Rottenberg, neoliberalism is not simply understood as an economic system of intensified privatisation and market deregulation, but “as a dominant political rationality or normative form of reason that moves to and from the management of the state to the inner workings of the subject” (p.7). Mendes (2012) explains that studies of postfeminism in popular culture are dominated by their association with neoliberalism which is understood as “an ideology of governing western social and cultural values since the late 1970s and early 1980s when US President Ronald Reagan and the UK’s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came to power” (p.557). While second wave feminism stressed collective action to tackle an imbalance of power between men and women, neoliberalist emphasis on individual choice and freedom masks the reality of social inequality (ibid.).

As a capitalist ideology, neoliberalism also equates consumption with freedom that blend with liberal feminist values but “poses a serious challenge to more radical feminist theories which stress collectivism and social responsibility” (ibid.). Gill

---

[5] Commodity feminism is defined and discussed in the Introduction chapter.

(2007: 163-4) states that postfeminism and neoliberalism synergise on many levels. The entrepreneurial, free-choosing, self-reinventing subject of postfeminism bears similarities with the neoliberal subject. Also, women are called upon to self-reflect and self-manage in cultural discourses, which can be seen in the prolific makeover TV trends, chick flicks and women's magazines. She argues that postfeminism replaces key feminist terms such as "equal rights, liberation, and social justice" with a focus on "happiness, balance, responsibility, and lean in" (p.5). This is how a language of 'empowerment' becomes dominant. The authors argue that what makes postfeminism distinct from past movements is the emphasis on the individual and *feelings* of empowerment over structural understandings of power relations. When feminist scholars comment on the rise of postfeminist discourses, they are also critiquing the individualist, capitalist, and consumerist values promoted by the media (Mendes, 2011). Postfeminism is critiqued for being a type of feminism that upholds status quo values rather than questioning structural power when it engages with gender relations. Neoliberalism is seen as the main factor in this and what makes postfeminism unique.

Overall, this section has shown that postfeminism is a term that does not have a straightforward definition, but there is an agreed emphasis on the ways neoliberal thinking constrains feminist politics under a language of empowerment and choice. Postfeminism represents an entanglement for some scholars, where feminist values are incorporated but repudiated with anti-feminist values. There is an emphasis on empowerment and choice over liberation or equality. This is seen by-product of the entangled values of feminisms and neoliberalism. However, 'empowerment' is a specific construction of freedom that "refers to enhancement of social, political, and economic strengths of an individual so that s/he can resist domination of any form" (Varman & Vikas, 2007: 119). Empowerment, under neoliberalism, removes the emphasis on resisting domination and this is embedded in a postfeminist entanglement (of neoliberalism and feminist values). Therefore, scholars who critique postfeminism argue that neoliberalism has centred this version of empowerment for feminist discourse. However, an emphasis on neoliberalism overlooks the possibility of a longer history of feminist and anti-feminist entanglement and the importance of consumer culture in constructing postfeminist values and a part of the entanglement. In the following section, I explore the sociology of consumer culture to highlight the importance of consumer capitalist values and projects that should be considered alongside the emphasis on neoliberalism in understanding postfeminism as an entanglement.

2.2 Understanding 'Consumer Culture' and 'The Consumer'

The previous section examined various scholarly perspectives on contemporary postfeminism, illustrating it as an entanglement between feminist and neoliberal values. One of the main aims of the thesis is to investigate the longevity of this relationship and how it manifests in consumer culture. I also explore the complexities of postfeminism to understand the entanglement and how wider political tensions can shape and be shaped by postfeminism entanglement. These include wider politics of environmental harm from the fashion industry and animal rights activism against fur fashion. Scholars note the importance of consumption within 21st-century postfeminist sensibilities along with commodity feminism in the 1980s. However, insights from the sociology of consumer culture offers different insights. This literature examines the projects and values of consumer capitalism that are mobilised across the 20th and into the 21st centuries. This thesis considers the analyses and evaluations of the sociology of consumer culture to aid the analysis of a consumer capitalist document across the 20th century.

In this section, I will begin by providing an overview of the sociology of consumption and the key insights it provides for a historical investigation of American consumer culture. I will discuss how this history offers an understanding of the values and projects of consumer capitalism within the case studies. This leads to a discussion of the constructions of 'the consumer' and how his figure has been mobilised differently in different contexts. Here, I expand on how this relates to *Vogue*'s constructions of women's subjecthoods over time. Then, I will highlight the key terms that are used within these studies and why I adopt 'consumer capitalism' in this work. Finally, I outline the developments in theories of consumption and consumer culture and how they inform the understandings within this thesis.

2.2.1 Consumption

The term 'consumption' has many definitions and can often contain loaded meanings (Hilton, 2003: 4). Consumption can evoke positive ideas of modern societal integration and negative connotations with excessive materialism.[6] Campbell (1995: 102) broadly defines consumption as "involving the selection, purchase use, maintenance, repair, and disposal of any product or service". Warde (2016: 19) proposes three distinct processes that capture the fundamental aspects of consumption – *acquisition*, *appropriation*, and *appreciation*. *Acquisition* refers to exchange (by market or other mechanisms) which supplies the means for personal and household provisioning (ibid.). *Appropriation* refers to practical activities that entail the use of goods and services for personal and social purposes. *Appreciation* covers the variation of processes that give meaning to provision and use (ibid.). He argues that academic disciplines tend to focus on different aspects of consumption. Economics concentrates on acquisition, and cultural studies overemphasise appreciation, whereas sociology and psychology are concerned with all three. Warde (2005: 136) emphasises that most practices require and entail consumption. The concept, he argues, displays ambivalence between two contrasts of *purchase* and *using-up*. The term 'consumption' should not be "restricted to, nor defined by, market exchange", or reduced to demand (ibid.). Sassatelli (2007) highlights that consumption, specifically under capitalism, is routinised into times and spaces. She argues it is "made up of specifically dedicated places and times which are thought of as juxtaposed to, and separate from, those of work" (p.2). Leisure time is commoditised, and daily life becomes organised "between times/spaces of work and times/spaces of consumption" (p.3). Work time is devoid of amusement and distraction; it is outside this time and space of paid work where individuals can partake in the varieties of consumption. These understandings are important to support the view that some postfeminist studies overemphasise neoliberalism as one of the most important aspects of contemporary Western culture. However, within the sociology of consumption, how time and activities are commodified and managed is part of a longer history of capitalist projects that shape everything from work, to leisure, to culture, and mundane, everyday practices.

---

[6] Hilton offers Vance Packard's *The Waste Makers* (1960) as an example of one of the first expressions of the negative consequences of materialism but argues this is not the first instance of unease and instead is a manifestation of centuries old concerns, especially found in discussions of 'luxury' consumption.

It is important to briefly outline the differences between the terms 'consumption' and 'consumerism' (Littler, 2011: 28). 'Consumption' refers to the using up of an object, good, or service, regardless of the economic or ideological context. 'Consumerism', on the other hand, refers to the "logic of consuming within a type of social and political system: consumer culture" (ibid.). It is a loaded term compared to consumption.

2.2.2 Consumer Culture and 20th Century Developments

'Consumer culture' refers to another specific understanding within the sociology of consumption. Consumer culture is a culture *of* consumption that is unique and specific to the modern West (Slater, 1997: 8). He argues it is bound up with central values that define Western modernity such as "choice, individualism and market relations" and is a notably *capitalist* culture (p.8, 26). Under these values, "the right and ability to be a consumer is the ideological birthright of the modern Western subject” (p.27). The term ‘consumer culture’ points to “the impact of mass consumption on everyday life which has led to the gearing of social activities around the accumulation and consumption of an ever-increasing range of goods and experiences” (Featherstone, 1983: 4). However, Featherstone is attentive to the idea that this definition cannot be easily applied to contemporary culture as its “transformative efforts encounter stubborn resistance from both tradition and the new set of oppositional practices and countertendencies it generates” (ibid.). The project of consumer culture (of permanent expansion) is against ecological barriers and finite material resources that have harnessed an increase of social critique (ibid.). Therefore, Featherstone highlights the tensions between the projects of consumer capitalism and wider criticism of the harm to the planet which is an important aspect of this work. However, consumer cultural studies provide important insights into the development of consumer capitalist projects across the 20th century.

The term ‘consumer society’ is associated with post-war Western societies but the centrality of the consumer way of life is not particularly new. The acquisition and display of luxurious, fashionable goods and clothes can be traced back throughout history (Featherstone, 1983: 4). However, these goods were usually confined to a small elite. A ‘consumer revolution’ took place in the 18th century when goods became increasingly available for a larger portion of society (McKendrick, Brewer & Plumb, 1982). This can be exemplified by the Industrial Revolution’s rise in fashion, and an increasing obsolescence of style through the fashion doll and fashion plates (Lury, 2011: 81). The spread of fashion was dependent upon a new consumer sensibility and featured novel ideas about the contribution of consumption to the ‘public good’ (ibid.). Later, in the second half of the 19th century, there were changes that “transformed the experience of consumerism and formed the basis for it to become a distinctive way of life” (Featherstone, 1983: 4).

It was not simply the range of mass-produced goods but how the experience of consuming was transformed, including the new sites like the department store. These large stores were some of the first institutions to use new technologies of colour, glass, and light to enhance the atmosphere in stores (Leach, 1984: 323). From the 1890s, merchants made new glass environments, using curved or straight glass to create counters and displays for goods; by 1905 there were forty-one different kinds of glass showcases (ibid.). The rise of the department store was accompanied by the rise of ‘the consumer’, a figure that “situated strategies of enticement which both democratised desires and standardised them” (Sassatelli, 2007: 45). Locating commodities in a department store within an urban space meant that those walking around the metropolis were considered a ‘consumer’ and shopping became a typical bourgeois activity (ibid.). It was this transformation in the experiences of objects from around 1850 (with relation to the department store and advertising) that established a cultural creation of demand at the heart of the twentieth century (Glennie, 1995: 185). These transformations impacted women’s access to the public sphere. The department store opened up the public safely to middle-class women in a way that did not threaten men’s public power (Glennie, 1995: 186) and is considered one of the ways women gained a sense of confidence and empowerment which led to the beginnings of the collective suffrage movement (Nava, 2000).

One of the most crucial shifts that took place across the twentieth century in the USA that influenced consumer culture was the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism (Lury, 2011: 83). Fordism refers to the “system of mass production and consumption characteristic of developed industrial economies during the 1940s-1960s” which includes an emphasis on manufacturing, Taylorism, scientific management of labour, assembly-line production, and the standardisation of products (Lury, 2011: 84). It also consisted of economies of scale (spreading capital expenses such as building and maintaining factories, machinery, and equipment) and economies of scope (cost-effective labour through assembly-line production). The labour force consisted of primarily (male) semi-skilled manual workers who had strong collective solidarity and class identity that was expressed in labour movement organisations and politics (ibid.). Fordist production brought about structural changes in everyday life. For instance, the diffusion of mass-produced goods in the US, such as the motorcar, led to a revolution in American lifestyle (Sassatelli, 2007: 46). Consumer durables, such as fridges and washing machines, also impacted gender divisions in the home (ibid.). These changes were often portrayed as "the epitome of progress and freedom" but, at the same time, they were entangled with moral, practical, and economic concerns and were not simply driven by demand (ibid.). For instance, from the 1930s to the 1950s, refrigerator companies copied masculine car designs despite their audience of women demanding more feminine and longer-lasting designs and products (ibid.).

Across the twentieth century, market research developed to understand consumers, and to guess their whims with science which could allow for better predictions (Andrews & Talbot, 2000: 5). These attempted to rationalise the (usually feminine) irrational consumer. Understanding 'the consumer' was viewed as essential for predicting and creating stability in the marketplace. In the early 20th century in North America and Europe, market research firms began studying 'the consumer' with techniques such as consumer surveys that inquired about tea consumption, shoe purchasing, and film-going (Belk, 1995: 58). During the 1950s, research applied psychoanalysis to examine the emotional meanings of consumer goods, but the focus remained on how to sell branded goods more effectively (ibid.: 59). This research was conducted by both industry (in marketing, advertising, and specialised motivation research agencies) and academic marketing departments in US universities (ibid.). However, Vance Packard's 'Hidden Pleasures' (1957) raised fears about this research gaining access to consumers' subconscious desires and led to a decline in the respect for motivational research in academic work.

In its place was the rise of scientific marketing in the 1960s. This research borrowed methods from psychology and led to laboratory research on consumers which examined the effects of promotion, pricing, product design etc. (ibid.). Fordist production was combined with low prices, high wages, advertising, and the lifting of regulations to make consumer credit easily available. It consisted of persuasive policies to spend and stimulate demand (Lury, 2011: 85). Fordism was a largely North American scheme that was adopted by Europe following the Second World War to rationalise scarce wartime resources and boost demand to overcome economic depression that made states identify 'consumers' as a core target of public policy (Trentmann, 2006: 12).

Following the Second World War, an important aspect of consumer culture was youth culture. Youth culture was the consolidation around particular commodities and practices of consumption by young adults and teenagers that expanded across borders (Sassatelli, 2007: 47). An example of these goods includes the popularity of rock music through the massive sale of cassettes which would have been considered luxuries a few years prior. The development of an increasingly global media and mass motorization (which allowed young people to leave the confines of their home town) meant that certain styles of consumption could easily spread amongst young people (ibid.: 48). In the 1970s, this developed into a 'bedroom' culture where middle-class teenagers expressed themselves through consumption in their rooms. This is one reason why houses were seen as spaces for individuals to construct their identities via 'lifestyle projects' (ibid.).

The shifts in consumer culture in the late 20th century were seen as a part of the shift towards post-Fordism. This consisted of 'lean' manufacturing, total quality management, just-in-time delivery, and price-based costing, as well as the Toyota Production System (Lury, 2011: 85).[7] The transformations were supported by technological developments in communications, logistics, and information processes. At the same time, firms found it more profitable to produce different lines of goods targeted at mini-mass or niche groups of consumers, over producing mass goods.

---

[7] The Toyota Production System eliminated all waste in the pursuit of the most efficient methods.

Further changes occurred in labour as companies employed labour wherever it was cheapest in the world, creating a new international division of labour (ibid.). This reduced the demand for manual labour in Europe and North America, which led to a decline in the influence of unions. At the same time, there was a rise in service industry jobs, such as tourism, and the participation of women in the workforce.

The 'new' middle classes that emerged as a result of the changes in labour in the West are seen to have an increasing power in consumer culture and a disproportionately loud voice in cultural intermediaries (ibid.: 88). Bourdieu (1984: 310) argued that the new bourgeoisie is "in favour of a hedonistic morality of consumption contingent on credit, spending and enjoyment" that is based on judging others by their capacity for consumption as much as by their capacity for production. In this post-Fordist phase, Bourdieu (1984) and Featherstone (1991) claim that cultural intermediaries have acquired more power and promote new styles of consumption that cut across traditional social divisions (Sassatelli, 2007: 49). American historian Thomas Jackson Lears (1993; 1994) found that during the last two decades of the 19th century, commercial messages promoted the secularization of the Protestant ethic, and this allowed for the emergence of a blending of both hedonism and asceticism. Following the post-war era, the reach of cultural intermediaries grew and stretched their influence beyond the middle and upper classes (Sassatelli, 2007: 49). In more contemporary society, this has developed to a point where there are no clear boundaries between high and popular culture. As a result, an increase in people who participate in multiple cultural pursuits (Lury, 2011: 100) and can be classed as 'cultural omnivores'.[8] Overall, consumer culture has developed by both broad social phenomena (the influence of the Second World War, gender relations) and more specific economic phenomena (the development of standardised production and information technologies), which have led to new economic ethics of production and new cultural views of social identity (Sassatelli, 2007: 49). These factors shaped the way cultural intermediates operated across the twentieth century and inform US *Vogue*'s role in a developing and changing consumer cultural landscape. The work shows the types of consumer capitalist projects that took place across the 20th century and will be used as a part of the analysis. This history also highlights the importance of consumer capitalism which is sometimes overlooked in postfeminist critical studies but will guide this investigation.

---

[8] The cultural omnivore will be unpacked in Chapter 7.

2.2.3 'The Consumer'

Another important aspect in the sociological understanding of consumer culture and the projects of consumer capitalism is the construction of 'the consumer'. Over human history, consumption has occurred in all societies and is not always restricted to commerce (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Sassatelli, 2007: 1; Lury, 2011: 14). Evans et al. highlight that "all human societies have been involved in consumption, but the connections between what people do and a sense of them being 'consumers' are only found in specific analytic contexts" (2017: 1400). The proliferation of advertising, markets, and affluence inevitably led to the emergence of 'the consumer', a figure constructed by commercial actors and mobilised by state and civil society (ibid.). 'The consumer' can be seen to take many forms and is found in different contexts outside the "purchasing end user, cultures of commodity consumption, and the Global North from the 19th century onwards" (ibid.).

The changing configurations of 'the consumer' are important aspects of consumer capitalism and how it coincides with the projects and developments across the 20th century that were previously discussed. Lury (2011: 9) views consumer culture as a type of material culture, "a culture of the use or appropriation of objects of things". Here, 'material' refers to "the significance of stuff, of things in everyday practices", with 'culture' indicating that there are norms, values and practices attached to this significance (ibid.). She emphasises that the sociological significance of this is that "the individual is not judged by him- or herself […] but in terms of how well they exercise their capacity to make a (consumer) choice" (p.214).

Gabriel and Lang (2015: 2) highlight that "discussions about consumption and consumerism are rarely value-neutral". For instance, Lasch (1991) argues that, in the 1920s, understandings of consumption broadened to facilitate ideas of pleasure, enjoyment, and freedom. In the 21st century, 'the consumer' has a multitude of connotations and assumptions attached to the actions of consumption. Gabriel and Lang (2015: 8) argue the figure can be seen as:

> "one who chooses, buys or refuses to buy; as one who displays or is unwilling to display; as one who offers or keeps; as one who feels guilt or has moral qualms; as one who explores or interprets; reads or decodes; reflects or daydreams; as one who pays, who gets into debt or shop-lifts; as one who needs or cherishes; as one who loves or is indifferent; as one who defaces or destroys".

Their analysis showcases the varying associations of 'the consumer'. The figure of 'the consumer' is central to the 'stories' of consumerism, sometimes viewed as sovereign (deciding the fate of products and corporations at a whim), as duped victims, villains who are indifferent to the consequences of their buying on the planet or other humans, or insatiable addicts. Gabriel and Lang describe 'the consumer' as *unmanageable* but do not overlook the ways many people struggle to make ends meet, or the influence of social expectations. 'The consumer' is a well-established figure in contemporary politics and commerce, and is often treated as a "self-evident category", but this "shifting subject position has been mobilised in pursuit of various political and economic projects" (Evans et al., 2017: 1397). An example of this includes the 2007-8 banking crisis where the pace of debt-based spending faltered, alongside the crash of major economies like Japan and the Eurozone (Gabriel & Lang, 2015: 5). Politicians despaired about consumers "doing their bit for the economy", meanwhile the core assumptions of consumerism were being questioned for the sustainability and abuse to the environment (p.6). 'The consumer' is mobilised differently, in different contexts, and for different purposes over time and space.

Across the 20th century, 'the consumer' has been mobilised in a variety of ways, but Welch's (2020) teleoaffective formations highlight three key typologies of 'the consumer' and consumerism that have existed in the West. The first is the 'sovereign consumer'. At the beginning of the 20th century, the "notion of the consumer [linked] with the tenets of democracy" and "inherited the liberal ideal of the marketplace as a civilising institution through which subjects not only acquire economic rationality but reflect upon themselves as social actors" (p.68). This figure represented the idea that "consumers have sovereignty over their own needs, desires, wants, identities" and they have "both the right and the ability to formulate their own plans and projects" (Slater, 1997: 35). These ideas stood in opposition to communism and socialism as they undercut collectivism, from the 1920s to the Cold War (ibid.: 34). Consumer sovereignty shaped the development of market research methods in America in the 1930s and 1940s, it introduced consumer juries and surveys to measure preferences (2020: 68).

The sovereign consumer was replaced by 'emancipatory consumerism' in the 1960s and 70s due to the limitations of the Taylorist style of advertising under the 'creative revolution' (Frank, 1997: 39; in Welch, 2020: 69). The emancipated consumers are "individuals who are sovereign of themselves and of their will" (Sassatelli, 2007: 97) in a way that is "quite alien to the sovereign consumers of the early 20th century" (Welch, 2020: 70). Under this type of consumerism, marketing emphasised creativity and adopted inspiration from counter-culture movements. There was an emphasis on libidinal emancipation and a sexualisation of media and advertising images (ibid.).

Finally, the third configuration is the contemporary 'promotional sustainable consumption' which cannot be described as hegemonic but is not niche (p.70). It emerged in the 2010s and represents the shift of brands taking responsibility for encouraging excessive consumption and correcting this by introducing 'sustainable consumption' alternatives. Each typology informs "novel understandings of the consumer and provides both cultural resources for transformations in consumption norms and resources for capitalist legitimation" (p.64).

The constructions of 'the consumer' inform the types of projects and values of consumer capitalism that are developing across the four case studies. It is important to recognise that many of these discussions do not offer a gendered lens and assume a non-gendered consumer that is (re)configured across the 20th century. The importance of wider environmental issues and consumer capitalist projects is captured by Promotional Sustainable Consumerism. However, the studies of postfeminism and commodity feminism that have translated and (re)constructed women's freedom under the limitations of consumer 'choices', and away from structural critique or notions of equality, are not considered within the sociology of consumption. The gendered nuances within the constructions of 'the consumer' are not captured in recent studies of consumption but will be analysed in this thesis.

2.2.4 Consumer Society and Consumer Capitalism

The previous section on the history of consumer culture in the West highlighted that, since the second half of the twentieth century, contemporary societies have been portrayed as 'consumer societies' (Silla, 2018: 3). A 'consumer society' can be defined by four broad characteristics. Firstly, there is a difference between the *use of things* and the *consumption* of goods. Secondly, it is a *mass* phenomenon. Thirdly, a number of events, relations, and practices not related to 'material' objects are encircled into the *logic* of consumption. And finally, people are defined as *consumers* (Silla, 2018: 3). To discuss a 'consumer society' is not to eradicate the range of historical, geographical, political, and social differences but to help constitute the character of social order where a human type, 'the consumer', is involved in a 'consumer culture'. Therefore, a 'consumer society' highlights the important aspects of the construction and mobilisation of ‘the consumer’, adding a more analytical layer to the term ‘consumer culture’.

Due to Western dominance, consumer culture has spread around the world (ibid.: 9; Featherstone, 1991: 84). Welch, Sahakian and Wahlen (2022: 4) note that the West was the first society to define itself as ‘modern’ and associated with ideas of a ‘democratic consumer capitalism’. These ideas have become more widespread and in 2022, more people have joined the ‘global consumer class’ around the world. To exemplify this point, they note that in 2002, only 1 percent (7.5 million) of the Chinese population was a part of the ‘global middle class’, but by 2018, this reached 25 per cent (344 million), nearly double the size of the consuming classes in Europe and the United States (p.4). Due to Western dominance, consumer culture has become a global phenomenon (Slater, 1997: 9). For this reason, ‘consumer society’ may be too broad to use in the contemporary context as it does not always relate to Western societies.

Crucially, the type of consumer society in the modern period is different from other types because it is based “on a particular way of organising the relationship between people and objects, and between human wants and the means for satisfying them” which should not be viewed as normal or, from a genealogical standpoint, as a preordained outcome of a linear ‘process’ (p.4). However, the way modern consumption is tightly bound with industrial capitalism, and selling goods and commodities for profit, should also not be taken for granted. The term ‘consumer capitalism’ helps capture the analytical aspects of consumer society but also the emphasis on capitalism and the West. For this reason, I have decided to use the concept ‘consumer capitalism’ in this thesis to ensure I capture the important and harmful components of capitalism (p.5). The term also specifies my focus on a capitalist country: the USA.

2.2.5 The Sociology of Consumption and Cultural Studies

It is important to highlight how this thesis engages with understandings of consumer capitalism that are informed by both sociological perspectives and cultural studies. Consumption is an important aspect within both sociological and cultural studies, and I will outline the developments of these theories to explain where this work is situated. The thesis aims to interrogate how a postfeminist entanglement in *Vogue* constructs subjecthoods and notions of women's freedom. It is, therefore, important to outline how 'freedom' under consumer capitalism is understood.

Social scientists addressed consumption from the 1960s in response to the mass production and material abundance in the post-war boom (Warde, 2022: 13). The Frankfurt school adopted classical Marxist lines of thinking, around alienation, commodity fetishism and rationalisation to develop their 'notoriously' pessimistic view of consumer culture (Campbell, 1995, Warde, 2022). In this school of thought, "culture as a whole has become consumer culture. All culture is now produced, exchanged, and consumed in the form of commodities" (Campbell, 1995: 121). Intellectuals and social scientists expressed disapproval of mass consumption and viewed it as vulgar, wasteful, and character-destroying (Warde, 2022: 13). This work on consumption is sometimes hailed as overly critical, especially the work from the Frankfurt School on the culture industry and mass society (Evans, 2019: 503). Neo-Marxist critical theorists engaged with a cultural aspect of consumption, i.e. mass culture, but they only offered a detached viewpoint that disregarded the reality of popular culture (Campbell, 1995: 97-8).

In the 1970s and 1980s, the 'cultural turn' critiqued these theories as elitist and moralist and instead stressed the potential of consumption and popular culture. During this turn, humanities and social sciences explored the ways "mass-produced goods and services provide comfort and entertainment" for many (Warde, Welch & Paddock, 2017: 281). The cultural turn allowed a closer analysis of 'ordinary people' and their cultures with new ethnographic studies emerging. These studies began to recognise the ‘protest’ or ‘resistance’ of cultural forms adopted by ordinary people, rather than simply ‘compliance’ or ‘despair’ (Campbell, 1995: 98). The previous negative associations of consumerism and ‘the media as manipulative’ was “too crude a denial of human agency” and scholars began to look for areas of diversity within mass consumption (Hilton, 2003: 8). Criticisms of this Marxist thinking highlighted the assumption that consumer “needs are entirely imposed on them by the functional requirements of the system”, which ignored the creative, conscious, and rebellious ways people can deal with goods (Slater, 1997: 125). Through semiotic research on popular culture and mass media, scholars found ways individuals and groups could find self-expression and cultural experiences in consumption (ibid.: 282). Consumption came to be seen “as a means by which individuals and groups expressed their identities through symbolic representation in taste and lifestyle, with their desires focused on symbolic rather than material reward” (Warde, 2022: 13).

The cultural turn was also influenced by theories of postmodernist culture that emphasised a process of individualisation and informalisation; both stressed the reduced social embeddedness and normative regulation that characterised social groups (Warde, 1997: 13). David Harvey (1989) described postmodernity as the “shifting and churning that has gone on since the first major post-war recession of 1978” where the Fordist system was replaced by post-Fordism (ibid.:2). This thinking foregrounded aspects of consumer culture such as enhanced individual freedom, empowerment, and the ability to exercise choices in the marketplace. Self-identity was bound up with lifestyle and the idea that people must now monitor their consumption behaviour to accurately present themselves to others emerged (ibid.). Baumann (1988) argued that people are less restricted in the realm of consumption than in any other area of life, and it *appears* as a site of freedom (Warde, 1997: 11).

Following this, Lefebvre (1990) and Baudrillard (1988) considered alternatives to theories of alienation, the idea that “we are *bored”* (Slater, 1997: 127). Under this line of thinking, all of reality has become alien and objective, and ‘the society of spectacle’

(Debord, 1967) emerged. Alienation has spread from the workplace and has absorbed leisure and culture in everyday life (ibid.). Under postmodern theories and the ‘logic of signs’, individuals are seen as commercial images with the ability to “forever play out, adapt, and experiment with the signs and imagery of commodity capitalism” (Hilton, 2003: 8). People come to be defined through the goods and practices they possess and display (Warde, 1997: 10). However, some sociologists argue that these theories overemphasised an individualised sense of decision-making and, in general, “consumer behaviour is more socially disciplined, less anxiety provoking and less concerned with self-identity” (Warde, 1997: 10). One of the most sophisticated theories of consumption came from Bourdieu’s (1984) work on habitus and distinction. Bourdieu offered a complex and nuanced account of the ways social classes can be identified by their consumption patterns. Consumer behaviour can, therefore, be explained in terms of the role of display and social judgement in the formation of class identities (p.9). Bourdieu did not emphasise consumption as a realm of freedom. Instead, he portrayed how the types of “furniture, paintings, books, cars, spirits, cigarettes, perfume, clothes” that surround a person, and their preferences in “sports, games, entertainments” are classed and display ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 173).

Despite Bourdieu’s influence, by the 1990s, the cultural turn had become hegemonic and an overemphasis on aesthetics and communication neglected materialist concerns (Warde, 2022: 14). The emphasis on the expressive individual is criticised for the lack of attention paid to the appropriation of products. However, in the mid-1980s anthropologists developed insights into the appropriation of mass-produced objects (e.g. Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986; Miller, 1987; McCracken, 1990). This body of work steered consumption studies towards ‘things’ and led to the turn towards material culture. Miller (1995, 2001) claimed that empirically grounded work should be developed to counter the ‘myths of consumerism’ that were being reproduced in social theory (Evans, 2019: 504).

Practice theories emerged in social theory in the 1970s (Ortner, 1984) and readdressed the ‘biases’ of hegemonic cultural analysis by offering an alternative to models of individual choice and action (whether based upon the sovereign consumer or expressive individual) (Warde, 2022: 15). Welch and Warde (2015) note that the shift towards practice theories was due to the dissatisfaction of the theoretical emphasis on: “the symbolic and the conspicuous aspects of consumption, their role in communication and their support for ‘expressive individualism’” (p.3). Against these models, “practice theories emphasize routine over actions, flow and sequence over discrete acts, dispositions over decisions, and practical consciousness over deliberation” (Warde, 2014: 286). As a result, the material comes into focus rather than the symbolic and “embodied practical competence over expressive virtuosity in the fashioned presentation of the self” (ibid.). Practice theories pay attention to the role of equipment, objects, tools, material artefacts and infrastructures (Warde, 2022: 15). Overall, they have a sociological orientation that emphasises the social embeddedness of processes of consumption (ibid.).

However, Evans (2019: 508) and Welch (2020: 62) suggest that practice theory risks neglecting cultural approaches to consumption, which can explain why the postfeminist subject is overlooked in this field. Welch highlights that practice theories tend to focus on the mundane and ordinary forms of consumption and position themselves against the Frankfurt School style of criticism and other forms of 20th-century critique. Practices are the primary unit of analysis, but they tend to “militate away from the use of concepts that capture the kind of large-scale configurations of discourse and practice that enable engagement with this earlier generation of concerns with consumer culture” (p.63). Also, in his consideration of practice theory approaches to sustainable consumption, Evans (2019) argues that there can be an overemphasis on inconspicuous consumption (the invisible but still environmentally impactful forms of using resources such as heating). It is important to recognise that not all consumption is ordinary or mundane, such as new cars, smartphones, fast fashion, and luxury world travel, but still has a significant impact on the environment.

Terms such as ‘ordinary’ or ‘mundane’ consumption are loaded concepts that can moralise consumption. As Welch notes, these issues echo and enable an engagement with the earlier generation of concerns with consumer culture (2020: 63).

This section shows how understandings of consumption and consumer capitalism have developed within academia. This thesis is informed by these developments and supports Evans’ (2019) view that conspicuous consumption is still a vital area of research and significantly impacts the environment. This is why *Vogue* was chosen as the site of investigation and seen to play an important role in the practices and normalisation of luxury consumption for Western women that is bound up with postfeminist values of freedom and empowerment. This section shows how both the sociology and cultural studies inform the thesis, especially the use of fashion as a site of both materiality and the symbolic.

Overall, the sociology of consumption and consumer culture traces developments and projects of consumer capitalism across the 20th century. An understanding of this history is vital as the thesis tracks the history of a postfeminist entanglement and is attentive to the other processes outside neoliberalism that can shape this entanglement. There were major developments in advertising, magazines, and branding during this time that the visual discourse analysis focuses on. Also, this literature shows how wider shifts in production impact the projects of consumer capitalism, such as niche markets, standardised products, and democratisation that impacts women’s fashion. The thesis also explores the types of subjecthoods that are constructed for women across the 20th century and how these are informed by the projects of consumer capitalism. Therefore, the insights from the work on the construction of ‘the consumer’ allow me to engage with these subjecthoods as figurations of gendered ‘consumers’ and understand how women are mobilised by and for the agendas of consumer capitalism.

The analysis focuses on the political-cultural work on woman and versions of ‘the female consumer’ over time. The understanding of consumer culture and ‘the consumer' shows the importance of consumer capitalism in the development of a 21st century postfeminist landscape. By not only emphasising neoliberalism as a part of the entanglement with feminist values, and also considering the values and projects of consumer culture as an influence, the history of a postfeminist entanglement can be investigated prior to the 1980s dominance of neoliberal politics. The work on consumer culture also raises questions about new constructions of 'the consumer' that engage with sustainability and shape narratives of consumption under the contemporary context of the concern for the environmental harm of consumption.

2.3 Linking Feminist and Environmental Politics to Constructions of Women and Consumer Culture

In the previous sections, I have outlined the importance of postfeminist critical cultural studies, discussed postfeminism as an entanglement, emphasised the role of neoliberalism, and presented insights from the sociology of consumer culture. These discussions have outlined feminist values and the projects of consumer capitalism. In the upcoming section, I will outline why the research questions investigate wider feminist and environmental politics, and how these issues are interconnected with the constructions of women, consumer culture, and fashion. This section also provide further clarification on what constitutes 'wider feminist and environmental politics' within the thesis.

Within the sociology of consumer culture, the concern for the environment and how this impacts the practices of consumption and constructions of 'the consumer' is an important area of current research and discussion. However, postfeminist critical studies avoid how this concern for the planet may impact postfeminist discourse, particularly regarding women's consumer culture. Conversely, the sociology of consumer culture does not consistently adopt a gendered lens in the studies and constructs non-gendered accounts. Here, I will present scholarly works that have employed a gendered analysis of consumer culture and those that integrate feminist and environmental concerns.

In the contemporary feminist landscape, there has been both a popularity of feminist cultural messages and popular misogyny within the media and marketing. Banet-Weiser (2018) recognises that “popular feminist and popular misogynistic brands did not simply emerge in the twenty-first century but are instead connected to historical processes of branding politics” (p.44). Authors such as Victoria de Grazia, Susan Bordo, Lynn Spigel and others have pointed out the variety of debates about consumer constructions of freedom for Western women. From “historical analyses of consumer culture’s expansion of middle-class women’s social and institutional boundaries to examinations of consumer culture representation of women and the ‘female’ audience” (2012: 20). Therefore, the question ‘have women been empowered by access to the goods, sites, spectacles, and services associated with mass consumption?’ has a long history.

In her study on mid-20th century consumer culture, McClintock (1995) reveals how soap was a rich source for the notion of ‘consumption as a civic duty’, where ‘cleanliness’ stood for both the physical body and the social body (ibid.:22). This work shows that commodities were constructed to represent cultural and social values and they affirmed racial and gender hierarchies (ibid.). McClintock notes: “Soap flourished not only because it created and filled a spectacular gap in the domestic market but also because, as a cheap and portable domestic commodity, it could persuasively mediate the Victorian poetics of racial hygiene and imperial progress” (1995: 209). In Peiss’s (1996: 331) historical research on the cosmetics industry, she challenges reductionist takes on makeup as simple ‘masks’ imposed by patriarchal society or by a racist culture (in Banet-Weiser, 2012: 22). Instead, she argues that women’s consumption can be understood in the broader contexts of consumer conformity and female empowerment (ibid.). While she does not deny that cosmetic marketing contributed to the commodification of gendered identity, makeup also destabilised traditional gendered hierarchies based on notions of private and public (ibid.). The cosmetic industry in the early to mid-20th century capitalised on insecurity but also created a market exclusively for women.

The studies show how a gendered analysis of consumer culture through time can provide insights and nuance to the understanding of contemporary postfeminist entanglement. Piess's work highlights how gendered practices (wearing makeup) are bound up with the projects of consumer capitalism. In this case, the cosmetics industry created a specific gendered market to advertise to. It can also be suggested that cosmetics were democratised during this period as they were once associated with prostitution but became normalised and available to all women in the early 20th century (Scott, 2006). This thesis is inspired by these studies that adopt feminist analyses of consumer culture and explore the history of women's consumer culture. The studies consider how the projects of consumer capitalism shape social and cultural norms and are also shaped *by* these norms. Therefore, there are longer histories of the gendered norms and values in contemporary consumer capitalism and the discourses of women's empowerment.

2.3.1 Considering the Environment and Ethical Consumption

Other aspects of contemporary consumer culture include the increasing narratives on the environment. Sociological work on sustainable consumption is expanding, especially as the climate emergency becomes a focus of the mass media and corporate initiatives. Littler (2008: 92) highlights that as newspapers present people with images of 'dead seas', anxieties around plastic, and new power plants, some "high profile responses to this have been attempts to 'green' consumption". Environmentalism is having a 'moment' again after the emerging movement from the 1960s and 70s was squashed in the 1980s by Thatcher politics (Castree, 2006; in ibid.: 94). Now, the world's most powerful states and politicians on the left and right want to be seen to engage with an environmental agenda (ibid.). However, the 'new green order' channels people's fears of climate change into endorsing a neoliberal set of solutions that continue market-led corporate expansion (ibid.: 95). This order also ramifies divisions between economically powerful and weak countries and seeks to gain approval and endorsement for these strategies by making climate change the problem of the 'individual'. The shift to the individual means governments or regulators avoid the responsibility to apply policy solutions to production and distribution (ibid.). Therefore, the individual is burdened with an overwhelming responsibility for change, known as 'responsibilization'. In neo-Foucauldian work on governmentality, these discourses imply that, in order to combat climate change, individuals need to 'govern their souls' rather than for governments to take action on structural challenges, and as such is a continuation of neoliberalism (ibid.). The work on environmental responsibilization shows how the neoliberal status quo is problematic for both scholars of postfeminism and sustainable consumption. Therefore, the work on responsibility and ethical consumption showcases the overlap between the two sections of this literature review: postfeminism and consumption.

Scholars discuss the extent to which consumer culture and ethical consumption can produce changes for the environment. In Barnett et al.'s (2011) work, they argue that a popular conclusion about consumerism is that it distracts from civic duty. They highlight Lasch's (1979) arguments that consumerism is an expression of cultural narcissism. Barnett et al. highlight that these narratives suggest a stark and simple opposition between individualism and collective action (p.29). Schudson (2007) states that "not only can consumer choices express political values and be assembled into political projects [...] but consumerism can also enhance democratic, citizenly culture in various ways" (2011: 33). Examples include ethical trading organisations (e.g. Body Shop, Fairtrade Foundation); lobby groups (e.g., the Soil Association); trade justice campaign organisations (e.g. Oxfam, Christian Aid); the co-operative movement (e.g. UK Co-op); consumer boycott campaigns (e.g. Anti-Nestlé, Stop Esso); and 'No Logo' anti-globalization campaigns (e.g. against Nike, Gap, McDonald's) (ibid.: 37). Littler (2011) also highlights further examples, including fair trade products, anti-sweatshop products, buying local products and consuming less by 'downshifting' (p.27).

Contemporary ethical consumption campaigning showcases that 'the consumer' is not always an economistic, self-interested, utility maximiser (as neoliberal theories assume), but rather 'the consumer' is invoked as the bearer of responsibility for their own benefit and dispensed to others (p.41). Nava (1992) and Beck's (1997) work showcases the political potential for ethical purchasing, and Micheletti (2003) highlights that political consumerism represents the emergence of 'individualised collective action' where people can use their power as consumers (Barnett et al., 2011, Littler, 2011: 31). However, it is important to note that there are privileges around purchasing power, such as 'green' products often having a higher price tag and sometimes critiqued for their 'eco-aristocracy' and associated with the middle and upper classes (Littler, 2008: 101). Despite these arguments, it is important not to sympathise too much with consumers and scholars should remain critical of the damage from consumer culture (Evans, 2019).

Littler (2011) draws out the complexities of ethical consumption campaigns such as buying fairtrade wine from Chile that contradicts 'buying local' schemes to save food miles. Another example includes, buying 10 organic t-shirts from Marks & Spencer which sits in opposition to downshifting your consumption (p.27-8). Ethical consumption also has varying goals, such as Adbusters who poke fun at contemporary neoliberal consumer culture. On the other hand, charity ethical campaigns such as RED product associations with brands like Starbucks, Armani, and American Express neither provide critique nor promote downshifting. RED, instead, enables brands to promote their (limited) association with the anti-AIDS charity and continue to encourage the consumption of their products (p.28). Therefore, ethical *consumption* becomes a zone of 'contradictory consumption' but ethical *consumerism* (such as RED) is a tautology. Consumerism that promotes ethics continues to rely on neoliberal capitalism's structures of unequal wealth divides.

Due to this corporate adoption, Littler (2008) questions how ‘radical’ this consumption can be. Not all ethical consumption is produced by corporations, and some co-operative initiatives exist in the US, the UK and Europe. Littler raises concerns about the increasing ‘greenwashing’ of corporations. She argues that products sold as ‘organic’ in Europe and the US must meet strict legal restrictions whereas those labelled as ‘green’ are more ambiguously defined and loosely legislated (2011: 29-30). Fast fashion companies also create sustainable initiative programmes, while they continue to contribute heavily to pollution and wastage. For example, in 2017, Swedish fast fashion brand H&M launched their *Close the Loop* incitive to recycle clothes in the store, but in the same year, it was revealed that they sourced viscose from factories in China and Indonesia causing toxic contamination of waters (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020: 352). In 2015, a Nielsen poll showed that 66 per cent of global consumers were willing to pay more for environmentally sustainable products and among millennial age groups, this rose to 72 per cent (Majláth, 2017: 92). The study showcases the profitability for a corporation to express a ‘sustainable’ brand reputation.

There are many ways corporations can increase their brand reputation through ‘ethical consumption’. Littler (2008: 29) highlights ‘Cause Related Marketing’ (CRM) as a strategy used by corporations where they join with charities to show their support. CRM seems positive as “everybody appears to be helped: consumers get to contribute without significantly changing their behaviour, while brand value is added to the corporation” (ibid.). On the other hand, ‘corporate social responsibility’ (CSR), a term that emerged in the 1990s, refers to corporate initiatives that manage their reputation in the face of criticism (p.61). Companies can regulate their own behaviour before an outsider source regulates them (p.66). For some, it is not a coincidence that CSR was born during the early 1990s when corporations pushed for their own power and governments passed laws to facilitate this (Harvey, 2005; Monbiot, 2002; in Littler, 2008: 66). A useful example of how this works includes when Tony Blair’s public request for Britain’s major companies to publish environmental reports by the end of

2001 helped diffuse some of the public pressure for government actions, but as it was voluntary, three-quarters failed to report (ibid.: 67). As a result, Littler showcases how corporations adopt political strategies of ethical consumption to increase their brand reputation. Overall, ethical consumption is a messy landscape, fraught with contradictions and confusion. However, a growing concern for the environment from many consumers suggests changing practices of consumption and highlights a care for the environment.

2.3.2 Ethics of Care

The concept of a 'care' for the environment is discussed by many feminists. Care is a term rooted in feminist ethics as it accounts for the ways women are more prone to value "intimacy, responsibility, relationships, and caring for others" (Norlock, 2019; in Godin, 2022: 399). Care can be defined as a "species of activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. The 'world' includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment" (Fisher & Tronto, 1990: 40). Godin (2022) adopts this definition and highlights three main features of care that link to consumption and environmental politics.

Firstly, it involves bodies and the material world, both sentient and non-sentient (p.399). It is important to acknowledge that Godin moves away from other definitions that restrict care as interactive or face-to-face as this complicates thinking about consumption. Secondly, care implies vulnerability and interdependence. Vulnerability is an essential part of human life as bodies must be sustained and cared for. Depending on one another for care is a pre-condition of being in the world (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012: 198). Thirdly, care is a way of knowing and interacting with the world and 'thinking with care' means acknowledging interdependencies and collectivity. These features make care an important tool for thinking about "consumption as embedded in social relations within and outside the market", they consider the consequences of moving towards sustainable lifestyles (Godin, 2022: 399).

Miller's (2005) work on shopping emphasises it as an act of love mostly done by women that helps maintain family relations, romantic relations, and friendships (p.400). In this gendered analysis, shopping for food, clothes and other household items is seen as emotional labour and a part of caring. Gift-giving and sharing in the private sphere are also viewed as emotional/care work that is often done by women and is undervalued (Belk, 2010). Studies have shown, for instance, that ethical consumption is presented as a way for some new mothers to build their identity (Carey et al, 2008; Heath et al, 2016; in Godin, 2022). Another instance is 'green' consumption, where the market creates an opportunity to care for a 'distant other', such as fair-trade products. As a result, consumers put their trust in intermediaries in the hope that their acts of benevolence reach their ultimate objectives (Shaw et al., 2017). The adoption of a more 'sustainable' lifestyle (through everyday consumption) ties to one of the fundamental features of care highlighted by Fisher and Tronto (1990): to maintain or repair our world.

However, maintaining this lifestyle means changing everyday routines and habits which involve caregiving and resources (p.400-1). Such changes require time and money that are not distributed equally between households and these changes are at risk of creating or entrenching inequalities within the home between genders (Godin, 2022). The authors call attention to the ways 'green' consumption can engrain gendered norms and values of care. *Vogue*'s intended audience is made up of mainly middle- to upper-class women who are among those who have the time and resources to engage with these caring practices. It is important to consider how consumer capitalist documents engage with these issues and discourses of care for the environment through a gendered lens or postfeminism.

One of the causes of a contemporary commodification of care is the direct consequence of a 'care deficit' (Hochschild, 2000; 2003). The care deficit began with women’s entry into the workplace who follow traditional (masculine) career paths that require other people to accomplish care work (usually women). At the same time, the state retracted support in providing care due to neoliberal and austerity policies. This led to the expansion of the care industry that mostly relies on migrant women from the global south to provide their services to families and institutions in the West (2000: 131). The global chain of care leaves a deficit in the global South where love is taken from one part of the world and brought to another, creating suffering for those left behind and those who had to leave. Consequently, the commodification of care “robs communities of the presence and emotional involvement” of its members (p.402). One ‘solution’ to this problem is the rise of the ‘smart wife’ (Strengers & Kennedy, 2020). The ‘smart wife’ is technology or AI that carries out domestic labour, from virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa, smart washing machines, connected doorbells and surveillance or even sex bots and holograms that bring emotional comfort. The development of the smart wife means that in times of great vulnerability, such as childhood, sickness, or old age, physical and emotional needs are being addressed through market exchanges (p.403).

Overall, a lack of care risks destroying collective structures and is particularly important in an era of climate change and rising inequalities (ibid.). What this work highlights is how a feminist ethics of care is tied to consumption and sustainable practices. The ‘solutions’ to these issues are also entrenched in sexist thinking and continue to cement gender stereotypes. Therefore, it is important to consider how a postfeminist entanglement may be impacted by or shaped by environmental concerns.

This work has shown how feminist scholars analyse care within consumer culture and the rising concern for ‘caring at a distance’. It shows why the thesis is engaging with environmental politics, rather than limiting a postfeminist critical study to the representation and discourses of women, but also engaging with care and a care for non-human entities. This consideration of the environment *and* postfeminist discourse will enable the thesis to investigate an area of research that is underexplored. The understanding of posthumanism and Actor-Network theory provides further insights into the thesis' analysis of both postfeminism and the environment.

2.3.3 Non-Human Theory

In this thesis, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is used to develop novel understandings of fashion and emphasise why fashion is a useful site for this research as it captures concerns including women, feminists, subjecthood, the environment, and care.[9] The fashion magazine, *Vogue*, operates at a level of creating fantasy images and constructions of women's subjecthoods. The materials that are used to construct these goods are alienated from the audience. The magazine also constructs 'modern' subjecthoods as style and fashion are often bound up with notions of being 'modern'. In Bruno Latour's influential work, *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991), he considers how claims to be 'modern' divide 'culture' from 'nature'. Under this view of being 'modern', human knowledge of science and technology becomes a superior 'culture' that is distinct from a passive 'nature'. However, he argues that these binaries do not exist, and 'nature' is not merely 'out-there' or separate from us as we are enmeshed in it (Latour, 1991: 104).

Under this view, the world is a hybrid of nature-culture. An example includes the contemporary issues of global warming that cannot be seen as natural events but as hybrids that are natural and social. Latour's theory helps show how fashion is a useful site of nature-culture. The fashion industry uses natural resources, degrades environmental landscapes, pollutes water, and creates waste. The case studies in this thesis highlight two occasions where the fashion industry is critiqued for the impact it has on ‘nature’, including the use of animal fur and unsustainable practices that lead to a huge amount of waste and pollution to the environment. Despite this link, sociological studies of consumer culture often do not consider fashion but “there is certainly scope for thinking about fashion consumption in terms of practices that encompass the whole life history of clothes and our relationships to them as material objects” (Rocomora & Smelik, 2016: 727).

---

[9] For an extended discussion please see section 1.1 (Parkins, 2008) and section 2.4.5.

ANT exemplifies how some postfeminist sensibilities and values are not separate from nature. Postfeminist studies focus on the ways brands and adverts adopt a language of ‘empowerment’ to create subjecthoods for women that prioritise consumption as a site of choice and freedom. However, these analyses overlook concerns for the environment. ANT also allows the thesis to acknowledge how an ethics of care operates within a women’s consumer cultural document where there are tensions between the projects of consumer capitalism and wider environmental concerns. As a result, the thesis will explore how environmental politics operate with postfeminism and how *Vogue*’s responses create further tensions for wider environmental politics.

Vogue magazine is bound up with the current criticism towards the environmental harm of the fashion industry as they are seen as responsible for creating new fashion trends that obsolete and trickle into fast fashion practices. Not only does fast fashion pose a threat to the environment but it is also an expanding market that targets young women. As a result, fast fashion has become a site of tension that captures the intersecting themes of this thesis: notions of Western women’s empowerment, choice, consumer capitalism, generations, and the environment. EarthOrg (2023) defines fast fashion as “cheaply produced and priced garments that copy the latest catwalk styles and get pumped quickly through stores in order to maximise current trends”. This involves the rapid design, production, distribution, and marketing of clothing and allows consumers to get more fashion products at a low price (ibid.). According to EarthOrg, the biggest fast fashion brands in 2023 are Zara, UNIQLO, Forever 21 and H&M. The term was first used in the 1990s when Zara revealed they could take a garment from design to shop floor in only 15 days (ibid.). *Vogue* highlight the new trends set by luxury fashion houses to their audience to disseminate new demands for garments.

The fashion industry is estimated to produce 8-10% of global CO2 emissions (4-5 billion tonnes annually), consume around 79 trillion litres of water per year, responsible for around 20% of industrial water pollution from textile treatment and dyeing, contribute 190,000 tonnes of oceanic microplastics, and 92 million tonnes of textile waste per year (Niinimäki et al., 2020: 189). The global consumption of fashion is around 62 million tonnes of apparel per year and is projected to reach 102 million by 2030 (ibid.). Fashion brands produced twice the amount of clothing in 2020 as they did before 2000 (ibid.). The authors argue it is the fast fashion business model that has increased production in the last 20 years. As a result, in the USA the average consumer now purchases one item of clothing every 5.5 days, (ibid., see footnotes for European statistics).[10] Garment usage time has decreased by 36% from 2005 where, in the Global North, items are disposed of after little usage, especially for impulse purchases (ibid.: 190). From the statistics, it is clear that fast fashion production is a key environmental threat.

Environmental concerns about fashion are not specific to the 21st century as politically active environmentalists have chosen second-hand clothing, used 'alternative' fibres such as hemp, and sought to minimise clothing consumption in previous decades (Chris & Elyse, 2013: 172). However, sustainable solutions or 'green' fashion have become mainstream and gained publicity in recent years (ibid.). Green marketing is profitable and fast fashion brands promote their 'sustainable' initiatives (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020). There is also a feminization of green consumption as some feminists argue that because women are considered 'closer to nature' and more caring, therefore targeted by 'green' initiatives (ibid.: 338). For instance, eco-friendly household and baby-related products are pushed onto mothers (Smith, 2010). Narratives of female empowerment and CSR (corporate social responsibility) often overlap in environmental adverts, showcasing a neoliberal/postfeminist individualisation of structural issues (ibid.). Karlsson and Ramasar's work on multiple fast fashion 'green' adverts shows how H&M's 'Close the Loop' programme (where clothing recycling stations are set up in stores)[11] uses young women and girls wearing T-shirts that read 'RE-USE', 'STAND UP', 'ACT NOW' and 'CARE FOR WATER' (p.349). However, when interviewed about the meaning of this, 8 out of 17 participants knew the meaning of 'Close the Loop' but were unsure about "what [the clothing] is being recycled into or what difference it actually makes" (p.352).

---

[10] Each year, the average person buys 14.5 kg of new clothes in Italy, 16.7kg in Germany, 26.7kg in the UK, and between 13-16kg in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

Overall, their work shows the ways women are targeted by environmentally friendly schemes, but the adverts also use discourses of empowerment and female pleasure (when purchasing) to continue to celebrate consumer capitalism (ibid.: 353). The postfeminist focus on individual choice as a source of empowerment, that helps maintain the neoliberal status quo, merges with sustainable advertising (Thwaites, 2017: 57; in Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020: 354). As a result, 'green consumers' can maintain their high-status (or excessive) lifestyle while 'supporting' environmental causes (Park & Pellow, 2011: 37).

Consumers care about climate change but are alienated from the realities of production and distanced from sites of labour (Norgaard, 2011; 2012). Overall, this indicates how corporations have turned their detrimental environmental degradation, labour rights, and human rights issues into positive selling points, where they ‘fix’ the issues they create (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020: 355-6). These marketing discourses are entangled with the idea that more consumption can lead to female empowerment *and* environmental sustainability. Fashion is a contemporary site of struggle, where individual interests clash with political concerns for the environment, the distanced ‘other’, and women’s empowerment through consumption. This shows how issues of postfeminism, neoliberalism, and the environment are entangled, and women’s fashion is a site of tension, from the early 20th century to the current 2020s period.

---

[11] Close the loop assumes H&M is referencing the circular economy, where waste is eliminated from the lifecycle of products and resource use is decreased. Karlsson and Ramasar argue it has become a buzzword in the fashion industry to promote recycling and products made from (or partially) recycled materials (2020: 352).

This section has highlighted environmental concerns and values in the contemporary period and how it intersects with issues of ethical consumption, posthuman theory, feminist concerns and postfeminist discourse. The section began by exploring the scholarly work that has developed a historical and gendered analysis of consumer culture, of which this thesis is inspired and ethical consumption. It explored feminist ethics of care and how ‘sustainable’ consumption can continue gendered stereotypes, but also construct sexist and postfeminist ‘solutions’. Therefore, this work highlights the importance of feminist analyses of consumer culture. Through ANT, the literature shows how fashion is a site of nature-culture and how criticisms of the fashion industry raise tensions for cultural intermediaries, such as *Vogue*, that develop the projects of consumer capitalism. The thesis is inspired by much of the literature in this review, but there are some problems and challenges raised in the scholarly work. In the next section, I will review these issues and discuss how these problems will be considered in the analysis.

2.4 Resources for Analysis

Up until this point in the literature review, I have only briefly touched on some of the critiques of postfeminist critical studies and the sociology of consumer culture, these include an overemphasis on neoliberalism and non-gendered analyses. In this section, I will expand on this critical analysis. Firstly, I explore the ahistoricism in some of the critical postfeminist cultural analyses, the problems in this literature of not engaging with consumer cultural analyses and the figure of 'the consumer', the youth and generational dimensions of this work, and the lack of engaging with debates on environmental decline. Then, I turn to the lack of gendered analyses in the literature on consumer culture and the consumer. Finally, I expand on the importance of fashion for the methods of this thesis and highlight the tools for analysis that will be taken forward in this work.

2.4.1 Ahistoricism and Generational Challenges

One of the challenges of exploring feminisms is the frequent simplification of historical movements. For many authors, feminism is comprised of three or four 'waves' that represent movements that took/take place in the Western world. Laughlin et al. (2010: 76) state that the "ubiquitous waves metaphor remains the dominant conceptual framework for analysing and explaining the genesis of movements for women's rights in the United States". The authors argue that the first wave is seen to have started around the 1848 meeting in Seneca Falls, New York, as a movement for civil and political rights, such as property ownership and suffrage. The wave then ended in the 1920s when the vote to women was achieved. The second wave began in the mid-1960s with a focus on activism to broaden the notion of equality and ended in the mid-1980s after criticism that this feminism asserted the goals of privileged, white, heterosexual women. The third wave is seen as an effort by younger men and women to incorporate more fluid notions of gender and consider the intersecting identities of age, class, race, and sexuality (p.77).

Postfeminism is often viewed as a movement that is critical of second-wave feminism and "challenges many of its fundamental propositions" under the assumption that gender equality has been achieved in the West (Milestone & Meyer, 2011: 11). However, these simplistic narratives of feminisms overlook periods in history that are not considered at the peak of a 'wave'. The simplification also ignores any complexities within feminisms and draws upon divisive arguments that do not locate ‘second-wave feminism’ or ‘postfeminism’ in a time-specific context. Also, generational narratives emerge from these positions. The wave metaphor “entrenches the perception of a ‘singular’ feminism in which gender is the predominant category of analysis” (Laughlin et al., 2010). However, the ‘waves’ focus particularly on single moments of protest rather than wider types of collective and individual action, it also takes the focus away from feminist beliefs that gender relations intersect with other social hierarchies (p.78).

To unpack the wave metaphor, Aikau, Erikson and Pierce (2007: 6) highlight that scientists do not define waves in isolation from one another but as connected to multiple sets or train waves. They suggest this is how feminist metaphors should be thought of. Laughlin et al. suggest that this metaphor also tightly defines ‘who gets to be a feminist’ and can leave out the longer history of feminist practices that have persisted in different social, political, and cultural forms (p.78). For instance, the wave metaphor suggests that after women increased social and political autonomy in the early 20th century, feminism did not survive until it was revived by a mass-based movement in the 1960s and 70s. Feminist history is erased through these simplifications. For example, the activism of working-class women in the 1930s and 40s, under industrial unionism and the public-sector union organising in the 1980s, are absent from the history of feminism (p.79-80). Historian Karen Offen uses a volcano metaphor to argue that feminism is a “rather fluid form of discontent that repeatedly presses against…weak spots in the sedimented layers of patriarchal crust” (2000: 25-6). I support Offen’s claim that the task of the historian is to “map and measure the terrain, to locate the fissures, to analyse the context in which they open…and to evaluate the shifting patterns of activity over time” (ibid.). This thesis is, therefore, attentive to the nuances and complexities of feminism history.

An example work that explores the shifting activity of feminism over time is in Gillis and Munford’s (2004) examination of postfeminism and third-wave feminism. This work tracks a longer history of feminist intersections with culture and feminine consumer products. The research finds that the 1990s rise of ‘Riot Grrrls’ and wider girl culture has often been “positioned as a depoliticised and dehistoricised product of the ‘backlash’ against feminism” (p.170). Feminists such as Germaine Greer argued that the cultural phenomenon of ‘girls behaving badly’ or ‘girls on top’ was not seen to challenge patriarchal structures and instead led to the application of ‘girl’ onto adult women, furthering infantilisation and belittlement (ibid.). However, the popularity of girl power in mainstream culture has cut out the radical and active history. Riot Grrrls used many techniques of second-wave feminism through girl-only mosh pits and weekly feminist meetings where they discussed sexual abuse, eating disorders, sexual harassment, self-defence, and skill-sharing workshops. The groups adopted ‘traditional feminine dresses’ with heavy combat boots to re-represent rather than reject ideas of ‘femininity’. As a result, they created spaces of contradiction and conflict. The girls from these groups argue they did not want to get rid of the trappings of traditional femininity or sexuality but to pair them with demonstrations of strength or power. The Riot Grrrls foreground a celebration of the paraphernalia of ‘femininity’ that was critiqued by second-wave feminism as caught up in patriarchal definitions of female identity (p.171).

Overall, the girl culture of the 1990s illustrated the complexities of femininity versus feminism. Gillis and Munford argue that the ‘power’ and the ‘girl’ in girl power needs to be interrogated rather than dismissed but, ultimately, they represent a shift from the “second wave focus on the politics of representation to an emphasis on the politics of self-representation” (p.173). However, these groups are constructed as rebellious daughters who position themselves against negative associations of patriarchal ideals of femininity but also against the values of second-wave feminism (p.176). This kind of generational thinking risks disengaging from feminist history and poses dangers for feminist futures. The wave paradigm was used during the Reagan-Thatcher years as a backlash. ‘Waves’ assume periods of ‘low tide’ feminism or weakness to depoliticise activism and combines it with the ‘fairy tale’ of second-wave successive mothers and rebellious daughters who threaten them with sexual agency. Therefore, feminist waves must be treated with caution.

Generational arguments are used to separate, for instance, 'old-style feminists' against a 'crazy new generation' who research gender fluidity and sexualities (Winch, Littler, & Keller, 2016: 558). Conflations can, as Sara Ahmed (2016) has argued, be used to silence the complexities in debates on gender and sexual politics (ibid.). For instance, Gloria Steinem argued that young women were supporting Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton so they could meet men. This sparked the critique that she did not consider that young women were against Clinton's neoliberal policies that would ultimately harm women (p.559). Afterwards, it was sensationalised that the 'feminists are at each other again' and raised 'catfight' comments. The authors argue this strengthened postfeminist discourses where the primary divisions within feminism are based on generations rather than race or other politics. It also raises a construction that women of different generations are natural enemies (ibid.). This notion of different feminist 'waves' has been critiqued for creating the idea that a 'new' kind of feminism that has broken with the 'old'. In doing so, the differences, diversity, and connections in the feminist movement are eradicated for a more simplified history. Under this view, postfeminism can be simplified. Greer, for instance, (1999: 12) stated that:

> The future is female, we are told. Feminism has served its purpose and should now eff off. Feminism was longhair, dungarees and dangling earrings; post-feminism was business suits, big hair and lipstick; post-post feminism was ostentatious sluttishness and disorderly behaviour.

This shows a general link between the cultural shifts in popular culture/fashion and feminism(s) across the decades. The 70s is viewed as a 'feminism' with dungarees, then 'postfeminism' emerged in the 80s with power dressing, and later 'post-post feminism' in the 90s with raunch culture and marked by another ‘sexual revolution’. However, it creates simplistic narratives for feminisms that are segregated by ‘waves’.

Within postfeminist critical studies, a postfeminist entanglement is seen as a strictly contemporary phenomenon which creates time boundaries and another distinct ‘wave’ (or ‘anti-wave’). By viewing this feminism as time specific to neoliberalist dominance, the studies overlook deeper complexities of postfeminist entanglements. The ability for feminist and anti-feminist entanglements to exist before neoliberalism and postfeminist discourse is not considered, which is why it is an aim of this thesis. The emphasis on neoliberalism and feminism also overlooks potential contemporary postfeminist tensions with other politics such as environmental politics. When feminism is bound up with ‘waves’ or specific contexts such as neoliberalism, it is difficult to be attentive to the idea of a multitude of feminisms that coexist, develop over time, and change over time. This can overlook other factors, such as the influence and development of the projects of consumer capitalism on the values of popular feminisms. Therefore, this thesis is attentive to the complexities of feminism, paying attention to other periods and definitions of feminisms and constructions of women’s freedom that can develop over long periods of time.

2.4.2 Reconsidering Materiality

Postfeminist discourses are adopted by large consumer capitalist corporations and brands that recognise gender inequality as part of their advertising campaigns. Gill acknowledges that this is a part of larger language shifts in adverts, from an obvious stress on a product towards purchasing a sign of one’s own individuality and empowerment (in 2008: 438; Goldman, 1992; Macdonald, 1995). However, this is an assumption that does not fully explore how ‘the consumer’ has been constructed and mobilised in the past with relation to production and the ongoing projects of consumer capitalism. As previously highlighted, the sovereign consumer had a duty to 'choose' which evoked democratic qualities. In this discussion, I will highlight some of the drawbacks of postfeminist critical studies that can ignore materiality. This section helps to clarity why the case studies on fashion make this thesis original and how combining cultural and sociological theories can develop a deeper understanding.

Banet-Weiser (2018) and Gill & Elias (2014) investigate the current proliferation of feminist language that is adopted by large Western corporations such as Always, Dove, Nike, and Special K cereal. Though many of the adverts from these brands highlight a structural problem where women and girls face a lack of confidence compared to men and boys, the campaigns argue that 'self-confidence' and individual 'empowerment' are the solutions to sexism (Banet Weiser, 2018: 41-53, Gill & Elias, 2014). For instance, Banet-Weiser (2018) analysed the *Always* campaign, 'Like a Girl', which interviewed young girls and teenagers. The interviewers asked: "How do you throw/run/fight like a girl?". In the advert, the teenagers respond with dramatic and satirical movements, flailing their arms to represent feminine movements. However, the younger girls performed the activities with confidence, focus, and strength. The advert asked the viewer: 'When did doing something like a girl become an insult?' and attempted to show how gender stereotypes are taught somewhere around puberty. The advert highlights gender relations of power through the embodied practices of women as weak and dramatic, but the solution to the problem in the advert is to make women 'feel' more confident. There is also the suggestion that if women rejected these stereotypes, sexism and inequality would fade away.

Gill and Elias found comparable postfeminist values in the 2013 *Special K* cereal campaign, 'Let's shut down fat talk' (2014: 189). The brand stated that 93% of women talk about their bodies in negative ways, complaining that they are 'fat', and talking negatively of other women's bodies. However, *Special K* is a brand that encourages women to consume 'low fat' cereal to maintain a fat-loss diet. Gill and Elias argue that the brand's campaign simply allows *Special K* to shift any critiques aimed at them for encouraging this 'fat talk', as they have a history of advertising the message that "being lovable is contingent upon being thin" (2014: 188). The campaign is not about revealing patriarchal values, but rather shifting the blame onto individual women. One woman in the advert claims, "Fat talk…is like bullying yourself" and others reflect that they "can't speak that about [themselves anymore]" (ibid: 190). Gill and Elias conclude that this discourse of confidence and empowerment shows that it is no longer good enough to simply have a disciplined body, women must now have a beautiful body *and* mind to accompany it (ibid.). From this, the discourse is far removed from a feminist rejection of patriarchal standards for women, but rather an intensification of the regulation of women, that they must not only apply body work but also psychological work.

The research by Banet-Weiser and Gill & Elias shows that adverts incorporate a postfeminist emphasis on the individual when they engage with a criticism of gender relations and patriarchy. In addition to this, the consumer culture narratives suggest that women can gain confidence through consumption and embodied or psychological work. To defy sexism and misogyny, women can engage with brands that encourage confidence and empowerment. It should also be noted that *Always* and *Special K* specifically market to a feminine audience. These brands do not sell to masculine markets and, therefore, they do not risk their reputation with those that benefit from sexism and misogyny (or those that may harbour sexist and misogynistic views). Therefore, the two brands are 'targeting sexism' and gender relations but do so on a stage in front of women rather than a wider audience. The adverts shy away from being too structurally radical or risk sales with an audience of men who may be put off by a 'feminist' campaign. Postfeminist values of empowerment that do not threaten structural powers operate here by holding audiences of women responsible for 'negative self-talk' or 'gender stereotypes' but not men (who will likely not engage with these brands).

However, it can be suggested that the studies lack from this overemphasis on advertising and ignore some of the wider complexities of consumption and production. By focusing solely on advertising messages, the studies risk conjuring assumptions about the impact media messages have on consumers. Despite the interesting findings this work reveals about postfeminist advertising, this work does not consider a longer history of advertising to the 'sovereign consumer' figure, where the producer changes, innovates, and designs for the imaginary 'needs' of this imagined figure. For these reasons, this work explores 'constructed subjecthoods' rather than an 'audience' to avoid conjuring an expressive consumer. To ensure there is a consideration of production processes, this work utilises case studies of fashion to ground the work in materiality rather than focusing on media messages. Materiality aids a more complex consideration of the entanglement between wider politics and consumer capitalism that avoids a one-way adoption of feminist values from the media into marketing. The material case studies anchor this work into the processes of production, technological advancements, fashion design, and the practices of wearing garments. This helps to avoid an overemphasis on more abstract advertising messages where the 'success' or 'rejection' or the advert is harder to understand without speaking with consumers. As a result, the thesis can capture how the wider projects of consumer capitalism (including production and consumption) are entangled with wider politics rather than solely focusing on media messages.

2.4.3 Absenting Environmental Concerns

In '*Postfeminist genealogies in millennial culture'* (2021), Genz asks how postfeminism has evolved, especially in an era that she believes is far less optimistic than the early 2000s (p.206). Negra and Tasker (2014) explain that postfeminism was a part of 'bubble culture' in the 21st century's first decade, focusing on a celebration of the "postfeminist female consumer as an icon of excess as much as admiration" (in

Genz, 2021: 206). Yet, the current political and cultural moment is "complexly gendered" and many discussions contain a fear of 'the end of men' due to the 'rise of women' (p. 207). Meanwhile, economic figures show rising numbers of women in unemployment that does not reflect these anxieties (ibid.). What is important for Genz in the contemporary climate is the contrast between early 21st century postfeminist optimism and opportunity, towards a more pessimistic mindset in the 2020s. The 2008 recession complicated the "Noughties confidence in (consumer) 'choice' and 'freedom'" (ibid.: 207). The postfeminist reliance on hard work and reward through pampering and pleasure (and consumer culture) was complicated in the environment of austerity and a rollback of opportunity, with a rising ethos of self-restraint and self-care (ibid.). Under this climate, postfeminism received a 'reality check'. The early postfeminist reliance on consumption as the "key to *having it all*" was ruptured when those "who cannot *spend it all* might have to forgo their 'freedom'" (p. 208-9).[12]

Genz's analysis offers a useful insight into a contemporary, late 2010s context of postfeminism. However, the analysis does not consider one of the biggest issues facing mass consumption which is the relationship between the natural world and people. A postfeminist 'right' to consume comes under threat from wider economic challenges but the analysis does take into account how an environmental emergency and requestioning of consumer practices may also impact this. Genz raises the issue of a younger generation of women whose ability to consume is inhibited by a post-boom climate, but the ways women's consumption (especially fast fashion) is under critique from wider environmental and ethical arguments is not explored.

McCoy et al. (2021: 1) report that 68% of Gen Z adults consider themselves as eco-friendly shoppers, which shows their consideration for the environment in their thinking. The 'throwaway culture' and fast fashion (where luxury clothing trends are copied and produced at lower costs, leading to short usage of garments), is a concern for women's consumption practices and may be a large factor in the 'reality check' that Genz mentions. Due to these research gaps, this thesis explores how the contemporary middle-class Western woman's subjecthood is constructed during periods of environmental and ethical concern towards animals and the planet. Genz's questioning of how the women who 'have it all' inspired the investigation of how this belief might operate with environmental values and a care for nonhumans. In addition to this, the research explores how this was navigated by exploring the case study of the fur coat that came under scrutiny as a harmful garment worn by rich women in the 1980s and 1990s. Therefore, the thesis investigates how, in the late 20th century, *Vogue* navigated the discourse of women 'having it all' under the 'reality check' of killing animals for fashion.

---

[12] Emphasis added.

The thesis also takes inspiration from Littler's (2013) work on the construction of the 'yummy mummy' in Britain. This study explores how white, wealthy, mothers are positioned against eco-friendly practices and the neoliberal value of 'responsibilizing'. The 'yummy mummy' sits in a longer history of 'motherhood' stereotypes for white, Western women, from the 1950s domestic goddess (groomed yet chaste), the 1970s oppressed housewife (made-up and miserable), to the working mother of the 1980s (powerful and besuited) (Woodward, 1997; in Littler, 2013: 4). The new, 21st century sexualisation of motherhood opens the post-partum woman to glamour and upkeeping her appearance. The 'yummy mummy' figure shows how the rise of the fetishization of motherhood runs parallel to the decline of state-funded childcare, both can be seen to support neoliberal policies (p.9).

In this work, Littler investigates a connection between the 'yummy mummy' versus environmental politics, showing the ways postfeminist neoliberal discourses intersect with contemporary concerns for the planet. In the fiction novels analysed, Littler finds a common stereotyping of an 'eco-mother' who is unfashionable, dull, and concerned with eco-practices. In one book, the yummy-mummy characters discuss their aversion to organic food but explain that they continue to buy it due to wider social pressures. Littler analyses the paradox of the yummy mummy's normalisation of spending excessive amounts on fashion and beauty but spending more on organic food for their child as abnormal (p.14). Therefore, the "yummy mummy discourse is a feminine ecology that rejects environmental ecology" (p.16). As a result, this figure focuses on a particular kind of consumerism: excessive and new over second-hand, corporate over cooperative, and intensely produced over organic. Environmentalist values, for Littler, sit in opposition to the constructed yummy mummy's individualist, narcissistic, consumerist values. The eco-mother ethics of social change and life beyond the private confines pose tensions for the yummy-mummy figure who is fixated on a femininity of interior emotions, domestic self-fashioning, and infantilisation.

Overall, Littler's work reveals the ways the yummy-mummy figure avoids focusing on a problem that has persisted since second-wave feminism: that the social infrastructure is not equipped for equality in childcare. The figure also showcases that 'the environmentalist' is a threat and creates tensions for the neoliberal, consumer-focused constructions of femininity. Littler unpacks how environmental concerns contradict a figure that normalises excessive consumption. The final case study investigates how environmental politics may shape the contemporary climate of postfeminist consumption and *Vogue*'s fashionable subjecthood.

By exploring gendered aspects of consumption, Littler opens up the competing discourses of neoliberal and postfeminist values of excessive consumption versus the strains on the environment. This work also highlights how postfeminist values support neoliberal policies of reducing state-funded childcare and promote consumerism as a site of pleasure for women. The research uses women's fiction to explore this construction and there is room to consider how these constructions might manifest in women's consumer culture, such as adverts and brand campaigns. This work also aids an understanding of gendered consumer figures and the tensions between postfeminist values and wider environmental politics.

2.4.4 The Non-Gendered Consumer

The previous section highlighted some of the previous historical and gendered work on consumption, and the intersections between work on sustainable consumption and issues of sexism and patriarchy. Feminist analyses of consumption emphasise that ‘the consumer’ is gendered and is mobilised and constructed in different ways in typically feminine markets. In some of the work covered in section 2.2, ‘the consumer’ was a non-gendered figure and therefore further analysis of gendered aspects of power and stereotyping was lost.

Previous consumer cultural work, such as Featherstone’s (1983) investigation into the transformations of consumer culture at the turn of the century, shows how the department store was a crucial site of change for women’s social position. Other scholars note that the department store revolutionised Western women’s lives as they were able to enter the public sphere alone (Rappaport, 1996, Nava, 2013). Thorstein Veblen recognised the role of women in the maintenance of social status through ‘conspicuous consumption’ and Emile Zola’s Octave Mouret gained fortune through knowledge of his female customers’ secret desires (Hilton, 2002: 103). These examples of the late nineteenth century show the importance of women’s consumption in the department store that reconfigured their movement in the public sphere. In analyses of twentieth-century consumption, ‘the consumer’ figure can be stereotyped as the ‘hero’ consumer, who is often envisioned as masculine, or the ‘passive’ or ‘duped’ consumer, who is usually feminine (Slater, 1997: 33). These constructions highlight the importance of understanding the gendered dimensions of ‘the consumer’ figure.

The relationship between women and consumption has been recognised in many studies.[13] However, in more recent work, there is a lack of discussion on gendered dimensions. In Welch's work on teleoaffective formations, uniform consumer categories exist across the 20th and into the 21st centuries. 'The consumer' is sketched as a non-gendered figure across time. Also, theories that argue that before consumer culture, 'traditional' identities that were based on paid work, and the 'contemporary' construction of lifestyle based on consumption practices, 'leisure-work', and domestic space are entirely new, reveal a gender blindness (Bell & Hollows, 2016: 3). There is a long history of women who have participated in the "construction of classed and gendered lifestyles through both domestic labour and 'leisure-work' in the private sphere throughout history" (ibid.). Therefore, the idea that 'lifestyle' (the combination of work identity and domestic identity) is new overlooks this history of working-class women. This shows how studies and understandings of consumption can often overlook gendered lenses and develop non-gendered theories.

Despite this non-gendered analysis, advertising has long been and is still fraught with gendered categories and stereotypes. Feminist research shows that women are often targeted by sustainable product advertising, which Karlsson and Ramasar (2020: 353) believe is due to the essentialist notion that women are inherently more nurturing and closer to nature. It is argued that, under a traditional division of labour, women are considered those responsible for the housework and family budget, and green consumerism is pushed onto women through eco-friendly household products (Sandiland, 1993, Smith, 2010; in Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020: 353). As a result, the adverts feature moral messages on how mothers should take care of their families without using harsh chemicals (ibid.). Therefore, the types of sustainable consumer analyses differ when a gendered lens is adopted.

---

[13] See section 2.4.

In addition to this, the body of literature from critical postfeminist cultural scholars reveals another specific gendered category of consumer. The postfeminist discourses highlight a "reconciliation of feminism and consumption, a reconciliation that links empowerment to sexual expressiveness and purchasing power" that is embedded in a gendered analysis of consumption (Maclaran, 2012: 466). Postfeminist cultural analyses highlight interesting, gendered constructions of 'the consumer' that are not considered in the sociology of consumer culture. Theories of consumption must, therefore, hold onto the insights from cultural studies.

Overall, the literature review reveals how important gendered analyses are for furthering the nuances and understandings of consumer capitalism. Postfeminist studies consider the specific ways in which (young) women are communicated to in consumer culture that entangles neoliberal and feminist values. On the other hand, many feminist studies are concerned with the way women are targeted by 'green' consumption and sustainable marketing strategies. For these reasons, this thesis seeks to bring these concerns together and consider how postfeminist sensibilities have been nurtured across the 20th century and continue to operate under environmental concern and an ethics of care towards non-humans.

2.4.5 Fashion and Women's Magazines

A cultural site that incorporates the interests of this thesis, including consumer capitalism, women's consumer culture, an industry that has been critiqued for its harm towards the environment, and is engaged with wider political issues, is fashion. Fashion has been critiqued for the harm it causes to animals when they are killed for their fur and the impact clothing production and waste has on the environment. In addition to this, women's fashion magazines often include images and adverts that sexualise women, commodify women, and set standards for the female body.

Women's magazines have been analysed and critiqued by many feminist studies and seen as a 'problem' for women (Hermes, 1997: 223). They argue that magazines are a site where gender differences are reinforced and where the values of both capitalism and patriarchy are enforced (Gough-Yates, 2003: 7). Early feminist accounts of women's magazines were concerned with the 'unreal', 'untruthful', or distorted images of women and the studies called for 'positive' images of women (ibid.: 8). At the end of the 1970s, Louis Althusser's (1970) notion of ideology inspired many feminist authors to suggest that the representations of women in women's magazines were not an 'ideological' chimera but had impacts on women's lives that were concrete and material (in Gough-Yates, 2003: 8). Althusser argued that ideology is not simply a set of ideas but has a material form that can be carried out by groups and institutions in society. These institutions "work to form people as subjects of ideology" and people understand themselves in terms of this ideological framework (ibid.). From this, women's magazines were viewed as places where women would recognise themselves in terms of the ideological frameworks generated within the texts (ibid.: see also Winship, 1978). The representations of women were seen to 'naturalise' an ideologically charged image of femininity and women's place in society. Althusser's theory enabled studies of women's magazines to move beyond analysing 'positive' and 'negative' images of femininity.

However, this model promoted an overly pessimistic account of readers' relationships with magazines, viewing them as 'closed' texts that were produced to serve patriarchal capitalism. In the 1980s, Antonio Gramsci's (1971) notions of 'civil society' and hegemony opened up women's magazines to be viewed as an arena of political contest rather than simply a site of ideological manipulation (Gough-Yates, 2003: 9). Hegemony is not a given but rather fought for in a space fraught with oppositional ideas. The balance or equilibrium of hegemony works to articulate the interests of subordinate groups to those of the dominant (Gramsci, 1971: 161). Women's magazines were conceived as a site where women's oppression was debated and negotiated, rather than reinforced (Gough-Yates, 2003: 10).

In her study on women's magazines, Janice Winship (1987) found that from the late 1960s, during the period of the women's liberation movement, magazines included more political issues, covering feminist issues that were previously dismissed (p.92). Despite this, the magazines continued to adopt a 'pragmatic' approach to such issues (Gough-Yates, 2003: 10). The discussions of women's socio-economic oppression were found to be superficial and lacked resolution, they worked to block any radical ideas. Women's magazines represented gender inequality as an issue for, and to be resolved by, the individual, rather than a structural problem that required collective action and societal transformation. While engaging in political discussions, women's magazines imagined a 'postfeminist' individual whose life could be "whatever you, the individual, make of it" (Winship, 1987: 149-50). Winship contended that reading women's magazines is a pleasurable activity but is still a site that is highly coded and structured, they do not offer women an escape from the limited social spaces they inhabit (Gough-Yates, 2003: 11). Therefore, readers' resistance to the messages in women's magazines were partial and temporary at best (ibid.). Following Winship's work, Ballaster et al. (1991), McCracken (1993), and Durham (1996) noted the possibilities of counter-hegemonic, resistant readings, but they lacked the substance needed to effect meaningful change in wider society or the magazine itself (in Gough-Yates, 2003: 11).

Many of these studies emphasised the meanings of magazines and how feminism and femininity were fostered. However, Gough-Yates (2003) highlights that these studies rarely considered the production of women's magazines. Ferguson's (1983) study is one of the few that considered production, consumption, and women's press rather than focusing on readership. As a former weekly women's magazine employee, Ferguson was informed by her experience and sociological methods. She drew on Durkheim's analysis of religion to understand the relationship between women's magazines and their audiences. Femininity was conceptualised as a cult and women's magazines represented the Old Testament (1985: 5). The editors of the magazines were 'custodians' of the feminine 'cult' and set the 'feminine agenda' in the 'scripture' of women's magazines. She also explained that feminism did not form a counter or challenge to this cult but, instead, extended it. Feminism offered a counter to the culture of women's magazines that focused on the positive search for a male partner, but rather than discussing women's common oppression by men, it transformed these positive discussions into negative ones. However, the production of the magazines was only touched upon and not deeply analysed in this study.

Some studies take into account the consumption and production elements of magazines. For instance, Nixon (1996) explores the practices of retailers, advertisers, and magazine producers and the construction of the 'new man'. The 'new man' was an emerging masculine identity that promoted "narcissistic pleasures of visual display and commodity consumption" (Gough-Yates, 2003: 19). His work shows how new technologies and modes of flexible production were a part of the construction of this masculine figure. Cultural intermediates helped to construct and mediate this consumption-oriented man via new codes and practices of representation (ibid.). This study is relevant for investigating women's magazines as they show that, rather than being forced to undermine women's autonomy, creativity, and cultural freedom, cultural industries cannot be represented as homogenous and stable entities. They are fluid and variable, reliant on the complexity of micro-relations that exist around notions of identity (2003: 20). These industries compete in a commercial sphere to present a construction of both themselves and their indented consumers.

From this work, *Vogue* can be viewed as a cultural intermediary that constructs itself, its consumers and partakes in cultural production. In Gough-Yate's (2003) work, she is interested in expanding this view of women's magazines and how, during the 1980s and 1990s, magazines witnessed a marked increase in the 'culutralizing' role of those involved in women's magazine production. This included a rise of "more pronounced and self-conscious strategies geared to construct not only the identity of the reader but also the 'personality' of the texts themselves" (p.20). This linked to wider processes, including economic shifts from an era of mass-produced and mass-market goods to an era of flexible specialisation and market differentiation. However, this study is restricted to the rise of 'glossy' magazines aimed at 'young, professional women' in the late 20th century.

In this thesis, I am interested in *Vogue*, a magazine that distinguishes itself from lifestyle magazines and, instead, focuses on women's fashion and luxury consumption. Therefore, *Vogue* is situated in a realm of luxury products and fantasy rather than attempting to articulate women's lives and the things that matter to them. It could be argued that *Vogue* does not access the construction of femininity as well as glossy magazines do. However, the aim of this study is not to explore how cultural intermediaries construct femininity but to investigate the intersection of wider politics, the construction of 'the female consumer', and the projects of consumer capitalism. The aim is also to investigate a longer history of feminist and anti-feminist values in women's magazines. US *Vogue* began in 1892 but established itself as a fashion magazine in 1909. It has been published since and continues to construct itself as *the* site of women's fashion today. With this in mind, *Vogue* magazine is not particularly interested in trailblazing fashions that are centred on creativity and showcasing new designers. It is a fashion magazine that is concerned with high-profile, luxury fashion and therefore committed to profits and status quo, rather than fashion that breaks the mould and innovative designs. *Vogue* is a magazine where the interests of this thesis come together to allow the analysis of consumer capitalism, entanglements with wider politics, and the construction of women's subjecthoods and notions of Western women's freedom.

Fashionable garments and practices of fashionable women were chosen as the main aspects of the case studies for a variety of reasons. Firstly, fashion is linked to aspects of consumption and production, through the selling and making of clothes. Unlike studies of women's magazines that explore identities and cultural constructions of femininity, the research questions consider both women's subjecthoods in relation to wider politics but also the material and practices/norms of consumption. Therefore, informed by the sociology of consumption and practice theory insights, the research does not repeat previous feminist studies of women's magazines. It considers the wider processes of production and consumption, and wider politics, as locations of tensions for women's magazines and the constructions of subjecthoods and notions of freedom. Therefore, the analysis does not view women's magazines as simple sites of ideological reproduction and patriarchal hegemony that are not bound up with wider processes and projects.

Secondly, fashion is an arena of women's consumption that is tied to the constructions of gender difference. Judith Butler (1990: 270) contests: "Gender is instituted through the stylisation of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self". It is also argued that "the body can be made, through dress, to play any part it desires as gender coding is displaced from the body on to dress" (Evans & Thornton, 1989: 62). For some, fashion can be a liberating site for women as it can be experimental, playful, creative (Finkelstein, 1997: 155). However, as Rabine (1994: 64) remarks, women's beauty practices are often a part of the "fantasies of fashion magazines upon the body" (in Finkelstein, 1997). From this, the fashionable woman is invited to self-reflect and consider how she is being looked at (Finkelstein, 1997: 156). Feminist work on fashion has revealed it as a site of both oppression, surveillance, and a site of creativity. Poggioli (1968: 79) remarked that "fashion is really about maintaining the eternal sameness, preserving the status quo" and makes us think change is happening when the opposite is the truth (in Finkelstein, 1997: 165).

Thirdly, fashion is a site that engages with wider politics that can sometimes shape the practices of consumer norms and values. Environmental activists have been critical of high fashion houses for creating fast cycles of fashion trends and they call for a slowing down, or end, to these pressures. Extinction Rebellion formed a funeral protest during London Fashion Week in 2019, advocating for the end of fashion weeks around the world and highlighting the number of resources the fashion industry uses and wastes. *Vogue* magazine also plays a role in this cycle of trends from high fashion designers as they legitimate the designs that are fashion worthy and those that are not. The magazine reports on the international fashion weeks to the readers and compiles the main trends from the catwalks. The magazine also features high fashion brands that set the seasonal trends for high street stores, playing a role in the legitimation of throwing away unfashionable clothes for the new season's 'looks'. Overall, fashion and women's magazines are useful sites to study as these spheres capture the aims and interests of this work. *Vogue* combines fashion, luxury conspicuous consumption, the constructions of women's subjecthoods, and constructions of what it means to be a fashionable 'consumer' across the 20th and 21st centuries.

2.4.6 Tools for Analysis

The literature review has showcased some of the tools for analysis that will be taken forward in this thesis. The areas of scholarly work that are central to this thesis include the features of postfeminist sensibilities (Gill, 2007) that will be used to analyse the history of a postfeminist entanglement. Welch's (2020) teleoaffective formations outline the different projects of consumer capitalism and the corresponding marketing, alongside the constructions of 'the consumer'. Littler's (2013) yummy-mummy work highlights the 'eco-mum' which is seen as oppositional to stylish women's subjecthoods, and this will be explored in *Vogue*. The insights from ANT highlight the separation of nature and culture, and feminist, consumption studies that explore the distancing of 'care'. Bauman's concepts of 'freedom from' and 'freedom to' will aid an understanding of the types of freedoms that are constructed for women that correspond with the projects of consumer capitalism but are also entangled with feminist and environmental politics.

2.5 Conclusion

In summary, this literature review has shown the scholarly work that has supported and inspired this thesis, and the previous section has also highlighted some of the oversights in this work that this thesis will address. The work on postfeminist entanglement shows the contemporary context of feminisms and the importance of neoliberal influences. However, this work can sometimes engage in ahistorical discussions and devalue the importance of consumer culture. On the other hand, the sociology of consumer culture engages with a deeper history and complexities of production, consumption, and constructions of 'the consumer', but can fail to consider how these can be impacted by power structures such as gender. This work does engage with more contemporary concerns within consumer culture narratives and marking for the environment and sustainability. Work on posthumanism and feminist ethics of care helps bridge the oversights in both postfeminist critical studies and the sociology of consumer culture as they highlight the intersections between gender and the environment in consumer culture. I use these tools of analysis to consider how wider politics of feminism and the environment have been adopted and repudiated by cultural intermediaries across the 20th and 21st centuries. It also considers the complexities of a contemporary postfeminist landscape and how these popular neoliberal feminist values may intersect with concern for the environment or an ethics of care towards animals. Finally, I showed why fashion is a useful site to study as it captures and helps focus the research questions and aims and the tools I will use in the analysis.

3. Methodology

The following chapter will outline the methodological underpinnings of the research, and how the methods of analysis were carried out. The main method of research is a visual discourse analysis of US *Vogue* magazine across the 20th and 21st centuries. It is a case study approach that investigates the entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist values, wider political values, and consumer capitalism. The archival analysis does not look at every year from 1900-2023 but focuses on the case studies where tensions emerge. The case studies explore 4 key changes to the norms of women's fashion and fashionable practices. These include: 1) the modern corset, 2) the miniskirt, 3) questioning the fur coat, and 4) (un)sustainable fashion. The literature review chapter outlined a lack of gendered lenses of 'the consumer' and the ahistoricism of a postfeminist entanglement. The literature review also explored why fashion and women's magazines provide a useful site of analysis for this research. US *Vogue* magazine captures and focuses the research questions aims of investigating wider politics, the construction of women's subjecthoods and the projects and values of consumer capitalism. The research brings together insights from the sociology of consumption to further explore contemporary feminist concerns about the entanglement between values of feminism and consumer capitalism.

To explore these challenges posed by the literature the research questions, that were first presented in the Introduction chapter (section 1.2), will be addressed:

1. What subjecthoods are constructed for women in *Vogue* during the 20th/21st centuries in relation to a) feminist politics and b) environmental/ethical concerns?
2. How do wider political and cultural issues come to inform definitions of what a fashionable woman is?

3. What tensions arise between the values of consumer capitalism and a) feminist politics, and b) environmental politics during the periods of liberation and environmental/ethical concern?
4. How do the tensions between values of consumer capitalism and wider political issues entangle and impact gendered consumption norms and values?

The chapter will explore the methodologies of visual discourse analysis that informed the research. I will highlight how the methods draw on cultural studies notions of the popular and competing discourses in the media. Here, I provide explanations of key terms such as discourse, subjecthood, and how these theories have shaped the ontology of the investigation. The thesis also explores the environmental tension in contemporary consumer culture, I will explain how posthuman theories offer new insights for exploring postfeminist critique. By engaging with notions of entanglement and Actor-Network Theory, the methods take a new approach to women's magazines and wider political values. The sociology of consumer culture also provides an approach to women's consumption that avoids ahistorical or moralising notions of 'the consumer'. At the same time, it considers the importance of cultural studies and the insights this brings to power structures, such as gender, class and ethnicity. As a result, the research utilises new methods and theories to explore women's magazines over time.

Following this, the chapter will outline why the specific case studies have been selected and discuss how the key terms in the research questions are defined and understood. Then the chapter will discuss why US *Vogue* magazine was used as the method of study and how this was shaped by the impacts of COVID-19. *Vogue* magazine was selected as it captures the many interests of the thesis aims, including women's consumer culture, a document invested in the projects of consumer capitalism, and aimed towards an audience of Western, middle- to upper-class women. Following this section, I will outline the data collection and sampling strategies. The history of *Vogue* and the *Vogue* editors will be explored to highlight how the changes to the magazine were considered as an important part of the analysis and historical investigation.

3.1 Cultural and Feminist Media Studies

In postfeminist critical studies, scholars analyse postfeminism through a cultural studies lens. Banet-Weiser draws on Stuart Hall's conceptualisation of 'the popular' to understand how postfeminism operates in the media. Hall stated that "popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle…It is an arena of consent and resistance" (1998: 453; in Banet-Weiser, 2018: 15). Postfeminism is conceptualised and located within the "culture of the powerful", which consists of racial and economic privilege (ibid.: 15-6). The 'post', popular form of feminism upholds heteronormativity, whiteness, dominant economic foundations, and a trajectory of capitalist 'success' (ibid.). Despite this, other forms of feminist values have gained popularity in popular media over the late 20th and into the 21st century that do not comply with postfeminism. These include the feminisms that expose the whiteness of popular feminism, use media visibility to expose structural violence, are non-heteronormative, or insist on intersectionality. However, within a popular domain, feminist values are often modified, made 'safe', and ultimately avoid structural critique from their discourses (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Lury highlights that a "comprehensive understanding of consumer culture would surface from more gender-specific theories of consumption" (1996: 121; in Martens & Casey, 2007: 4). One way to develop theories of consumption that account for gender is to integrate feminist perspectives into the examination of consumption research (ibid.: 5). Some studies have successfully acknowledged the absence of gendered-informed theories and have shed light on the historical and contemporary consumer practices oh women, revealing the gendered aspect of consumption values (Martens & Casey, 2007). Historical investigations into gender and consumption prompt the question: ‘Have women been empowered by access to the goods, sites, spectacles, and services associated with mass consumption?’ (Banet-Weiser, 2012: 20). Research by McClintock (1995) and Piess (1996) illustrates the complexity of gendered markets, demonstrating that they cannot be reduced to simplistic definitions of ‘empowering’ or ‘oppressive’, particularly for white, middle-class women.[14] Previous cultural and feminist media analyses show how discourse analysis can contribute to an understanding of cultural values and political resistance.

3.1.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis

To explore the research questions, a discourse analysis is employed in the thesis. Discourse analysis is part of the linguistic turn that embraces a “strong social constructivist epistemology” and “focuses attention on the processes whereby the social world is constructed and maintained” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 2). The term ‘discourse’ refers to language in its real context of use, therefore it operates beyond a textual, grammatical, or semantic level to “capture what happens when these language forms are played out in different social, political, and cultural arenas” (Simpson & Mayr, 2010: 5; in Machin & Mayr, 2012: 20). Discourse is “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e., a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (Hall, 1997: 201).

McRobbie provides an example of ‘Girl Power’ discourse which “is made up of all those statements that use this phrase and therefore create meanings of girls’ power” (2004: 69). It is both ‘power-charged’ and diverse, not fixed, and open to an array of possibilities (ibid.). A discourse therefore provides a dominant way of discussing a topic which then forms an ideology. Ideology is defined as: “knowledge that is constructed in such a way as to legitimate unequal social power relations” (Rose,

---

[14] Explored in the literature review, section 2.5.

2001: 70). Some discourses are mainstream or hegemonic, whereas others are oppositional or 'alternative' (Fairclough, 2001: 124). Overall, "social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 3).

Discourse does not simply apply to language and knowledge but also captures visual elements. The increasing saturation of visual media in the West is termed 'ocularcentrism' (Jay, 1995: 7). The dominance of visuality is seen as part of a broader shift from modernity into postmodernity, the period that this thesis explores. "Looking, seeing and knowing have become perilously intertwined" in modern Western culture, that we "perpetuate the conflation of the 'seen' with the 'known' in conversation through the commonplace linguistic appendage of 'do you see?' [...] or by inquiring after people's 'views'" (Jenks, 1995: 3). The visual is also intrinsically linked to social life and cultural construction in Western society. Meaning is so often conveyed visually through TV, adverts, film, and newspaper pictures (Rose, 2001). As the world becomes more and more filtered through visual means, the way we are 'made to see' becomes more crucial. This is understood as the 'scopic regime' which refers to the way 'what is seen' and 'how it is seen' are culturally constructed (Rose,2001: 6).

The idea that the postmodern Western world is dominated by the visual is due to an assumption of the premodern world containing a lack of circulated images, and an assumption that the visual was less important. However, critics argue that visual images were important to premodern and medieval spirituality (Hamburger, 1997). Also, the emphasis on the West in discussions of the visual is criticised for Eurocentrism (Shohat & Sham; in Rose, 2001: 8). However, this research explores the Western consumer capitalist landscape of women's magazines which are very much visual documents and, therefore, a visual method is required to access the relationship between consumer capitalism, women's subjecthoods, and constructions of women's freedom.

Another important consideration is recognising the researcher's role in analysing cultural documents. Firstly, the process of analysis is not viewed as accessing a 'truth' embedded in *Vogue*. There is no 'correct' answer to the meaning of an image as there is no 'truth' to uncover (Hall, 1997). Instead, researchers who employ visual analysis must do so knowing that their interpretation of an image is simply an interpretation (1997: 9). The researcher must be aware that 'looking' and interpreting images is never an innocent task, and the social scientist's reason for visual research, despite its uncertainties, is due to an interest in elements of culture and discourse in a modern world that relies more on the visual than ever before (Rose, 2001: 6). Women's magazines across the 20th and 21st century are consumer documents filled with a mixture of pictures and text, of adverts and articles, but are mainly visual documents. However, the ways in which magazines display the visual varies over time. For example, the early 20th century features illustrated images, but over time the magazine kept up with photography technology and colour printing. Therefore, the visual content of the magazine changes throughout *Vogue*'s history, but the document provides a useful insight into consumer capitalist discourses.

3.1.2 Subject, Subjectivity and Construction

Discourse informs understandings of how subjects are constructed, and the concept of the subject is crucial in the research questions of the thesis. Burr (1995: 3) highlights the importance of historical and cultural specificity for discourse analysis. The authors argue that how we understand and represent the world is historically and culturally specific, and contingent. The focus on the social world as constructed and changing is anti-essentialist: that "character is not pre-given or determined by external conditions, and that people do not possess a set of fixed and authentic essences” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 5). Therefore, discourse analysis goes against humanist, essentialist beliefs and deals with notions of subject and subjecthood.

Subjectivity contrasts ideas of a ‘human nature’ or essentialist thinking about individuals. Under this thinking, Descartes *Cogito ergo sum* (‘I think therefore I am’) positions *Cogito* (I) as a conscious being that allowed us to know what was human and what was not (Mansfield et al., 2000: 15). Inspired by Descartes’ thinking, Enlightenment thinker Rousseau wrote that a natural human self is born and becomes debased by pursuing unnatural demands of class, religion, and ambition (ibid.: 17). Humans can and should liberate their ‘true nature’ and free themselves by withdrawing into nature and contemplate their truth of the natural world (ibid.). This philosophy of essential human nature sits at the centre of some contemporary truisms in Western culture about individuality. It informs ideas that there is a truth of the human species that can be fulfilled by rejecting social pressures and giving individuality full expression (ibid.: 18).

However, philosophical frameworks have developed theories of subjectivity that help to understand why the individual is always connected to something outside of it and questions the existence of a unified sense of self. Subjectivity refers to an “abstract or general principle that defies our separation into distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine that [...] our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as object of need, desire, and interest or as necessary sharers of common experience” (Mansfield et al., 2000: 3). The word ‘subject’, therefore, proposes the idea the “the self is not a separate and isolated entity, but one that operates at the intersection of gender truths and shared principles” (ibid.).

From the influence of French structural and Poststructural debates, the subject does not master its discourse, rather the ‘subject’ is an effect of discourse (Angermuller et al., 2014: 72). Different philosophies consider the subject in different ways. For psychoanalysis, the subject is a *thing* that is instilled in us when we encounter experiences, such the gendered body of family members when we are young

(Mansfield, 2000: 8). Lacan developed these theories in the more abstract domain and argued that the subject is a discourse-producing being (Angermuller, 2014: 83). However, under more structural-inspired thinking, the subject is "equally fictitious, though here the claim tends to be that the subject is simply a 'function' of the rules of discourse" (Miller, 1987: 115). Althusser's theories delineate the contours of discourse where the subject is seen as an effect of language use by proposing that discourse determines and creates the subject in discursive acts of interpellation (Angermuller et al., 2014: 83). He developed his thinking by emphasising the subject's place under capitalism in the late 1960s (Mansfield et al., 2000: 52). Althusser argued that ideology *needs* subjectivity, it constitutes us as subjects by 'interpellating' us, calling out to us and making us the subject of the law and the state (ibid.: 53). In his view, there is a difference between ideology (capitalist false consciousness) and science (insights into the true nature of social order that Marxism can produce). Science can bring about revolution and a new social order.

On the other hand, Foucault theorised that there is no such objective 'scientific' truth (ibid.). To Foucault, power and so-called 'truth' justify itself and should be analysed with scepticism and resistance because the subject is the primary workroom of power (p.53, p.10). Power is built around institutions such as prisons, workhouses, schools, factories, hospitals, and barracks. These helped develop new categories of human behaviour that constructed 'normal' from 'abnormal'. Foucault argued that "subjectivity is not a really existing thing but has been invented by dominant systems of social organisation in order to control and manage us", these institutions "control and manage us until we believe that the world depends on this division of the human population into fixed categories" (Mansfield et al., 2000: 10). These categories include the sick from the well, the sane from the insane, the honest from the criminal, all of which are in the hands of doctors, social workers, police, teachers, courts, and institutions. Subjectivity is the way we are led to think about ourselves, and this is managed by the rationalised principles of 'truth' and 'knowledge'. It is, therefore, not the free and spontaneous expression of our interior truth (ibid.).

This thinking has been adopted by feminist explanations of 'sex' and 'gender'. Butler argued that it is impossible to theorise about biology (sex) without culture (gender). By the time we start "to speculate about nature and biology, we are completely saturated by the values, structures, and priorities of the gender system within which we live" (Mansfield et al., 2000: 73). Gender becomes a performance that must be repeated and is endlessly reinforced by the media, schools, families, doctors, and friends. Butler reminds us that failing to perform gender in the right way can result in social isolation, mockery, violence, rape, and even death (1990: 140). The discourse of gender difference is embedded in talk, rule-following, behaviour patterns, writing, reading, image creation, interrogation, and thought on gender that ultimately produces a sense of self (Gheradri, 1994; in Brewis et al., 1997: 1277). These constructed differences have no grounding in material reality but "the materiality of the body has come to signify culturally specific ideas" (Butler, 1987: 138). As a result, the body is "a semiotic as well as a physiological system – gender is mapped onto the physical/biological body" (Brewis et al., 1997: 1277). An individual's sense of masculinity and femininity is derived from the operations of prevailing contemporary discourses. As discussed, discourses are not closed systems and, although they affect every individual, there is the space for resistance. The images and discourses of gender may have "no material referent, they nevertheless have real-world effects" as they shape, order, and oppress individuals (ibid.).

Poststructural Feminist Discourse Analysis (PFDA) offers insights into gendered subjecthoods and how this shapes feminist politics. Weedon (1987) is critical of the ways some feminist theories or politics are underpinned by essentialist or liberal humanist thinking. Under essentialist thinking, when feminists reject academic theory as a patriarchal structure and rely solely on women's experiences, they can reproduce ideas of humanism and ignore constructed subjectivity. In her work, humanism assumes a "conscious, knowing, unified, rational subject" whereas subjectivity captures the "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding in relation to the world” (p.21-32). By contrast, humanist discourses “presuppose an essence at the heart of the individual which is unique, fixed, and coherent and which makes her what she *is*” (p.32). Liberal humanism often assumes a unified, rational consciousness, whilst some radical feminist discourses emphasise the essence of womanhood. A similar idea of essentialism underpins Marxism, that a ‘true human nature’ is alienated by capitalism (p.32-3). Poststructuralism, on the other hand, rejects the idea of fixed or ‘true’ subjectivity and instead “proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory, and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak” (p.33). PDFA decentres humanist discourses and views language as a site where “our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (p.21). In this thesis, *Vogue* is considered a cultural intermediary where gendered subjecthoods are constructed (and constantly reconstructed). The magazine also constructs what a ‘fashionable’ subjecthood is and sets this as an ideal.

The subject is crucial for feminist thinking to avoid contradictions and create a feminist practice that is sustainable. For example, Weedon dissects the issues in liberal feminist notions of ‘choice’. She proposes the following situation: “If I make a conscious choice to earn my living by selling the use of my body for prostitution or pornography, am I oppressed?” (p. 84). Under liberal feminist thinking, due to the strongly held belief in the sovereignty of the individual, there is no ability to understand or deal with this situation. If a woman’s choice is based on her ‘free will’, which is guaranteed by her individual rational consciousness, as it is in a liberal-humanist discourse that this feminism rests on, then it is not a relative matter, and her decision must be valid and there is no ‘complicity with oppression’. If feminism is inspired by this thinking:

> “the individual subject is a source of self-knowledge, and knowledge of the world can easily serve as a guarantee and justification of existing social relations. The structural and institutional oppression of women disappears behind the belief that if I, as a rational sovereign subject, freely choose my

> way of life on the basis of my individual rational consciousness which gives me knowledge, then I am not oppressed" (p. 84).

Oppression becomes an emotional, subjective, psychological state – *feeling* oppressed. Feminists need to think beyond and outside of the limitations of liberal humanist discourses to untangle the dilemmas of choice and individual free will. As a result, the concept of the subject can grapple with the challenges of a contemporary feminist problem of 'choice' and feelings of 'empowerment'.

Overall, I have focused on gender and values of liberal humanism that inform postfeminist thinking and shown why subjecthood is a central concept in this thesis that informs how *Vogue* was analysed and understood. PDFA provided tools for investigating how the stylish, fashionable subjecthood is constructed and continually reconstructed in *Vogue*. The theoretical insights from Foucault and Butler helped place *Vogue* as a part of a consumer capitalist institution that constructs gendered, consumer subjecthoods. Therefore, by tracing the entanglement between wider politics and the projects of consumer capitalism over time, I can investigate the types of subjecthoods that are constructed in *Vogue* and how they mobilise individuals to think of themselves as consumers. *Vogue*, through the entanglement between wider politics and consumer capitalism, ultimately construct notions of women's freedom and choice as consumers and fashionable subjects. Therefore, theories of subjectivity allowed the thesis to recognise that *Vogue* operates as a part of the construction of feminine subjecthoods in different contexts. The magazine translates notions of wider politics, women's freedom and choice, and mobilises this into gendered subjecthoods through visual means. In the following section, I will expand upon and explain 'entanglement', 'tensions', and the posthuman theories that inform the methods and analysis of the magazine.

3.1.3 Entanglement and Tension

My approach to understanding Vogue is shaped by cultural discourse analysis theories rooted in poststructuralism and PFDA, as well as posthuman and new materialist theories. The concept of entanglement serves as a methodological tool, viewing postfeminism as a complex interplay between neoliberalism and feminism. This perspective considers an understanding of postfeminism as lacking a self-contained existence between neoliberalism and feminism. This thinking also supports the idea that *Vogue* magazine is a part of a network of 'culture' that is not split from the 'natural' world. Authors that have encouraged this thinking include Eva Giraud, Bruno Latour, Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, and Rosi Braidotti.

Posthuman and new materialist theorists recognise the work of poststructuralism but continue to break down the humanistic foundations of Western philosophical thinking. One of the crucial features of new materialist thinking is the rejection of dualist thinking that seeks to categorise and manage the world into simplified systems of natural/social etc., including those that exist in social science (Fox & Alldred, 2017: 13-4). Though matter is not a new notion in sociology, new materialism updates classic notions of materialism in three ways (ibid.):

1. The material world is not fixed but is relational, uneven, and in constant flux.
2. 'Nature' and 'culture' should not be treated as separate realms, as both the social and physical have material effects in an ever-changing world.
3. There is a capacity for 'agency' – the actions that produce the social world extend beyond human actors to the non-human and inanimate.

The idea that the material world is not fixed and is in flux shows a link to poststructuralist and PFDA (Weedon, 1987) theories. However, posthuman and new materialist theories continue to challenge sociological ontology, especially those that perceive society as having individual human subjects that are split from the 'natural' world. The theories encourage a recognition that the relational networks or assemblages of animate and inanimate that both affect and are affected (p.4). Fashion is a useful site of study because it creates a link between the 'natural' world, material resources, and culture. Through this thinking I can consider the wider processes of production and consumption alongside the cultural and the symbolic.

The thesis draws on an understanding of entanglement to analyse *Vogue* magazine. Barad (2007: ix) explains that:

> “To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as if the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not pre-exist their interactions; rather individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating. Which is not to say that emergence happens once and for all, as an event or as a process that takes place according to some external measure of space and of time, but rather that time and space, like matter and meaning, come into existence, and iteratively reconfigured through each intra-action, thereby making it impossible to differentiate in any absolute sense between creation and renewal, beginning and returning, continuity and discontinuity, here and there, past and future.”

This definition of entanglement showcases the links to Poststructural understandings of subjectivity and PFDA. The emphasis on a “lack of an independent self-contained existence” echoes the insistence on construction that is central to poststructuralism. Entanglement focuses on the complexity and ties between things, but also how this is non-linear and goes beyond a simplistic relationship between two things. For instance, under this view, neoliberalism is not an ideology that has adopted feminist values in the contemporary period. Instead, feminist and neoliberal values can be viewed as entangled together, and this entanglement is recognised as postfeminism. It is also not a straightforward appropriation of feminism from neoliberalism, but an ongoing, fluctuating influence upon one another over time that develops a postfeminist sensibility. By embracing this complexity, the importance of other factors, such as the projects of consumer capitalism, and a longevity of this relationship can be assessed.

The understanding of postfeminism as an entanglement comes from McRobbie's 'Postfeminism and Popular Culture' (2004), where she argues that the feminism is 'taken into account' and the "co-existence of feminism is at some level transformed into a form of Gramscian common sense, while also fiercely repudiated, indeed almost hated" (McRobbie, 2004: 255). Feminist and anti-feminist values develop side by side, into a postfeminist discourse in popular culture. Gill (2007) also explores this complex entangling but uses the term 'postfeminist sensibility' to "avoid framings of postfeminism purely as a 'backlash' or a rigid 'epistemological perspective'" (Giraud, 2019: 147). Whilst "a postfeminist sensibility might superficially give the appearance of coherence, a closer examination reveals productive tensions" (2019: 147-8). Productive tensions are described as narratives of empowerment and individual choice that do not sit easily with the dominance of makeovers and where insistence on women's sexual agency is coupled with the resurgence of ironic sexism (ibid.). The contradictory elements create an intensely compromised nature of the feminist politics that exists in popular culture. For instance, high-profile media such as *The Hunger Games* trilogy and Lena Dunham's *Girls* showcase the type of entanglements described by Gill and the danger of reducing feminism to a brand or selling point. Seaton (2017, 2018) argues that the contradictions are generative as the site of fraught debate which make gender inequalities (such as the emotional labour of young women) visible and open to contestation (in Giraud, 2019: 147).

Giraud points out that if the use of entanglement is not seen as "the straightforward tangling of – or messy relations between – competing tendencies (that could potentially be disentangled), but instead as pointing to the mutually constitutive relationship *between* these contradictions (in a Baradian sense), then this offers a helpful framework" for understanding how opposing anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric tendencies work through and coconstitute one another (2019: 149).

In this case, it is the opposing feminist and anti-feminist themes over time that are the focus. But the thesis also considers how tensions from environmental debates and animal rights care for non-humans operate with postfeminist narratives. Therefore, the shifts in posthuman and new material theories have inspired this thesis to explore the historical entanglement of wider politics within consumer culture. Also, posthumanism highlights how the natural world is an underexplored aspect of postfeminist entanglement. If postfeminism constructs subjecthoods who view consumption as a form of empowerment, then to what extent do wider environmental politics (that consider the damage waste from the fashion industry) create tensions for *Vogue* magazine?

The word ‘tension(s)’ is used in this work to represent the wider political (and sometimes cultural) shifts which coincide with a new clothing garment or fashionable practice for women, which includes the modern corset, and the miniskirt case studies, or the questioning of fashion on the animal welfare or the environment, which includes the fur coat and (un)sustainable fashion. Tensions are used to explore moments in women’s fashion where a practice, norm, or value is called into question. The questioning can sometimes come from wider politics, such as the feminist critique of the corset or animal rights critique of the fur coat. In other instances, the tension may refer to the result of *Vogue* entangling the values of wider politics with the projects of consumer capitalism, such as the tension sexualisation of women in the media can cause for feminist politics. Tension also refers to the changes due to wider cultural and social changes, such as the miniskirt that was associated with youth cultures. Tension is used over other terms such as challenges or ruptures because tension captures the multidirectional aspect and messiness of US *Vogue*. If wider political issues were labelled ‘challenges’, the relationship would be constructed into issues raised by feminisms/environmentalisms *for Vogue*, which simplifies the matter. Instead, tensions can capture the varying types of tensions and directions of tensions. Ultimately, the term allows for an investigation of messy entanglements rather than constricting the analysis to simplistic ideas of a one-way relationship between politics and cultural intermediaries.

3.2 Case Studies

To answer the research questions, the investigation is split into two parts: Part I explores cases that occur during or around moments of change in women's social and political position in a period that comes 'before' postfeminism, whereas Part II investigates tensions associated with environmental politics in the late 20th century and early 21st century that are defined as postfeminist. The case studies investigate four key moments of change in feminine fashions or practices. The four case studies include:

1. The 'Modern' Corset
2. The Miniskirt
3. The Questioning of the Fur Coat
4. (Un)Sustainable Fashion

Case study one explores the shift from the Victorian hourglass figure to the much straighter silhouette that is strongly associated with the American Jazz Age flapper who represented modernity and consumerism in the early 20th century (Tinkler & Warsh, 2007, 2008). This style became fashionable for women during a period of their political liberation as American women gained the right to vote in 1920. As previously highlighted in the literature review, I do not agree with the reliance on feminist 'wave' terminology. With this in mind, the first case study explores the period where women gained suffrage and how women's subjecthoods were constructed to include corset-wearing practices against a backdrop of feminist critique. The analysis continues to investigate *Vogue* beyond 1920, when American women gained the right to vote, to consider an entanglement of feminist values and anti-feminist corset-wearing practice values in the aftermath of women's suffrage.

In the second case study, the miniskirt is the focus, a garment which became fashionable for young women in the mid-1960s. This garment does not have a similar link to feminist politics as the corset. The corset was transformed in the early 20th century to fit women's new social and cultural positions that were developed due to women's suffrage. The miniskirt, on the other hand, was not transformed by wider feminist critique. Instead, it was a garment that became acceptable in the explosion of youth culture and youth markets in America in the mid-sixties. The 1960s saw the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the approval of the contraceptive pill for women (1960) in America. These changes coincided with the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan (1963) and the changes to young people's lives from the dissatisfaction of 1950s conformity. Before the 1960s, many young people were expected to marry and have children following school. However, these social conventions were pushed against by an emerging youth culture that included young adults delaying marriage and children for pleasure during this stage of their lives. During this period, there was an increasing sexualisation of culture that created tensions for feminism(s) and the emerging second 'wave'. The analysis explores the rising hemlines in *Vogue* across the 1960s and the sexualisation of women in the magazine into the 1970s.

Case study three explores the period of animal rights protests in the 1980s and 1990s and how the bourgeois, fur-coat-wearing woman was criticised by animal rights protesters. The analysis highlights how *Vogue* navigated the tensions raised by this care for non-humans towards the end of the twentieth century. It also investigates the contemporary, 21st-century, representation of real animal fur garments in *Vogue* and how fur is repackaged as a sustainable, natural material that 'solves' the issues of waste in the fashion industry.

The last case study explores how (Un)Sustainable fashion and the damage of the fashion industry on the environment is presented and conceptualised in *Vogue*. It investigates the ways in which the magazine constructs environmentally conscious clothing as 'unfashionable' and then uses environmentally 'concerned' celebrities as a way to discuss sustainable fashion. The use of the celebrity is bound up with postfeminist narratives of individualism, entrepreneurialism, and positivity that subvert structural critique and focus on scientific innovation as the solution to the fashion industry's future. The case study is located in the 21st century which is considered a period of increasing climate awareness and the emergence of ethical consumption.

These case studies were selected because they were deemed the most relevant, with connections to broader feminist politics and environmental concerns. The corset and miniskirt are often associated with liberating fashion for women. In a 2020 issue of *British Vogue*, an article titled 'The Great Awakening' asked: "What does activism look like now? Not a lone figure, nor a small pocket of society, nor even a generation: it's a wealth of faces, from every demographic, the world over […] From 1920s flappers throwing out their corsets to the miniskirts of the 1960s, fashion has long been a way of expressing dissent" (Sept 2020, Issue. 216 Vol. 7). In *British Vogue*, there is a construction of these two garments as a part of popular understandings of women's protest and expressions of liberation. Other garments associated with women's rights include sports clothing and trousers in the early 20th century, both of which were associated with dress reformers and feminists. However, these garments were not as prevalent in *Vogue* compared to the corset. The miniskirt also helped to capture the youthful aspects that are associated with postfeminism and more contemporary notions of fast fashion that were one of the first interests for the thesis. Fast fashion was another potential case study but due to *Vogue's* focus on luxury brands, stores such as H&M and Zara are less likely to be featured or discussed. Therefore, luxury sustainable fashion was a more suitable case study and helped to capture other features such as travel and cosmetics.

3.2.1 US *Vogue* Magazine

US *Vogue* magazine is the chosen document of analysis for this thesis. The fashion magazine runs from 1892 to the current 2023 period and is one of the most relevant in the sphere of fashion. *Vogue* has become a brand and is culturally recognisable around the world (König, 2006: 205). The magazine is a fashion magazine but operates as a guide for upper- and middle-class women to explore luxury, high fashion trends. As previously discussed in section 2.5.5, *Vogue* does not aim to showcase fashion that is artistic and breaks boundaries, instead, it focuses on brands such as Chanel and Christian Dior. It is a document that advertises luxury commodities and clothing aimed at wealthy women rather than a document that features fashion designers who push the boundaries of fashion or trailblazers.

The original plan for the research was to compare US and British *Vogue* across the chosen time period, but the comparative element had to be removed due to the COVID-19 closures of British museums and libraries. Copies of British *Vogue* are held in the Cambridge University Library in the UK which closed throughout 2020 and 2021. US *Vogue* magazine is held online on the ProQuest archive which I could access during the lockdown periods. The focus on the US magazine meant that a richer analysis could take place as more time could be spent in the online archive at the loss of the comparative element. US *Vogue* remained a useful source for the purpose of this thesis as the document represents women's luxury fashion consumption.

Luxury fashion consumption for women operates on many platforms, within shops, online shopping, fashion shows, and on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. However, women's magazines continue to be a popular medium (Beijbom et al, 2023: 2; Gill, 2009: 180). In 2019, U.S. *Vogue* reported 11.1 million monthly readers, 13 million unique digital users, 52.7 million followers, and 180 million video views (Condé Nast, 2019). They also boast that their audience consists of 7.6 million millennials, that they are the #1 fashion publisher on Instagram and YouTube and that their audience spent $18.4 billion on fashion. In 2022, they reported that this rose to 22.5 million monthly readers, 86.2 million unique digital users, and 167.5 million social media followers (Condé Nast, 2022).

Gill (2009: 183) highlights that women's magazines operate as a feminine pleasure that sits in opposition to masculinity. In her view, the platform has been shaped by neoliberal philosophies of individualism that ignore structural issues since the 1990s (ibid.). They also lack inclusivity in terms of age, 'race', sexuality, and class. Women's magazines continue to be powerful platforms that shape subjectivities, practices, and embodiment, making them a rich site of critical analysis (Bejibom et al., 2023). From a sociological perspective, *Vogue* is a 'cultural intermediary', a place where "the taste makers define what counts as good taste [...] constructing legitimacy and adding value through the qualification of goods" (Matthews & Smith, 2014: 15). They are *professional* taste makers and 'authorities of legitimation' (Bourdieu, 1990: 96). For Bourdieu, cultural intermediaries are typically "the producers of cultural programmes on TV and radio, or the critics of "quality" newspapers and magazines and all the writer-journalists and journalist-writers" (1997: 325; in Matthews and Maguire, 2014: 17). *Vogue* legitimises luxury fashions for women and, as it is aimed as upper- and middle-class women, is situated in a classed construction of femininity associated with conservative values.

Vogue distinguishes itself from lifestyle magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, or celebrity gossip magazines such as *US Weekly*, *Hello!* or *OK!*, *Vogue* prioritises fashion due to its strong emphasis on advertising and a close relationship with designer brands. *Vogue* is also different from more recent fashion magazines such as 'Grazia' due to its longevity. Magazines such as *Grazia* started in the 2000s to keep up with the fast-paced cycles in fashion and showcase both high-end, designer brands and high-street, fast fashion (Findlay, 2023: 306). Like *Vogue*, fashion magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Grazia* are cut across categories to showcase a mixture of women's lives. Fashion magazines show spheres of work and leisure, where "private time and space are precious [...] and dreams and escape often feed on a modest vocabulary of everyday possibilities" (ibid.).

The magazines must engage with wider issues of politics and change to remain relevant. In 2020, *Grazia* UK could not risk looking out of touch by not responding to the global pandemic but did so with the usual tone of an upbeat, friendly nature. *Grazia* UK also constructed the pleasures of consumption as an escape from bad news and upheld a commitment to neoliberal feminism that encouraged "individual resourcefulness and self-transformation as a response to the challenges and ongoing project of being a woman in a particular time and place" (Findlay, 2023: 307). The global pandemic opened up ways for *Grazia* UK to critique the fashion system and question consumer culture (to an extent) and narratives of collective action (ibid.). Fashion magazines, therefore, engage with wider political issues to remain relevant and can participate with a multitude of complex and competing narratives. Therefore, *Vogue* is a useful document that allows an analysis of consumer culture, wider politics, and accesses constructions of subjecthood and postfeminist values that have been nurtured over time.

3.2.2 The History of US *Vogue*

Since being bought by the publishing house Condé Nast in 1909, *Vogue* has defined itself as a fashion magazine for women and has not shifted demographic since. Other magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* (launched in 1886) are also useful for their consistent publishing throughout the 20th century. However, *Cosmopolitan* transformed itself "from a family literary magazine to a general magazine filled with articles on national and international topics and fictions" in the late 1800s (Landers, 2010: vii). Then, between 1905 and 1912 it reported on political commentary and exposé articles. During the 1920s, it shifted again to a quality fiction magazine, then eventually to a magazine for young women (ibid.). It was not until Helen Gurley Brown took over in the 1960s that the magazine began to focus on young, single, employed 'pink-collared' women that it is associated with today (ibid: viii).

Harper's Bazaar is also a high-fashion magazine that targets a similar audience to *Vogue*. However, much like *Cosmopolitan*, it has shifted its focus across time, firstly aimed at both men and women and reporting on high culture and art, but did not publish in the UK until 1929, therefore it does not cover the full early 20th century period of the first case study.[15] Ultimately, it is *Vogue*'s consistent insight into middle- and upper-class women's relationship with consumerism that makes it the most useful.

US *Vogue* is an interesting document as it does not strictly aim to depict women as homemakers, as other women's magazines are often critiqued for, such as Woman's Weekly (Winship, 1987). Instead, *Vogue* is aimed at a fashionable woman who emphasises style and other features of femininity, such as motherhood and domesticity, are not a main feature. The magazine focuses on the cultivation of a glamorous lifestyle for women and can be considered as representing a fantasy of luxury or upper-class femininity. Therefore, *Vogue* is a useful document to explore how women's lives have historically been linked to beauty and fashion, and consumerism, but offers a different femininity to the housewife (who has been studied previously). The insight into a document that is aimed at women who have been free to consume and spend money on luxury goods from the start of the 20th century allows this project to explore the history of an entanglement between feminist politics and consumer capitalism.

In the early 20th century, the magazine featured drawings and there was a heavy emphasis on textual information in adverts compared with the more contemporary style of heavily visual communication that developed across the 20th century. Lebovic (2019b) explains that the way *Vogue* magazine communicated to its readers changed across the 20th century. She finds that in the early part of the 20th century, the magazine adopted a ‘dictator’ style and *told* women what they should be doing. However, after the Second World War, this tone of advertising and mass media text was criticised for dominating the impressionable minds of children and teenagers (ibid.). Therefore, in the middle of the 20th century, she locates a shift towards a softer tone in advertising and the mass media, where consumer capitalism ‘convinced’ and ‘suggested’ rather than demanded (ibid.). The increasing use of imagery, and less text, throughout the 20th century may not be solely due to shifts in technology but also in the response to concerns around a new mass media (2019b).

---

[15] Selecting a magazine that was published in both the UK and US at the same time was a factor in the study before the changes were made due to COVID-19.

3.2.3 *Vogue* US Editors

Vogue US was founded in 1892 as a weekly newspaper based in New York City by American businessman Arthur Baldwin Turnure. The first issue was published on 17th December 1892 and consisted of coverage of fashion, social affairs and sports. The main purpose was to follow the New York upper class and report on their habits, leisure activities and social gatherings.

The first editor of US *Vogue* was Josephine Redding (editor 1892-1901), a known journalist and writer, she had already worked with its owner, Turnure, as an editor of *Art Interchange*. Redding supposedly disliked men overall and wrote pieces for *Vogue* on women’s suffrage, animal rights, and racism (Maralles, 2021). After Redding retired in 1901, Turnure hired Marie Harrison (1901-1914) as the new editor, his sister-in-law. In 1909, Conde Nast published *Vogue* after Turnure’s death in 1906. Fundamentally, Nast transformed *Vogue* into a women’s magazine and began to expand internationally, producing French *Vogue* in 1920. Following a dispute between Turnure’s widow and the Nast management, Marie Harrison left *Vogue* due to the tensions between her sister and the owner of *Vogue*. Following this, Edna Woolman Chase (1914-1951), a previous *Vogue* employee, was hired in her place. In 1952, Jessica Daves replaced Woolman Chase.

Jessica Daves (1952-1962) stepped down as Editor of *Vogue*, Diana Vreeland took her place (1963-1971). Under Daves, the fashion articles were conservative, and the magazine included a strong sense of family life, addressing motherhood through adverts aimed at families and clothes for both mothers and daughters. Men's adverts also featured heavily under her editing. *Vogue* addressed women as 'ladies' under Daves' editorial period but changed to addressing women as 'girls' when Vreeland took over. Vanity Fair stated that "there was never any fashion at *Vogue* until Diana Vreeland arrived" (Vanity Fair, 2011). Vreeland is remembered as an 'editorial legend' by Vanity Fair, missed for her love of artistic expression and youth culture.

Vreeland was replaced by Grace Mirabella in 1971 and she remained the editor until 1988. Mirabella was chosen to appeal to the 'free, working, liberated' women of the 1970s and she stated that "women weren't interested in reading about or buying clothes that served no purpose in their changing lives". In her autobiography, she claimed that she wanted to "give *Vogue* back to the real women". In the 1970s *Vogue* went from a circulation of 400,000 in 1971 to 1.2 million in Mirabella's first year as editor. However, in the 1980s, her popularity decreased, and she stated that "The 1980s just were not my era" as she "couldn't stand the frills and the glitz and the $40,000 ball gowns" (Vanity Fair, 2011).

Anna Wintour took over the magazine from Mirabella in 1988 following her role as the editor for British *Vogue*. Wintour, in an interview with the Evening Standard, stated: "There's a new kind of woman out there. She's interested in business and money. She doesn't have time to shop anymore. She wants to know what and why and where and how". Wintour has been the editor-in-chief since 1988 and has served as the Artistic Director at Condé Nast since 2013. She has also been the president of the Met Gala since 1995 and the Costume Centre at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is named after her. Wintour is one of the most influential figures in the fashion industry, she was awarded an OBE in 2008, a DBE in 2017, and granted a Companion of Honour in King Charles III's first Birthday Honours List. It should be noted that

Wintour has been the target of many animal rights and PETA protests due to her open pro-fur stance. The context of *Vogue*'s editor's plays an important role in the analysis, such as Vreeland's creativity and admiration of youth culture that embraced the miniskirt or Wintour's consistent pro-fur stance.

3.3 Data Collection

US *Vogue* magazine is stored online on the ProQuest archival database, featuring issues from 1890 to the current issue. All pages of *Vogue* are uploaded and can be downloaded by the user. NVivo was used as the main analysis software for this research. The data collection and analysis were split into three strategies: 1) key word searches and quantitative analysis, 2) full reads, and 3) coding. Pages were downloaded from the Full Read and Key Word searches and uploaded to NVivo. NVivo allowed for further analysis and coding of the individual pages, this is where the visual discourse analysis took place. A sampling strategy was used for the Full Reads of the magazine to ensure an even spread of *Vogue* was covered to gain contextual insights.

3.3.1 Key Word Searches and Quantitative Analysis

The first method of analysis was searching for key words associated with the case studies. For instance, within the fur case study, a range of words such as "fur", "faux fur", "fur coat", "mink", "beaver", "seal", "animal skin" etc., were used to capture as many pages of *Vogue* that featured issues related to animal fur. The ProQuest archive also featured a tool to filter time periods and show the popularity of the chosen word across *Vogue*'s history. From the key word searches, the next step included analysing the adverts and issues of *Vogue* under the search and downloading important pages for analysis. The *Vogue* pages were stored in NVivo software for further analysis. The qualitative analysis took place in NVivo as the software allowed for large volumes of data to be stored. It also provides tools for analysis such as highlighting and labelling visual data, creating themes and nodes, and coding.

Alongside the qualitative method, a small quantitative analysis took place using the ProQuest statistics on word frequency. The number of times a word was used in *Vogue* magazine was recorded by ProQuest and could be analysed over time. I was able to view the popularity of a word across the decades. The statistics were captured and inserted into an Excel spreadsheet and transformed into charts that show the frequency of the key words in each decade. The quantitative analysis of the key words was used to visualise some of the terms featured in *Vogue* (e.g. see Figure 1).

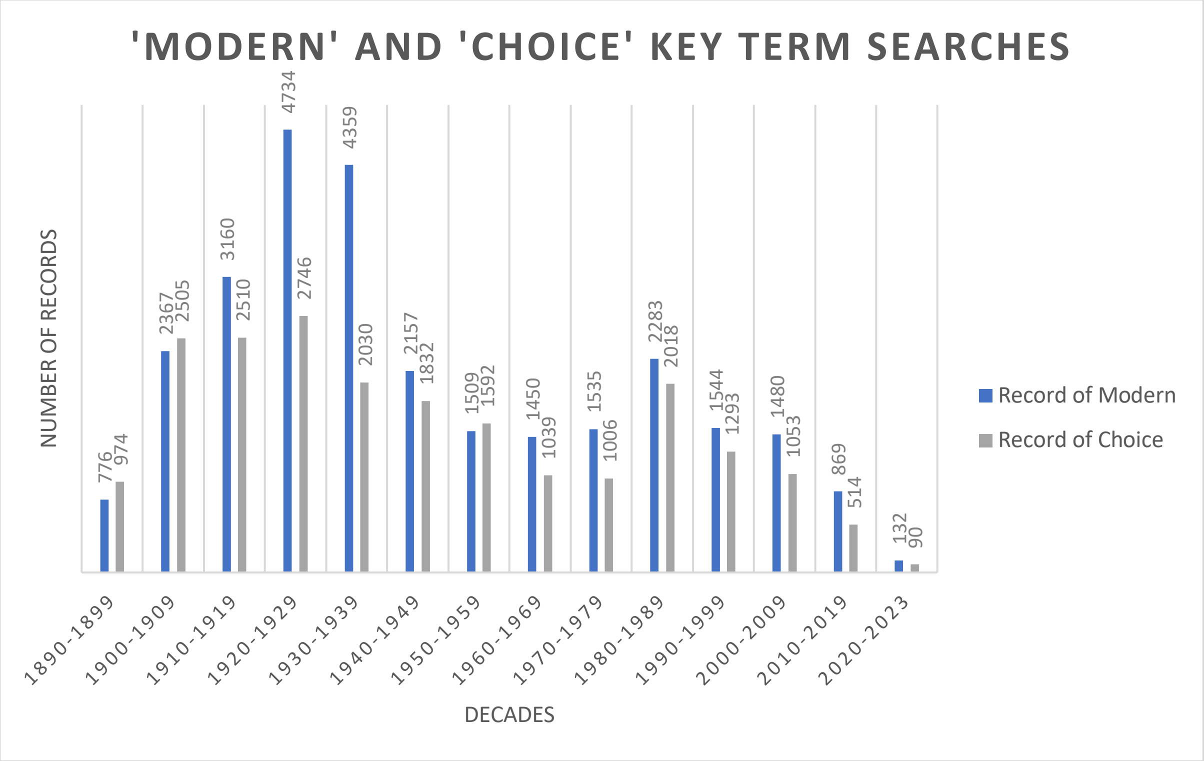

FIGURE 1: 'MODERN' AND 'CHOICE' KEY WORD SEARCH

The quantitative analysis was used to assess the frequency of words over time. Word frequency data assisted the key word searching strategy and more general insights into US *Vogue* magazine terminology. The quantitative method was not used as a content analysis (that considered whether the key term was used in a positive, neutral, or negative tone) but to simply capture the prevalence of the word. The method was supplementary to the research rather than a main method of analysis.

The frequency of the terms 'modern' and 'choice', as shown in the figure above (Figure 1), highlights the importance of the term 'modern' in the earlier part of the 20th century. The word frequency data shows that this was a common aspect of promotional talk during this time. It also shows that both 'modern' and 'choice' were used in the 1980s, a period when neoliberalism was on the rise.

3.3.2 Full Reads of Magazines

Following the key word searches and initial capture of *Vogue* pages in NVivo, I read full issues of *Vogue* magazines. The purpose of a 'full read' was to gain a wider context of the magazine outside the key term searches. The 'full read' is defined as reading the entire magazine from front to back and taking notes of any insights. The method of 'fully reading' magazines was inspired by Lebovic's (2019: 110) study of American *Vogue*. In her study, Lebovic read every issue of *Vogue* published in January, April, August, and December between 1945 and 1980. The method can be considered time-consuming but she argues that "this sample quickly spotlighted shifts in the magazine's content and form throughout this period". The full reads were helpful because they captured any content that may not have been in the key word search. For instance, when searching for fur adverts, if the word 'fur' was not used and the advert only featured fur visually, the advert with fur would not feature in the search. Therefore, the full reads helped to mitigate the drawbacks of the ProQuest search feature. It should be noted that, for example, most adverts for fur would feature the word fur on the page, the full reads captured how often fur would feature in other pages, such as makeup or interior design adverts. How often fur featured in other adverts helped aid the understanding of the wider reputation of fur outside of explicit fur adverts or articles. During the full reads, a sample of pages were downloaded into NVivo for later analysis and coding. The sample consisted of pages (adverts and issues) that linked to the case studies, the research questions, or wider research on values of consumer capitalism, feminisms, or environmentalisms. NVivo, therefore, consisted of pages from both full reads and the key word searches.

3.3.3 Coding

Coding strategies utilised the NVivo tools where data was highlighted (both textually using the cursor highlighter and visually using the drawing tool) and labelled with corresponding terms or 'nodes'. The nodes were then clustered into broader themes that could be used for further discourse analysis. This is useful "for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report repeated patterns" (Kiger and Varpio, 2020: 2 in; Mirzaei & Shokohyar, 2023: 4716), and involves a process of "selecting codes and constructing themes" (in Braun & Clarke, 2006). The magazine pages were uploaded into NVivo individually and were categorised by case study. However, nodes did not separate by case study which allowed for cross case study analysis. The cross-comparative element allowed for a deep analysis across all the decades and did not place strict time boundaries on the analysis.

During this stage of analysis, I also wrote a short 'memo' or written reflection for each page of the magazine that was analysed, this contained a longer initial reflection of my first analysis or analyses that could not be captured by nodes. The themes formed the structure of the writing and helped the processes of selecting what materials to include and what to exclude. The themes also formed the layout of the empirical chapters and the main arguments and analysis developed there.

3.3.4 Sampling

A sampling strategy was used to ensure a contextual understanding of *Vogue* for each case study period. To begin, I selected two issues from 1920, 1960, 1980 and 2010.

Then, two issues from 1925, 1965, 1985, and 2015. Finally, two issues from 1929, 1969, 1989, and 2019. The reason for this was to ensure I explored an even set of data for each case at the start of the study. It allowed for an initial contextual understanding of the magazine to develop within different time periods. However, the analysis avoided capping time periods with decades and this starting point served to gain initial insights about *Vogue*.

I selected the January, May, and September issues. These months were chosen for specific reasons. The January issues featured a 'trend forecast' for the year to highlight new 'aesthetics' and what the magazine prioritised for stylish women during that year. However, the January issue was usually a smaller issue consisting of around 100-200 pages. The May issues featured a summer forecast of styles, which was particularly useful for exploring shorter hemlines, the revealing of the body in the summer, and travel features. The May issues ranged from 170-375 pages. The September issue is one of the most important issues of *Vogue* as it is the largest in the year and contains updates from the Autumn/Winter fashion weeks. September is also the beginning of the 'fashion year'. The issues were around 150 pages in the early 20th century, but from the mid-1960s the September issue increased to 350 pages, reaching 472 in 1969 and 802 in September 1989. The months chosen provided different insights into the fashion year but were not restricted to these months. Again, this served as an initial sample.

After the initial search strategy, a more flexible approach was adopted that allowed me to tailor the sampling towards the specific interests of the case study. For instance, it was important to investigate *Vogue* in the years prior to women's enfranchisement to understand issues around feminist politics and constructions of women's freedom, and how narratives might have changed before and after women's suffrage. Also, when exploring the miniskirt fashions, the May and summer issues were more useful, compared to the fur case study where the September and autumn/winter issues were more appropriate. In other instances, *Vogue* magazine may publish an issue with a particular focus on a topic, such as the May 2007 issue that explored the environment and sustainable fashions. A list of all the full read magazine issues are recorded in the Appendix.

3.4 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has shown how cultural and feminist media studies, Poststructural theories of subjecthood, and entanglement inform the methods of analysis in US *Vogue*. It has unpacked notions of subjectivity and institutions of power to highlight why the research questions assess women's subjecthoods. I also expanded on how posthuman theories develop a novel approach to a feminist analysis of magazines. Following this, I provided an explanation of the methods, including sampling, the full reads of *Vogue*, quantitative aspects, and how COVID-19 impacted the research. I outlined how I gauged an initial contextual understanding of the magazine through full reads and then expanded in to a more flexible sampling strategy alongside the more systematic key word searches. In addition to the discussion in the literature review, it has outlined why US *Vogue* is a useful document for the thesis aims and fashion helps to focus the research questions.

Part I

In this section of the thesis, the first two case studies are presented: 1) The 'Modern' Corset and 2) The Miniskirt. The two case studies focus on moments of change in women's fashion in the early 20th century and then around the 1960s and 70s. Part I considers how wider feminist politics constructs new subjecthoods and notions of women's freedom that are entangled with the projects of consumer capitalism. The research in Part I shows the entanglement between tensions from feminist politics and values of consumer culture.

The mid-1910s and 1920s period witnessed the introduction of a new silhouette for women that no longer emphasised curves. It was later associated with the flapper subculture but was first inspired by dress reform and feminist critique of the corset. The two case studies focus on moments of change in women's fashion in the early 20th century and then around the 1960s and 70s. The 1920s flapper subculture introduced a new straighter silhouette for women that no longer emphasised curves. Underwear during this time changed and the bra was introduced during the early 20th century period. The miniskirt was also associated with a young woman's subculture, the mod, that became popular in the mid-1960s. The miniskirt is sometimes viewed as a sexually liberating garment that came into fashion for Western women during the 1960s and is still worn today by many women. The miniskirt is not linked to feminisms in the way the corset is, but rather a wider cultural shift that sexualised women but was bound up with the critique of the mid-century suburban housewife figure.

The visual discourse analysis investigates the following four research questions:

1. What subjecthoods are constructed for women in *Vogue* during the 20th/21st centuries in relation to a) feminist politics and b) environmental/ethical concerns?

2. How do wider political and cultural values and issues come to inform definitions of what a fashionable woman is?
3. What tensions arise between the values of consumer capitalism and a) gender politics and b) environmental politics during the periods of liberation and environmental/ethical concern?
4. How do the tensions between values of consumer capitalism and wider political issues entangle and impact gendered consumption norms and values?

4. The 'Modern' Corset

The case study on the corset investigates how US *Vogue* magazine responded to the changes in women's fashion. The early 20th century witnessed a rupture in fashion and bodily beauty, in which the hourglass, tightly corseted silhouette changed for the straighter silhouette, influenced by dress reform and later, the flapper subculture. In the 1900s, the safety of the corset was under debate by doctors, physicians, dress reformers, and feminists, especially as the garment was seen as the cause of women's ill health including miscarriage, fainting, and stomach issues (Erkal, 2017: 111). In the early 20th century, some women decided not to wear the corset and, at the same time, new options for underwear became available due to the introduction of new materials and mass production (Willett & Cunnington, 1992). Following this critique there was a demise in corset-wearing practices, and the straighter silhouette became fashionable. *Vogue* introduced feature the 'modern' corset in the late 1910s that created a straight silhouette. The new corset was constructed as a *must* for women during the 1920s and a part of modernity.

The chapter explores the discourses and subjecthoods that are introduced in association with the 'modern' corset and the entanglement between the values of feminist politics (such as women's bodily movement) and consumer capitalist values. The chapter showcases how *Vogue* constructed a 'return' of the corset through a 'modern' corset narrative that is entangled with notions of scientific innovation, women's changing social position, and the need for movement. The chapter also highlights how the corset was marketed with a focus on women's bodies, including a categorisation of the body, the moulding of the body, and individualisation. The research explores the way feminism was engaged with in *Vogue* and how a feminist subject was constructed and represented in the early 20th century. As identified in the introduction and literature review, the thesis aim is to provide insight into the historical entanglement between feminisms and consumer capitalism, paying attention to a period during and after women's suffrage in the US. The importance of this case study is to understand the historical entanglement of consumer capitalism and feminist politics and how this constructs notions of women's freedom and a fashionable, modern subjecthood in the early 20th century.

4.1 Early Twentieth-Century Context

In this section, I provide the historical context of the case study. Firstly, I provide an overview of the suffrage movement and engage with the values of first 'wave' feminism. In the literature review, I indicated that feminist 'waves' can be problematic and simplify feminism (see section 2.4.1). Despite this, the research questions and aims of the thesis seek to explore how a 'feminist politics' comes to shape women's subjecthoods and are rewritten in *Vogue*, which forms an entanglement with consumer capitalist values and projects. Therefore, it is crucial to outline what constitutes these wider politics for each case study. Following this, I also explain the history of the corset and the changes in production in the early 20th century. This helps explain why the corset fell out of favour and the wider changes to undergarments that occurred during the interwar period. The case study is, therefore, attentive to the wider changes in production and consumption.

4.1.1 First 'Wave' Feminist Values

Scientists in the Victorian era supported the view that women were inferior to men. Clarke (1874), a Harvard Medical School professor and physician, explained that reproductivity in women drained them, so attending university would atrophy their wombs (in Payne, 2001: 21). Early feminist advocates shared the belief that the status of women must be improved. Some scholars argue that the origins of feminism and women's movements began with the French Revolution and Enlightenment thinking (Hannam, 2013: 18). One of the most notable post-French Revolutionary publications was Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). In this piece, she responded to the beliefs that women were submissive, only desired to please men, and lacked intelligence (Payne, 2001: 22). In the mid-19th century United States, Lucretia Coffin Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony focused on women's right to vote which was gained in 1920.[16] The World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840 (that excluded women) inspired American women to organise a convention for women's rights (Hannam, 2013). Eight years later, the first Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls in the US. The debates in the early twentieth century centred around whether women should share power and control in areas traditionally controlled by men. At the start of the suffrage movement, feminists upheld a common notion that men and women were different, and they claimed women were more "pure, moral, nurturing, and committed to harmony than men" (Payne, 2001: 23). A narrative emerged that, due to their higher morality, women's involvement in politics would cure it of corruption. Payne argues that this secured women the right to vote and, following this period, feminism lay dormant for the next thirty-five years until the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s.

During the late 19th century, the figure of the 'New Woman' reveals how shifting gender relations were perceived in America. This woman dominated comics and humour magazines as a feminist who "perched on bicycles", smoked cigarettes, wore athletic gear and transformed the dominance of a language of 'ladies' towards 'women' (Marks, 1990: 2). She pointed towards a reversal of sex roles and in the New York *Truth* magazine, she was illustrated as a 'mannish girl' dressed in a tie, hat, and monocle, smoking (ibid.: 3). The New Woman simplified clothing and "eliminated tight corsets and long, heavy petticoats and skirts" which represented the abandonment of domestic duties for studying and exploring the world (ibid.: 147). This woman freed herself from the stiff corset and was able to move her body, exercise and engage with the world in new ways. The new modes of dress allowed for an expansion of physical health but ultimately loosened the stereotypes of feminine independence and well-being during the late 19th and early 20th century (ibid.: 173). Though the 'New Woman' was not strictly a suffragette, she captured the changes taking place alongside the feminist movements that gave women the ability to reimagine femininity and gender roles.

---

[16] None of the women who organised the first convention for women's suffrage in 1848 lived to see women gain the right to vote.

However, some feminists did promote the changing of women's fashion as a direct link to their political freedom. Dress reformers at the time promoted a dress with shortened skirt and pantaloons for women (Fischer, 2001: 1; in Payne, 2001). Paulina Wright Davis (1813-1876), a nineteenth-century suffragist and reformer, argued that fashion constituted the 'symbols of our slavery' (Stevenson, 2014: 6).[17] Reformers attacked women's fashion for the way it affected women's physical and mental health. Fashion historians note that "fashion signified and was a major cause of women's political and economic oppression" (Cunningham, 2003: 1). The National Dress Reform Association (NDRA) was formed in 1856 which borrowed from antislavery and women's rights movements (Stevenson, 2014: 7). These changes and movements show the wider context to this case study on the corset and how it is entangled with feminist values and constructions of women.

4.1.2 The History of the Corset

The corset is a difficult garment to define as it varied from one decade to another (Erkal, 2017: 110). It is a garment that was usually worn as a part of women's dress that supported and shaped the bust and waist, worn around the torso. The corset is often viewed as a restrictive garment as it physically confined the wearer and decreased mobility. It was a persistent part of women's dress from the Tudor period (1485-1603) to the early 20th century. It has been seen as a controversial 'instrument of torture', the cause of illness, and in more contemporary discourse, universally "condemned as having been an instrument of women's oppression" (Steele, 2001: 71). Steele claims that it fell out of fashion when it was "liberated by feminism" in the early 20th century since the corset was used as an example to show how women are 'victims' of fashion and the fashion system is a tool of both patriarchal and capitalist oppression (p.72).

---

[17] Paulina Wright Davis was an American abolitionist and founded the New England Woman Suffrage Association.

King (2004: 35-6) highlights that although corset-wearing practices have declined, the techniques of discipline, manipulation and discomfort are still practised on the female body, such as 'shapewear', push-up bras, or breast augmentation and wider cosmetic surgery procedures. The embodied freedom of women contains values of feminist politics, as Bordo's (1994: 21) work highlights, it was feminism that first discussed the politics of the body and the idea that "the human body is itself a politically inscribed entity [...] shaped by histories and practices of containment and control". Medical and scientific discourse has legitimated women's subjugation, the activities they can engage in, the clothes they should wear and reserving their bodies for childbirth (King, 2004: 31). Also, Butler (1990: 270) argues that "gender is instituted through the stylisation of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self". For these reasons, the corset is viewed as an important aspect of women's embodied freedom.

Leopold's (1992) historical research further complicates simplistic narratives of the demise of the corset, highlighting wider changes during the period. She pays attention to the changes in clothing manufacturing that occurred after the First World War due to the rise in industrial employment and growth of the population (p.107). These changes included an increase in disposable income, national transportation, and distribution networks. In the 1920s, larger retail and distribution agencies "gained the upper hand" and the 'hand-to-mouth' buying practice led to the decline of advanced orders, which manufacturers had relied on for certainty and the ability to plan production over longer periods. Due to these changes, manufacturers (or contractors) "could only survive by outbidding each other, through either lowering the quality of work or lowering wages or both" (p.108).

There was also the introduction of 'separates' which encouraged an increased turnover of stock (Leopold, 1992: 113; Wilson, 2003: 78). In previous decades, ready-made suits and dresses were expected to be worn over many seasons or years and were seen as major purchases. However, according to Leopold, the 1920s encouraged the idea of obsolescence in fashion and design due to the surge in demand in the post-war climate (p.113). By producing separates (ie. Jackets and trousers sold separately), the items were cheaper to produce and buy than the full outfits. Her research finds that between 1929 and 1950, "the number of dresses as a proportion of the total production of women's 'outwear' garments declined from 86.9 per cent to 53.1 percent, while the share of blouses and skirts over the same period rose from 2.7 per cent to 37.9 per cent" (p.113). For these reasons, clothing practices changed which also impacted the styles. The traditional dress with a corset underneath was no longer the only option available for women. The flapper silhouette also introduced dresses that exposed the back, meaning a high corset could be seen through clothing and needed to sit lower down on the body. Due to these many factors, it is difficult to assume one single cause of the demise of the corset.

Another important change from the 1920s was the introduction of new materials. One of the most crucial for the dressmaking industry was the synthetic fabric, rayon, sometimes referred to as 'artificial silk' (p.114). At the beginning of the 1920s in America, it cost $2.80 per pound, but by 1940, an improved rayon cost just 53 cents per pound. The synthetic fabric allowed the dressmaking industry to reduce prices and produce in larger quantities and facilitated "a quantum leap in the production of mass-produced garments". Another change during this time was the introduction of the chemise dress and straight coats that could be easily produced in the 1920s (Wilson, 2003: 79). By the 1940s, Wilson reports that the production of attractive cheap clothing was increasingly associated with the development of modern factory methods (p.82). There is a notable shift during the 20th century towards the use of synthetic materials that benefit the projects of consumer capitalism to create most cost-effective clothing.

The changes in fashion in the early 20th century introduced a new style of dress for women and a new ideal feminine body type to match. The new silhouette is notable for the lack of an 'hourglass' figure and the shift towards a 'straight' figure with no curves. For some scholars, this silhouette is a move away from typical standards of feminine curves, towards a more androgynous ideal and warps gender expectations (Scott, 2006). However, for other researchers, the straight figure is less about gender and more about idealizing a 'youthful body' as the lack of curves imitates a young girl's body (Fields, 1999). Conor (2004: 13) argues the flapper represents a symbolic modern youth that manifested in mass culture, where the "questions of globalising visual technologies and their effects on local heteronormative rites and feminine sexuality were thrashed out". Women's rising hemlines in the 1920s are sometimes argued as an indicator of their increased mobility in the early 20th century, the need to ride a bike and dance required a lighter, shorter hemline, but the visual discourse analysis reveals that women's new mobility practices also had an impact on the corset. Overall, this complicates the narrative that the corset fell out of fashion simply due to feminist critique and the following analysis explores how US *Vogue* constructed the corset as a 'modern' garment that 'returned' in the 1920s due to fashion innovation that provided women with more 'choice'.

In the interwar period, *Vogue* categorised the corset as a 'foundational' garment that helped shape the body into a straight silhouette and a practice required to create a 'modern' woman (Tinkler & Warsh, 2008: 122). "The corset enabled women to 'welcome the new silhouette'; it assured 'fashion accuracy'" (ibid.). The 1910s/1920s corset sat lower down on the torso compared to previous versions of the corset that usually sat in the middle to support the breasts and pull in the waist. The 1900-1910s corset was a longer corset that reached the hips, but the late 1910s-1920s version attempted to make the lower half of the body smaller and free from curves. Previous research on the corset of the early 20th century does not highlight the 'return' of the corset narrative that helps construct the discourses of modernity. Tinkler and Warsh's (2008) research on *Vogue*'s construction of affluent modern femininity in the interwar period emphasises the corset as an object that encompassed modern ideals. Alongside the car and cigarettes, corsets were entangled with narratives of women's freedom, liberation, and technological advancement. Tinkler and Warsh (2008: 121-2) highlight that although the corset "appears as the antithesis of modernity" due to its association with traditional Victorian dress, *Vogue* created an explicit distinction between the 'modern' and 'old-fashioned' corset. The following section explores how US *Vogue* constructed the corset as a modern garment that 'returned' in the 1920s.

4.2 The Modern Woman and the Return of the Corset

The early 1900-1910 issues of *Vogue* magazine featured a middle-class subjecthood that was concerned with what was 'moral' and 'modest'. This was reflected in the way *Vogue* constructed itself as a guide on what was 'correct' or 'right' for women. The guidance was mostly on fashion but also extended to manners, dining, and hosting. The magazine was practical and informative for wealthy women. At the same time, corset adverts in the magazine emphasised safety and hygiene as the most important factors. However, in the post-WWI issues, there was a shift towards an increased focus on what was 'modern' over the previous practicality.

The importance of being modern became increasingly prominent in the issues of *Vogue* across the late 1910s and into the 1920s. What was once 'modest' was reconstructed as 'traditional' and an antithesis of modern fashions and practices. *Vogue* previously showed fashion that was 'right', but this later shifted into a language of making a ‘smart’ decision, showing a shift from *Vogue* as a dictator of fashion into an influence for consumer choices. The corset in the late 1910s and 1920s was a ‘new’ and ‘improved’ garment that incorporated style, modernity, and freedom, as well as comfort. To introduce the ‘new’ corset, *Vogue* constructed a narrative of the ‘return of the corset’. However, the ProQuest database reveals that the number of times the word ‘Corset’ was featured in 1910-1919 was higher than any other decade (see Figure 2). Then, in 1920-1929, there was a decline in the number of times the word ‘corset’ was featured (see Figure 2). The key word searches show a steady decline in corset adverts and articles after 1910, despite the ‘return’ of the corset. *Vogue* constructed a narrative that the corset returns to fashion, but it decreased in the magazine.

The corset discourse across the 1900s and 1910s highlights *Vogue*’s response to the wider criticisms (and feminist politics) aimed at the corset and how this entangled with the projects of consumer capitalism. Firstly, *Vogue* corset adverts emphasised the comfort of the corset as a response to the critique that it was uncomfortable for women to wear. Secondly, the adverts promoted the health benefits and the practicality of the garment to counter medical concerns. For example, in a ‘Modart Corset’ advert from 1913 (Oct, Vol.42, Iss.8: 122), the company promoted the use of elastic insets that ensure “absolute ease and comfort”.[18] Another company, ‘Heath Corset’, advertise that their corsets are recommended by the wearers for comfort and physicians for health (Oct 1911, Vol.38, Iss.7: 106). An earlier Heath Corset advert from 1911 stated: “Live and Breathe in Comfort” (Jan, Vol.37, Iss.1: 49). These examples shows how the language changed to emphasise comfort in response to the wider political values. Towards the end of the decade, the “Schwartz Corset” stated that their corset meets “the demands of fashion and hygiene” (Oct 1917, Vol.50, Iss. 7: 171). Similarly, a ‘Lane Bryant’ Maternity corset is described as scientific and recommended by the medical profession and nurses everywhere as it "prevents fatigue, improves appearance and affords greatest comfort" (Oct 1918, Vol.52, Iss.8: 19). Here, the adverts respond to the medical concerns aimed at the corset with scientific discourse.

---

[18] The elastic inserts make the Modart corset unique, but the text does not evoke ideas about modernity or innovation.

The scientific discourse and emphasis on fashion was as common in the previous 1900s decade. For instance, in 1905, 'The Corset Shop' advert featured an old Gothic font and stated 'Ye Ladies' to refer to the reader. The company promoted itself as traditional and linked to the past, but also advertised that its garments provided comfort (Feb, Vol. 25, Iss.8: vii). The early 1900s issues also featured adverts for Corset Hospitals to mend and repair an old corset. The corset hospital could also alter them to make them "longer, higher, smaller or wider" and therefore fit new fashions and changing body shapes (Sep 1905, Vol.26, Iss.12: 351). The *Vogue* 1900s adverts emphasised practicality, mending older garments, and not shying away from tradition. These early 20th-century adverts were not as obviously entangled with notions of modernity as the later 1910s or 1920s marketing. However, the adverts do show that they were influenced by wider political and feminist values in the 1910s by emphasising comfort.

In the early 20th century, corset-wearing practices were fraught with tensions due to a demise in the practice and *Vogue* responded by advising women against being 'uncorseted'. As early as March 1913, US *Vogue* promoted the "uncorseted effect" corsets that, "paradoxical as it may seem, [these] models are the longest of all" (Vol.41, Iss.5: 112). The line highlights that *Vogue* was aware of the illogical notion of wearing a long corset to create an 'uncorseted' figure. However, *Vogue* argued that "A clever woman, instead of adapting herself to fashion, allows fashion to adapt itself to her" (Feb 1918, Vol.52, Iss.3: 63). Despite the contradictory advice, *Vogue* pushed the projects of consumer capitalism here as they support buying the 'new' corset rather than altering their current or older corset. The advert evokes the idea that a 'clever woman' allows fashion to adapt itself to her. Paradoxically, buying a new corset to adapt to a new ideal figure is marketed under individualist values, not following fashion but having it adapt to her. Also, the discourse emphasises the idea that corsets can shape a woman's body so she can create an ideal body type.

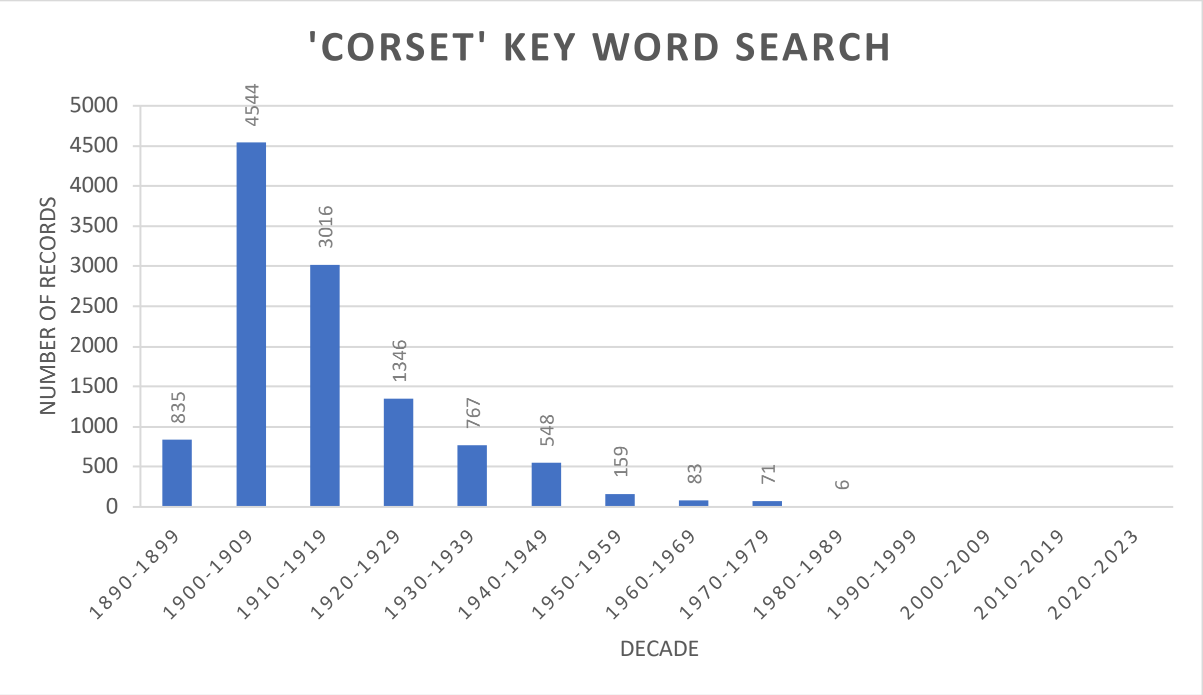

FIGURE 2: 'CORSET' KEY WORD SEARCH

In ‘Drawing the Corset Line’ (Mar 1913, Vol.41, Iss.5: 112), the article states that the fundamental principle of the “present-day corset is the fitting of it with accordance with the needs of the individual figure [...] for correction or development, and to harmonize with the muscular swing of the body”. The new figure, they argue, is neither feminine nor natural but “calls for the slender, straight hips, the flat back, and the small bust of a boy”. From this, corsets were designed to be longer and sat lower on the body to achieve the paradoxical uncorseted effect (ibid.). The advert supports individualist values but, at the same time, the figure must be shaped to fit an ideal. The article makes the statement that those who followed the uncorseted trend “found themselves with flat hips and a large waist, with a diaphragm developed out of all proportion and beauty”. Here, *Vogue* clearly does not support the wider feminist politics of going without a corset. Instead, the magazine promotes buying a new corset and the idea that women should shape their bodies to meet an ideal.

There is also evidence that this value, which responds to wider feminist politics, is shaped by the projects of consumer capitalism. In *Vogue*, there is a diversification of products that emerged with the ‘new’ corset. In 1916, *Vogue* stated that the corset is “out of sight, out of mind” as the corsetiere “rules the mode” (Vol. 47, Iss.1: 40-41). The corsetiere does not favour the “pinched-in line at the waist” and they help show off the ‘new figure’ in fashion as it is longer than the previous corsets. The corsetiere has an attached brassiere which are two new products showing a diversification in products. Diversification is one of the projects of capitalism that the ‘modern’ corset supports as it does away with mending corsets and altering them. The new corset comes with new gendered consumer norms and practices that support the projects of consumer capitalism.

The introduction of a brassiere also changed the practice of wearing an undergarment that is next to the skin. In previous centuries, clothing required many layers (thin shirts and dresses) to keep skin from touching outer garments (Willett & Cunnington, 1992: 235). The ‘traditional’ corset was worn with a chemise underneath, but the 'modern' corset and brassiere were worn next to the skin. New hygiene standards and the development of dry-cleaning clothes allowed for the washing of outer garments, and a consequent change to the purpose of underwear. Women's underwear shrank down during this time to a brassiere and short pants, a set suitable under a dance frock (ibid.). The corset did not disappear completely in replacement of the bra as corsets became a popular way of constricting and moulding the figure (ibid.). The authors highlight the advertisements at the time that stated, 'corsets produce a slenderizing effect on the figure' (1928), and wrap-around rubber corsets to flatten the buttocks (ibid.). In addition to the corset was the 'belt', which was seen as another substitute (p.245). The belt "varied from abdominal supports to light suspender belts with or without bones. Some were made of elastic only and became known as 'roll-ons'" (ibid.). By 1932, belts were made using latex and allowed the wearer more freedom without any 'riding up' (ibid.). Therefore, there is evidence of further diversification of undergarments across the 20th century.

Following women's emancipation in America in the 1920s, *Vogue* started to discuss a 'Return of the Corset', despite the 'new' corset style featuring throughout the 1910s. The 'new' corset is advertised as more comfortable and innovative due to new materials. In 1921, an article titled 'Incited by the Present Mode, the Corset Demands Lighter Work and Dainty Fabrics' (Jan 1921, Vol.57, Iss.1), *Vogue* announced that:

> "Since fashion has decided to follow the natural lines of the figure, the corset has been relieved of a great deal of heavy work and in its leisure hours has learned such substitutes for whalebone and tricot" (p.60).

Firstly, the article states that it is the new fashionable silhouette (straight, flapper style) that has allowed for a new comfortable corset. The new corset is not as heavy as the more traditional materials of whalebone and tricot, and these have been substituted for new ones. Immediately, fashion innovation is rewarded for creating a more comfortable corset. The article also features illustrations of the brassiere and claims that "in the frequent absences of the corset, a great deal of responsibility falls upon the brassiere" (ibid.). Again, there is an acknowledgement of women not wearing corsets and how the brassiere was used as a substitute garment. Here, *Vogue* engages with the tension between feminist politics and fashion. However, the discussion is avoided, and the brassiere is offered as a *new* product to substitute corset practices, despite the brassiere featuring in *Vogue* since the early 1900s (see figure 3).

The shift from whalebone to more synthetic fabrics is evidence of a much wider project of consumer capitalism that becomes problematic in the late 20th and early 21st century discussions on waste. Synthetic materials can be readily made and mass produced, whereas whalebone is a more scarce material that takes longer to acquire. Shifting to more synthetic materials support the wider projects of consumer capitalism, such as mass production and faster production. The shift also becomes bound up with ideologies of modernity, that having access to cheaper, faster produced items is a part of what makes a democratic, modern state (Slater, 1995). Materials become another factor in *Vogue*'s binary distinction between what is 'modern' and what is 'traditional' and therefore outdated and unfashionable. They construct a fashionable subjecthood to seek modernity which entails the wider process of synthetic materials and faster, cheaper production; all of which serve wider consumer capitalist projects of reducing costs and selling more.

The sentence also states that the corset has had some 'leisure time', a period where it was not working or in use, which has also allowed for 'new' designs and changes to develop. However, the long, straight corset has featured in *Vogue* in the previous decades. By referring to the lack of corset-wearing practices as 'leisure time', *Vogue* subverts political narratives and the questioning of the garment. With this use of language, *Vogue* insinuates that the previous unpopularity of the corset is simply due to changes in fashion, rather than issues surrounding women's ability to move and feminist or medical concerns. Though *Vogue* does not directly engage with the critique of the corset in the early 20th century, the adverts show a response to these issues.

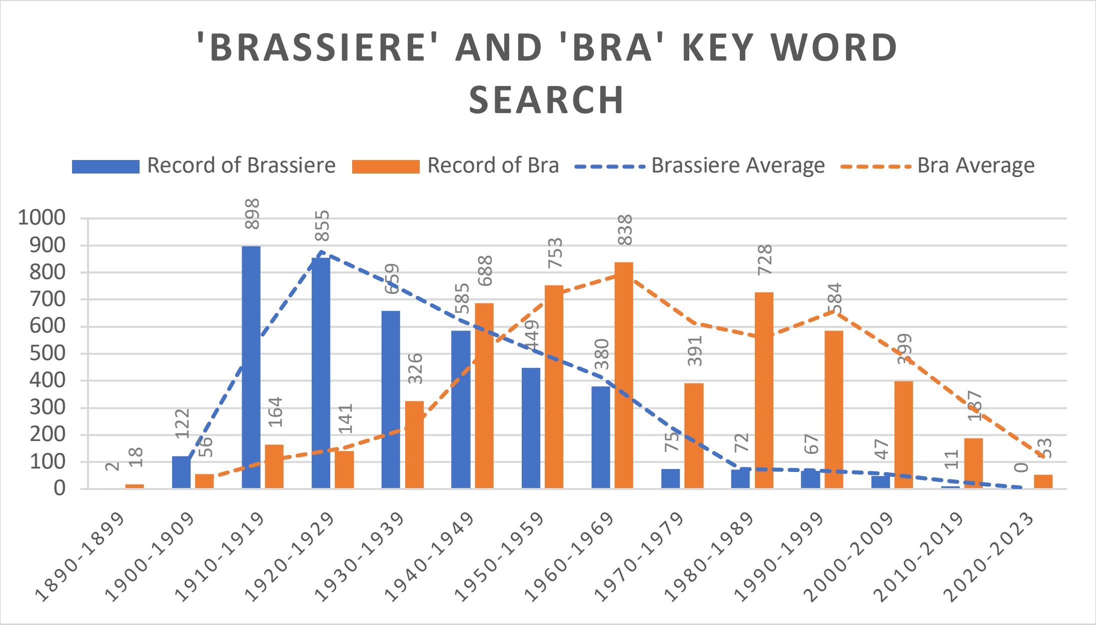

FIGURE 3: 'BRASSIERE' AND 'BRA' KEY WORD SEARCH

Despite the acknowledgement of the decline in corset-wearing practices, *Vogue* does not discuss *why* there was a decline. The previous critique of the corset as unsafe and unhealthy is removed from the narrative in *Vogue*. Wider political discourses, such as feminist politics or medical critiques, are avoided and instead, it is the flapper fashion that has created the comfortable corset. The fashion magazine constructs a narrative that eradicates corset critique and women's dissatisfaction. The 'return' of the corset from its 'leisurely break' shifts a potential discussion of feminist politics towards 'newness' and innovation in fashion. The new flapper fashions become the cause of the change in undergarments and the reason for the new 'comfortable' corset. There is no room for the critique of the corset or women's need for mobility. It shows how values of consumer capitalism develop and shape the marketing narratives of the corset that respond to wider political tensions and changes in women's fashion.

To further emphasise the 'new', *Vogue* are critical of the past corset designs and create a split between the 'new' corset and the 'traditional' corset. An article featured in *Vogue* with the heading: "The New Silhouette Brings Back the Corset and Demand Well-Fitted Brassieres" (Oct 1921, Vol. 57, Iss.7: 77, 100, see Figure 4). The text states that “fortunately” the new corsets are “made of softer fabrics and are much more lightly boned than the old-fashioned ones with their exaggeratedly long lines” (p.77). They continue that, in Paris, there was “much controversy as to whether autumn fashions would require women to corset themselves or not. One group contended that “we would revert to the [...] styles of Louis XIV”.

An advert from October 1927, by the company ‘International Corset’, also promoted the ‘new’ corset as comfortable as it replaced the previous tight lacing and boning to achieve “smart style without stiffness” and “fashion without firmness” (Vol.70, Iss.8: 178). Here, the magazine constructs the ‘new’ over the ‘old’. Valuing ‘newness’ becomes a part of the stylish subjecthood, an intrinsically ‘modern’ woman who seeks innovative technologies and designs to be a part of modernity. Also, *Vogue* invite the reader to consider the ‘modern’ corset as a garment that no longer contains the flaws of the previously critiqued ‘traditional’ corset. By arguing the ‘modern’ corset has been innovated and improved upon, they can reproduce corset-wearing practices without the previous critique. As a result, women are sold the idea that they are not partaking in an outdated practice, but instead a new and improved one. The ‘modern’ corset allows women to follow fashion and conform to the new straight silhouette in a way that is removed from the negative connotations of the restricting, uncomfortable, unhealthy corset.

Under this construction of ‘old’ and ‘new’, *Vogue* create parallel generational divides through the ‘traditional’ versus ‘modern’ corset, developing new practices for young, fashionable women that oppose the previous, traditions. For instance, the article ‘A Guide to Chic in Corsets’ (Oct 1924, Vol.64, Iss. 8: 86-7, 114, 116, 120) featured a letter sent to *Vogue* by a reader who asked for advice on wearing corsets for herself and her sister. *Vogue* argued that in previous decades any style of corset would fit all women as “the slender woman, her robust mother, and her grandmother (who was an out-and-out stout) [could] order the same corset” (p. 86). All three generations could wear the same garment because the traditional corset would be laced to provide shape and tighten the waist (ibid.). The generations of women are split, and the older traditions are disapproved of for the new corsets, where the individual must select the corset for her ‘body type’. By creating the split between a ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ corset, *Vogue* can evoke ‘newness’ while continuing to uphold traditional corset wearing practices that wider politics questioned and led a decline of the corset.

4.2.1 Movement, Modernity, and Youth

Vogue constructed stylish subjecthoods as ‘modern’ and the corset became a key part of the way women were invited to partake in modernity. Adverts featured innovation as a key marketing technique. For instance, they featured ‘patented’ technologies featured across the 1900s, 1910s, and 1920s. The emphasis on modernity, however, became increasingly embedded with notions of youthfulness, an anti-feminist value that promoted how women looked rather than their ability to move. Women’s movement was reconfigured into a quality that made them appear beautiful and youthful which commodified their bodily freedom. For instance, the ‘La Resista’ corsets patented ‘spirabone’ stays featured in adverts in the early 1910s (May 1911, Vol.37, Iss.9: 104). In the 1911 advert, the patented design is recommended by an actress who stated it “offers comfort while at work”, highlighting a value of feminist politics and bodily freedom. In 1916, the same company advertised the spirabone as providing “perfect freedom of motion, while gently persuading to graceful and youthful lines of figure” (March, Vol.47, Iss.5: 141). This shows how the language emphasised beautification of the body over movement.

In 1922, ‘La Resista Corsets’ (March, Vol. 59, Iss. 6, p.95) continued to advertise their “exclusive patented La Resista feature”: the ‘Spirabone side stays’. In this advert, the spiral stay is illustrated and shown to easily bend in a woman’s hands alongside a woman bending down in the corset. La Resista Corsets argue that their products are “Made for stylish women who appreciate the value of a youthful figure”. The adverts show how achieving a youthful figure becomes a priority across the period and related to corset-wearing practices. This engages with the generational issues and continues the idea that youth is 'better' than 'old' or 'traditional'. It can also be suggested that 'youth' is bound up with the discourses of new, innovation, and improving products.

The 'Snuggleband' corset by the company 'Bromley-Shepard' was featured in *Vogue* in 1925 and continues to highlight the changes to the 'modern' corset, the diversification of products, and the 'new' materials used that improved the 'new' corset. The garment could be combined with the 'Bromley Panty-brassiere', a "step in heavy glove silk which buttons on to the Snuggleband" (1925, Vol.65, Iss.8: 140). The Snuggleband is illustrated in the advert and described as a 'rich, firm satin [garment], with no bones, hooks, eyes or elastic', it is a corset that begins at a woman's waistline and finishes at the top of her thighs, with suspenders that can hold up stockings. The advert states that "modern corseting no longer caricatures a woman's figure but accepts as its ideal the 'human form divine' and molds [sic] the figure into the natural, girlish lines of youth" (ibid.). The use of 'girlish' highlights that woman were encouraged to replicate a young girl's body, rather than a *woman's* body. Therefore, in *Vogue*, the shift from the traditional corset that created an hourglass figure, towards the modern corset that restricts feminine curves, is an idealisation of a child's body. This idealisation of youth becomes an aspect of being fashionable and modern.

In addition to the La Resista advert, the 'P.N. Practical Front Corsets' also advertise their patented and exclusive corset designs in *Vogue*'s April 1925 issue (Vol.65, Iss.8: 130). They argue the corset can be adjusted for sportswear, a tailored suit, and an evening gown. It also claims that for women to appear youthful, they must be "flexible and yielding as the very Spirit of Youth itself" (p.103). Here, the need for freedom of movement is translated from women's new practices, such as playing sports or dancing, into looking youthful. The demand for flexibility is shifted towards a construction of femininity that seeks to maintain a youthful body over their bodily freedom. Therefore, the discourse of change is reduced to being beautiful and young for men rather than partaking in activities. The emphasis on a youthful body shows how modernity is gendered during this period and feminist politics are transformed into 'beautifying' the female body in consumer capitalism.

Also, in the article 'Corseting the Summer Mode' (June 1922, Vol.59, Iss.11: 68,108), the article explains how innovative materials allow for more 'freedom' when wearing corsets. It is stated that "fabrics for the modern corset may vary" and lists brocade, satin, and tricot as the most popular (p.108). *Vogue* inform that elastic is used for gussets and insertions as they provide "freedom wherever freedom is necessary" (p.108). Yet, they argue that elastic has "been found to lack stability" and instead, some designers use suede in its place, a material not known for its stretching ability. *Vogue* explains that "elastic, introduced in the most surprising ways [to suede], especially in combination with tricot, has effected results one would hardly have believed possible" (p.108). The ability to combine materials to improve their use is explained to the reader as a scientific experiment that yields discoveries. Therefore, the changes to women's undergarments are situated with the designer's ability to innovate, rather than women's liberatory demands or their refusal to wear a corset. The article continues that these innovations allow the "ability to present a woman's figure as it should be" (p.108), a statement that continues to shift the reason for changes in undergarments away from critique of the corset and towards stylistic and patriarchal values. This shows the entanglement between the projects of consumer capitalism and feminist and anti-feminist values. Here, the feminist values are adopted by the fashion industry and *Vogue* by responding to women's requirements to move their bodies, but the 'new' corset continues anti-feminist values of beauty, youth, and the control of women's bodies.

Welch (2020: 68) argues that scientific marketing was a large part of 1920s and 1930s ethics of advertising and marketing under consumer sovereignty. The idea that the "consumer served the public good by mediating the interests of producers and consumers" connected the "notion of the consumer with the tenets of democracy" (ibid.). For Berynays (2013 [1952]) this represented the American way of life and

Figure 4: US *VOGUE*, The New Silhouettes Bring Back The Corset, OCT 1921

could be sold to the world as a model of modernity, where owning consumer durables and consuming mass media represented “the importance of and dignity of the individual” and right to the good life (in Welch, 2020: 68). These elements are found in the emphasis on science and technology in the marketing of the corset. However, the categorising of the sovereign consumer overlooks the masculine and patriarchal elements found in this analysis as it assumes non-gendered consumption norms and practices. For instance, women are invited to partake in modernity through the corset by engaging with scientific and innovative commodities which is captured under the definition of the sovereign consumer. However, the rational, sovereign consumer evokes traditionally masculine values of rationality and logic for commodities; but women’s bodies are treated as ‘a body without organs’ (Finkelstein, 1997) in corset discourse and the female body becomes another commodity to be shaped and improved upon. The discourse also avoids how it is women’s practices and lifestyles that have shaped and changed the corset and urged a new ‘modern’ design. Under discourses of scientific innovation, women are removed as a part of the change to the corset and corset-wearing practices. An emphasis on the sovereign consumer could risk overlooking the deeper complexities of marketing towards women that commodified them. This analysis has revealed how, underneath scientific advertising, female consumers were constructed through their ability to be young as an aspect of modernity and commodified.

4.2.2 A Modern Lifestyle

Across the early 20th century, women partake in activities that require the freedom to move their bodies such as playing sports, dancing new American styles such as the Charleston, and driving. Sports corsets and the flexibility of the corset was an important part of the ‘modern’ corset that avoids discussing wider politics of women’s liberated lifestyles. In ‘A Guide to Chic in Corsets’, *Vogue* created an expansion of needs by arguing that “the well-dressed woman should have at least three corsets” and should not "make the mistake of wearing an old, shapeless corset for morning" and they need a new corset for formal occasions (p.114). Sports corsets are the third type a woman should own. Although sports corsets were mentioned prior to the 1920s, illustrations of women's activities became a part of the adverts throughout the 1920s. Therefore, women's increased mobility is seen as an opportunity for a variety of corset products to be sold and new methods of corset-wearing practices, increasing the diversification of products.

A Mme Frène Corset advert from *Vogue* May 1925 (Vol.65, Iss.9: 20, see figure 5) visually illustrated a woman's lifestyle. Around the drawing of a woman wearing the advertised corset, there are 6 illustrations. In one she dances with a man, and in another, she plays tennis. However, the text emphasises that the corset adheres to "The trim lines of youth", marketing youthfulness over movement. Also, in 'The New Silhouettes Bring Back the Corset and Demand Well-Fitted Brassieres", a corset that is suitable for dancing is advertised (p.77). The corset is to be paired with a "well-fitted brassiere" which buttons onto the corset to keep it in place (ibid.). In the illustration next to this, another corset is featured that can be used to play sports. The corset includes "elastic inserts at the back and on the hips [to] allow ample freedom for sports" (p.77). The examples here show the way corset designs changed to suit the needs of upper- and middle-class women's lifestyles that required the ability to move their bodies more freely. The constructed 'modern' subjecthood featured an expansion of 'needs' to fit this lifestyle with more commodities and a range of products.

In an article titled "30 Years of the Mode" (Jan 1923, Vol.61, Iss.1: 63-8, 178, 180-6) *Vogue* reflects on the changes in fashion and women's lives. The piece argues that the war reduced the frivolity of women's fashion due to the scarcity of materials. The pre-war woman is described as knowing "nothing of sports, of masculine comradeship, of motors or aviation or telephones, of equal standards or careers for women, nothing of the identity of slimness with youth or of the arts by which the face of woman is transformed to-day" (p.68). Here, *Vogue* constructs the 'modern' subjecthood as one who, since the First World War, has entered new spheres such as sports and motoring, along with new technologies of aviation and communication, and has 'equal' access to

FIGURE 5: US *VOGUE*, MME FRÉNE CORSET, MAY 1925

a career. Alongside the changes in women's political, social, cultural position and technological advancement is an entanglement with slimness, youthfulness, and makeup. What it means to be modern is associated with constructions of feminine consumer capitalist values of youthfulness for women, forming an entanglement where feminist politics, technological advancement and feminine commodities come to form a modern subjecthood for Western, middle-class women in *Vogue* and construct notions of women's freedom.

The physical changes in the corset's design were made to allow women more freedom to move so they could continue to partake in activities such as sports, dance and riding a bike. These changes show that feminist politics and changes to women's social position (such as partaking in new leisure activities) cause tensions for fashion designers and manufacturers. The corset had to change to accommodate women's new lifestyles where they played a more active and physical role in leisure in the public sphere. Although this is not an example of feminist political action that supports women's equal rights, it does show how issues of feminist politics (that critiqued the inability of women to move their bodies) result in a tension for women's fashion. Ultimately, values of feminist politics are accepted and become entangled with consumer capitalist projects. These come to inform constructions of women's freedom and what it means to be a stylish, modern woman in opposition to older, outdated practices.

The evidence shows that the entanglement of these values resulted in *Vogue* subverting feminist narratives and emphasising the 'newness' of products. The innovative of the corset was due to the changes in fashion and supported the projects of consumer capitalism. The modern subjecthood was constructed to need a variety of corsets for her different levels of movement rather than one, increasing product diversification and creating new consumer needs. Conor (2004: 8) argues that "modernity's visions of women became part of women's self-perception as modern, gendered representations became embodied". Conor makes the link between how women were constructed in magazines and adverts and how women took on these values in everyday life. This thesis makes no claims about the relationship between *Vogue*'s images and the women who read them. However, by focusing on the materiality of the corset and the changes to the design, it is clear that modernity played a large part in the marketing in *Vogue* and a crucial part of consumer capitalist values. The new acceptable movement for middle- class women in the late 1910s and 1920s formed a type of embodied freedom for women and became a part of the split between 'traditional' versus 'modern' women. In addition to this, the corset constructs discourses around the female body and emphasises the slim and young body as an ideal. Feminist values of movement were accepted and incorporated into corset designs but were entangled with anti-feminist values of youthfulness, beautification, shaping the body and a preoccupation with how the body is perceived by others, all of which became key aspects of the modern feminine subjecthoods in *Vogue*.

4.3 A Corset for Every Body

Unlike the traditional corset, the 'modern' corset is not always made-to-measure and does not feature laces that can be tightened to fit the wearer. Instead, the 'modern' corset uses new materials such as elastic and is mass-produced, therefore sizes are standardised (Fields, 1999). The corsets are produced in different styles that suit different bodies instead of one corset style made to measure the individual woman. Due to this, women's bodies are categorised in 'modern' corset advertising and *Vogue* magazine aids women to choose the right corset for their 'body type'. For instance, in a 'La Resista' Corset advert from 1911, an actress writes that "until recently I have always had my corsets made to measure" but has since used La Resista corsets that offer "styles for every figure" (Nov, Vol.38, Iss.10: 110).

The individual wearer must choose the corset to match their figure and therefore know the body 'type' they are classified into. In *Vogue*, this is constructed into 'slim' and 'stout' figures. In 'A Guide to Chic in Corsets' (Oct 1924, Vol.64, Iss.8: 86-

7,114,116,120), a *Vogue* reader asks for advice on corsets for her 'plump' figure that is now being described as 'stout', a word she claims to hate. Keist (2017: 99-100) finds that the clothing for 'stout' women appeared as early as 1910 and this body type often referred to women with a 'matronly' appearance that did not fit fashion's 'slim' demands. The way the 'stout' body is represented in *Vogue* is showcased in the advert 'Comfort Corset', as the headline boldly states: "Stout women: Slenderize your Figure" (March 1926: 185, see figure 6). The Comfort Corset can arguably make a woman "appear 10 to 20 lbs. lighter". A binary distinction formed in the advert between the curvy as wrong, and the slim as ideal. The 'Guide to Chic in Corsets' article featured four types of corset models for 'the large woman' that are 'pound defying'. These corsets were made from rubber, a material that can reduce the hips, and *Vogue* advised they are paired with rubber brassieres to match (p.114). *Vogue* argued that, although brassieres can be attractive in "rosebud and ribbons", the larger woman should not opt for these as they require more support. The brassieres made for the 'average-sized' woman featured a smaller strip of rubber and can be worn without shoulder straps. The details in the article that guide different-sized women on the combination of undergarments to them showcase the categorisation of women's bodies. This also highlights the level that women were encouraged to scrutinise their bodies.

The article also argues that "while the well-developed figure has some natural support for the abdomen, the slim figure depends on its corset for the sole support that prevents weakening or distention of the abdominal muscles and the dangerous results that follow such disasters" (116). In the article 'Corseting the Summer Mode' (June 1922, Vol.59, Iss.11: 68,108), *Vogue* state that "some women, with tall, thin figures, are so fortunately constructed and situated that they can keep themselves perfectly symmetrical by exercises and need as little corseting as the casual debutante" (p.68). The article continues that "most of us are not so blessed" and to "look well in modern clothes" must wear the returning corsets. Similarly, in the previously mentioned article 'New Corsets Find Supple Means to Subdue the Flesh' (1926), *Vogue* argued that the ‘slim’ woman has flaws that must be corrected by a corset. On the last page of the article, a ‘short corset’ is shown, designed specifically for a woman with a ‘slight figure’ (p.110). The short corset offers the “correct amount of support” but is “very lightly boned to allow perfect freedom” for a ‘slim’ woman (p.110). Here, *Vogue* continues to support corset-wearing practices and revert narratives that the corset is unhealthy as they construct it as essential for slim women’s abdominal health. However, the discourse constructs different bodies that have different requirements and therefore, women require the knowledge to classify their own body to select the correct ‘modern’ corset.

In Delhaye’s (2006: 103) study on the individualisation of women’s identities in consumer culture in the Netherlands from 1800 to 1920, she finds that at the turn of the century fashion magazines “kindly asked [women] to scrutinize themselves carefully and were offered guidelines for evaluating and judging themselves”. According to Rose (1996: 17): “The forms of freedom we inhabit today are intrinsically bound to a regime of subjectification where subjects are not merely ‘free to choose’, but obliged to be free”. The site of consumption acts as a subjectification of women into consumers who are ‘free to choose’ but bound by patriarchal pressures. The analysis of *Vogue* shows that the body is a key site of this ‘choice’ and social pressure emerges. Entwistle (2000: 39) states that in “contemporary culture, the body has become the site of identity”. Delhaye’s research reconsiders this as a contemporary value, showing how the ‘modern’ linking of bodily appearance and female individualizing identity can be located in the late 19th and early 20th century.

At the start of modernity in the West, individualisation was restricted to men, and it was only at the end of the 19th century that women were liberated from the private sphere (Beck-Gernsheim, 1986: 219-20). It was only until the 1960s that women underwent an ‘individualisation boost’ (in Delhaye, 2006: 94). Delhaye’s work does

FIGURE 6: US *VOGUE*, COMFORT CORSET CO., MARCH 1926

contradict this history but highlights that the efforts of feminist politics and their ongoing fight for equal rights should not be overlooked. The strict definition of individualism focuses on masculine domains of politics, economy, and the arts prevents more mundane aspects of individualisation processes. Returning to the emphasis on the individualisation of the female body, my analysis of *Vogue* found further support for this process in the early 20th century in the categorisations of the body for the standardised corset. Delhaye highlights that magazines "stimulated women in thinking and acting on the bodily self", however, the *Vogue* analysis shows that the modern female body was a *slim* and *youthful* body that prompts patriarchal constructions of women in consumer capitalism. Delhaye's research does not emphasise the patriarchal pressures that restricted these freedoms on the expressive individual that is shown in this thesis.

By combining an exploration of women's subjecthoods in consumer capitalism and the practices of corset-wearing, the analysis shows how gendered consumption norms shift due to a variety of factors. On one hand, individualisation was a value of modernity that invited women to partake in consumer capitalism, but this individualisation of the body was also influenced by a shift in manufacturing and the projects of consumer capitalism such as diversification and standardisation. As a result, the corset case study highlights how the work on the expressive self can emphasise women's invitation into modern individualisation as a value of consumer capitalism that was bound up with their new status as political citizens. The shift from traditional made-to-measure to standardised 'modern' corsets also features a categorisation of the body that is entangled and bound up with the construction of a modern individual female body. However, the analysis shows how the emphasis on the *slim* body becomes a key value of modern, gendered consumer capitalism and the construction of the stylish woman. It encouraged the scrutinization of the female body and values of beauty and youth that are anti-feminist values.

4.3.1 Moulding the Body

Another discourse that emerged in the case study that featured gendered norms of consumption was the moulding of the female body. In addition to the construction of the modern female body as slim and youthful, discourse on the corset promoted the shaping and moulding of the flesh. In 'A Guide to Chic in Corsets', *Vogue* stated that

"Flesh is plastic and can be moulded to look its best with very little guidance. If your shoulder- and hip-bones are symmetrical and the bone structure is right, flesh is a comparatively easy problem" (p.86). In 'New Corsets Find Supple Means to Subdue the Flesh' (July 1926, Vol.68, Iss.2:84) the text states that:

> "Nature is apparently the only force that moulds her form. Yet, in reality, the corset is the medium that achieves this supple silhouette, and is a garment that is more indispensable now than for many season past. When the uncorseted silhouette first appeared in the mode, some years ago, many women gave up wearing corsets altogether, but, alas, the result of this discarding was not all the desired effect of simple natural curves. Rather, figures that had been accustomed to being held within prescribed bounds took advantage of this new freedom to spread to awkward proportions; the effect of the silhouette after a few months was uncorseted, indeed, but far from desirable".

Following this passage, *Vogue* announced that the new corset has a dual purpose, to both create the illusion of an 'uncorseted' figure, and to also correct the faults caused by women's practice of not wearing a corset. The text here shows that *Vogue* constructs shaping the body with the corset as a practice for modern women, using products to reconfigure the body. Therefore, from the tensions of uncorseted women, *Vogue* reaffirms the need for a corset through the desire to be fashionable and the ability to shape the body. As 'slimness' becomes a valuable aspect of femininity and a value entangled with modernity, continuing a traditional practice to achieve a modern subjecthood is normalised and supported.

Previous discussions of innovative and scientific marketing emphasised the tenets of consumer sovereignty in the corset discourse. However, it is important to note that consumer sovereignty was based on the liberal ideal of the marketplace as civilising, rather than a celebration of freedom (Trentmann, 2006), and subjects could "reflect upon themselves as social actors" (Sassatelli, 2007: 97). The analysis here may help explain why corset wearing practices continued because it was viewed as a garment that civilised and helped maintain a 'correct' posture for both the categorised 'large' or 'slim' body. Therefore, women's mobility and movement in the modern corset maintained an emphasis on being graceful and having a correct posture. The values of consumer culture prioritised 'civilising' over freedom and choice during this period. However, aspects of the sovereign consumer, such as reflecting on the self, was constructed differently in *Vogue* in corset advertising and articles. The reflection of the self centres on scrutinising the body and the corset's ability to mould the flesh, constructing women's bodies as commodities themselves. From this, women's bodies are constructed as objects that can be aided with external consumer products to help them achieve the demands of fashion. The corset highlights how the straight figure, rather than reducing the contortion of women's bodies or introducing more androgynous styles, ultimately commodified women's bodies and combined a slim and youthful body with tenets of democracy and consumer capitalism. It promoted the idea that a woman's body is without organs and should be shaped to be beautified which overrides feminist critique of the corset and stimulated anti-feminist values.

4.4 A 'Feminist' Subject

Vogue's first publications in 1892 featured wider political discussions. It began as an informative magazine and transitioned into a fashion-focused publication after its acquisition by Condé Nast in 1901. While political discussions diminished, they did not entirely vanish. Examining the magazine's texts reveals the construction of the 'feminist' subject in Vogue, both before and after women gained the right to vote. The following section diverges from the corset case study to explore the use of the terms 'feminist' or 'suffrage' in *Vogue*. The analysis captures how the 'feminist' subject is portrayed, contributing to the research questions and highlighting the historical entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist values.

Figure 7 highlights that suffrage terms featured more frequently between 1910 and 1919, featuring a decline in the 1920s period. In 1910 (June, Vol.35, Iss.16:32), *Vogue* reported on a ‘Suffragette Luncheon’ hosted by “an ardent suffragist”. Not wanting to offend “her friends as she knew were either anti-suffragists or so-called suffragenes (those who have only a faint leaning toward woman suffrage), she arranged it more or less as a jest”. The lunch had a ‘Woman Suffrage Headquarters’, banner and ‘Votes for Women’ ribbons that were ‘made to order’ and painted in a novelty shop. The guests were asked to write down whether they were for or against women’s votes with a small statement to explain and discuss over coffee and liqueurs. The outcome of the event was not discussed in *Vogue* but is simply highlighted as a unique luncheon event. The lunch being thrown in ‘half jest’ and without telling the guests the motives to gain attendance suggests a complexity of how women engaged with the politics of their emancipation. The analysis highlights that *Vogue* was interested in the event for its uniqueness and does not portray a celebration or condemnation of the political lunch but recognises the varying levels of support from women.

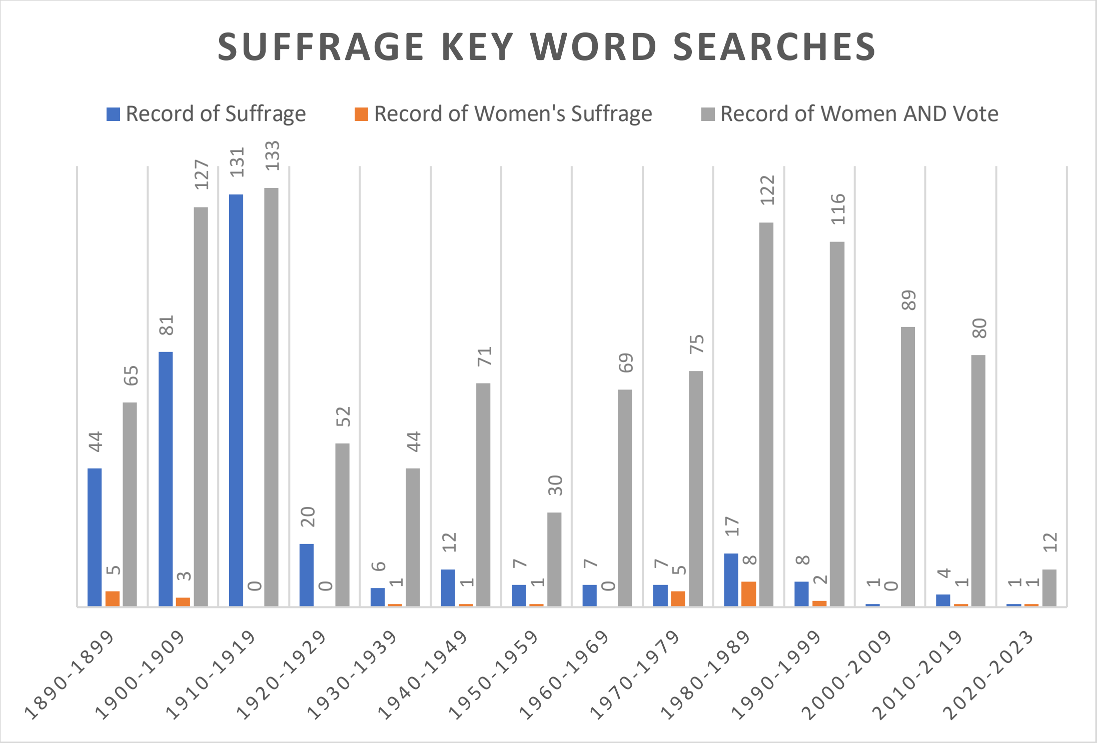

FIGURE 7: SUFFRAGE TERMS SEARCH

In ‘Feminism at the Bar’ (Feb 1914, Vol.43, Iss.4: 31,84,86,88), author Brian Hooker states that feminism is simply a movement that seeks the improvement of women’s lives. The main objectives of feminism are to overcome the unjust treatment of women in the law by letting women vote, hold office, overcome unequal earning, women’s education and hold jobs that a man can, and not binding women to motherhood so they can be free to elect marriage and children. He claimed feminists have “no sentimental reverence for existing traditions of what is masculine and what is feminine. They believe in Progress” (p.31). One of the main supporting points for feminism is that “you cannot argue with evolution [...] That [women’s] position is unjust is not a question: it is a fact of morals” (ibid.). Hooker agrees that women’s involvement in the public sphere would help the evolution of humanity (1869: 154). As a result, the type of feminisms accepted in *Vogue* are those that agree with liberal notions of evolution, progress, and choice.

Hooker also states that: “Feminism flatly declares that the modern home neither is nor ought to be large enough for the modern woman, still less for the woman of the future; that she should pursue outside the home her own public or personal career as freely as a man; or that, in case the two conflict, she should choose between them freely” (p.84). Here, choice is a key part of women’s freedom. However, the choice here is not linked to the choice of ‘the consumer’ but as an active citizen in the public sphere over the private one. The feminisms discussed seek to break down normalisations of gender as Hooker quotes: “We talk of man’s courage and woman’s purity; yet there was nothing masculine about the courage of Joan, nothing feminine in the purity of Jesus” (p.84). Also, men have “kept women subservient to themselves, the drudges of their work and the playthings of their pleasure” (p.86). However, these views are stated as more ‘radical’. Overall, he argued it cannot be denied that women are oppressed by men because they cannot vote. This shows how the oppression of women is mainly a concern because it violates the core principles of a modern, democratic society (Bristow, 2015: 5). Therefore, the article considers feminist arguments but ultimately legitimises those that uphold liberal democracy and values of Western modernity.

Some adverts used feminist values as a selling point by promoting a female founder of the company. In an advert for Madame Bertie's skincare range (June 1929, Vol.73, Iss.12:131), they note that she is a 'French scientist and feminist' who has "devoted her life to the creation and maintenance of smooth, healthy, desirable skin". In February 1927, a small advert for designer 'La Maison Karagère' was featured (Vol.69, Iss.4: 22,134). The lingerie designer is "an excellent piece of propaganda for the feminists" as she is a business owner and a "wonderful example of what can be accomplished by a woman's energy and initiative". The advert stated that "relations did everything in their power to discourage her from launching a business house, because, they said, she would never succeed, and they believed that a woman's place was in the home". She operated in both New York and Paris, and she did not show a dress in Paris for longer than four weeks. The feature shows how in the 1920s, feminism was considered as a movement for women to work and succeed under capitalism rather than concerned with structural or collective matters of women's oppression. The individual monetary success of Madame Karagère is constructed as something that could be used as feminist propaganda, showcasing the merging of consumer capitalism and feminisms in *Vogue* in 1927. Also, Madame Bertie's roles as both a scientist and a feminist are promoted to sell a skincare range to women. Although this is not a popular discourse in *Vogue* adverts following women's enfranchisement, they show instances of how 'feminists' were depicted in the 1920s. They highlight how 'feminists' were utilised in adverts to sell products and promote how the 'freedom' of women can lead to entrepreneurialism and new products, becoming values of consumer capitalism.

In 'Prettiness versus Chic' in the June 1926 (Vol.67, Iss.12: 88) issue, *Vogue* compare the previous Victorian fashions of lace and frills to the 'modern' straight lines. They state that the desire to be 'pretty', 'adorable' and 'sweet' is a thing of the past and instead, women should aim to be chic which includes simplicity, sophistication and even a little hardness, but never pretty. Although they should aim to be beautiful, this is not synonymous with 'pretty'. The article stated that "*Vogue* cannot claim that the average man [...] is educated to this modern point of view. But this in no way daunts the woman of discriminating taste". The text argues "It might also be said, by ardent feminists, as a proof of the superiority of woman over man, since it is well known that the love of prettiness is a sign of immaturity". Again, *Vogue* constructed feminist issues with issues of style and consumer culture. However, there is a shift here from women adhering to a male gaze towards women who beautify for the self and for fashionable style that is not aligned with men's tastes. Therefore, there are elements of self-subjectification in the 1920s. However, this focus on the self can be linked to the values of consumer culture and the sovereign consumer who is expected to reflect on the self (Delhaye, 2006, Sassatelli, 2007).

In the September 1929 issue (Vol.74, Iss.7: 72-3, 86, 90), an article titled 'Youth Must Have Its Way' discussed the arguments that break out between a mother and daughter during shopping. The fictional argument imagines a daughter who asks for a dress with thin straps and a low-cut back. The mother suggests a pastel-coloured dress with lace. Her daughter argues that she does not want to look like a debutante and boys will not be attracted to a girl in a Victorian 'baby frock'. The previous article's notion that men are attracted to 'pretty' and not 'stylish' is overturned. *Vogue* also construct the idea that young women know 'better' than their mothers and are more up-to-date with style, fashion, and men's desires. As a result, *Vogue* praise the youth as the leaders of fashion and style, and the mother as out-of-date. However, by calling the mother's taste in her daughter's dress a 'Victorian baby frock', *Vogue* play with issues of generation and morality. The magazine article supports the younger woman's ability to wear a more seductive dress that idolises a movie star and women's sexuality.

As a result, *Vogue* constructs what is appropriate for middle-class women's subjecthoods, opening up their choice to dress seductively and stylishly, going against their mothers. Issues of generation and choice are raised here, where the young woman seeks greater variety, newness, and sexuality in her style. The ability to choose her style is tied to her ability to choose and attract a partner. Therefore, the *choosing* woman of an enfranchised generation is entangled with notions of consumer capitalism. Ultimately, *Vogue* supports the younger generation and undermines the mother's approach, constructing it as outdated and in opposition to her sexuality. Therefore, the emancipated woman is free from the morals of the suffragette and an 'older' generation of women to be pure. Feminist politics are reconfigured under consumer capitalism and the (re)construction of women's freedom is tied up with youth, generation, and consumer values, constructing an older generation as 'outdated' and unfashionable. *Vogue* constructs itself as 'modern' through the support of younger generations and new styles which are bound up with women's sexuality and values of changing gender relations. The values come to shape what is viewed as fashionable and what is deemed as 'modern'.

4.5 Conclusion

The fashionable subjecthoods that were created for women in US *Vogue* in the early 20th century are a part of modernity, and the corset is reconfigured as a 'new' practice set against traditional corset-wearing practice. The corset poses a tension between the expectation of women to constrict themselves and their more liberated positions and activities in the early 20th century. With the wider critiques from doctors and feminists, and the need to move their bodies more, the corset comes under pressure to adapt to the changing practices and lives of women. The changes to the corset are depoliticised and constructed as a response to the straighter silhouette but also feature discussions of modernity and technological advancement. The fashionable subjecthood is constructed to continue corset-wearing practices but it is repackaged as modern and, into the 1920s, it becomes crucial to achieve slimness and youthfulness over mobility. Generational tensions emerge as the 'modern', young woman (who seeks new styles and embraces the ability to express her sexuality), clashes with previous constructions of femininity as modest. Therefore, as style, sexuality, and modernity become fashionable, 'traditional' values and pretty clothing are ridiculed in *Vogue*, urging women to seek newness and adopt values of an expressive, sexual subjecthood. From this, the tensions of being modern over traditional, which shape the reconfiguration of the corset, become a key part of the values of women's consumer culture and what it means to be fashionable.

Due to changes in clothing manufacturing, the corset was standardised which was translated in *Vogue* adverts under discourses of more choice, variety, and individualisation as the corset was sold in different styles rather than made-to-measure. The standardised sizing in corset manufacturing led to the construction of an ideal body type (Fields, 1999). This also led to a categorisation of the body and the idea that the body could be moulded into a corset as much as moulded *by* the corset. As a result, within women's consumer culture discourses in *Vogue*, the individual body was a key value for the American woman. The stylish woman's subjecthood emphasised consumer cultural values of individuality, choice, innovation and freedom. However, these values also featured alongside discourses of restraining the body, following fashion, and a glorification of the young, slim body. Therefore, the tension between the corset and feminist politics entangle to form a construction of women's freedom that includes a continuation of corset-wearing practices and women shaping their bodies but tied to values of being modern and engaging with this through consumer commodities.

Delhaye's (2004) work highlights the individualising subjecthoods for women during the early 20th century. This thesis argues that the requirement for women to be slim and youthful that emerged as a key value in women's ability to be modern and partake in middle-class liberated lifestyles and highlights further gendered norms and values that were developed for women during the time and associated with the body and looking young. The analysis shows how, in *Vogue* magazine, the tensions around the corset are subverted and feminist critiques are avoided for a celebration of constructions of women's freedom that comes from consumer capitalist innovation and the diversification of products. It sheds light on how aspects of freedom are key values in the construction of the modern woman. However, it revealed the ways the corset was shaped by wider politics and invited women to partake in modernity, but also constructed a middle-class feminine subjecthood that is pressured to be young and slim.

5. The Miniskirt

In this chapter, how rising hemlines and the miniskirt were presented and marketed in *Vogue* magazine is analysed. The miniskirt gained popularity in the mid-1960s and remains popular in contemporary society. It is often associated with the British mod youth subculture in the 1960s, a group that dressed in a modern, smart style. The case study reveals how this culture was received in the US and how it shaped *Vogue*'s communication of rising hemlines and the miniskirt to their middle-class audience. It shows how an acceptable middle-class sexuality changed over the 1960s, as part of a shift from a sophisticated Hollywood glamour towards young, playful subjecthoods. The miniskirt constructed a youthful category of consumption for young women reading *Vogue*, while continuing an idolisation of youth that created age anxieties for women who must judge if they were young enough to fit in. The construction of a gendered youth category opened up a type of consumer that was free from the responsibility of the family and domestic duties. Previously in consumer culture, women's subjecthoods were confined by their responsibilities in the home as young people left school and married. But the mid-1960s, youth categories invited young women into new subjecthoods without these concerns and young people could delay marriage and children. In *Vogue*, young women were invited to partake in consumption and a lifestyle of leisure that expressed playfulness and sexuality. *Vogue* experimented with revealing the body and the levels of modesty for middle-class women.

Due to the rising hemlines, there was an emphasis on revealing the legs in the miniskirt but *Vogue* also included nudity in the magazine, embracing women's sexuality and self-subjectification. There is an enhanced focus on the body during this period, specifically a continued emphasis on the young, slim body. As a 'second wave' of feminism gains momentum in this period, the chapter also explores how *Vogue* interacted with the wider political discussions of women's rights. I examine how *Vogue* created tensions for wider feminist politics and how they navigated this rising political landscape. Overall, the case study shows the history of an entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist values that are also bound up with the projects and developments of consumer capitalism.

5.1 Mid-Twentieth Century Context

In this section, I will outline the historical context of the case study. Similar to the previous section, it is important to define the wider feminist politics of the 1960s and 1970s to clarify what tensions emerge from these feminisms, how this is translated in *Vogue*, and entangled with the projects of consumer capitalism. Following this, I outline the history of raising hemlines and how the miniskirt is linked to a wider emerging youth culture. Unlike the previous chapter where the case study garment (the corset) was critiqued by wider feminisms, the miniskirt is not directly linked to feminism in this way. Instead, the miniskirt is a part of youth cultures and specifically the mod subcultural group. Therefore, I will explain and discuss the link between youth culture and consumer culture, providing a brief overview of sociological analyses of the time period and the cultural shifts. Overall, this case study explores how the miniskirt created tensions for feminist politics and how *Vogue* constructs a landscape for postfeminist values and sensibilities to flourish in the future that are bound up with the projects of consumer capitalism.

5.1.1 Second 'Wave' Feminism

Second-wave feminism is believed to be the next peak of feminist activity since the suffrage movement in the United States. The Women's Liberation movement of the 1960s and 70s generated widespread publicity, influenced contemporary politics, and "affected the ways in which women and men thought about themselves and their place in the world" (Hannam, 2013: 9). In 1968, women protested the Miss America beauty contest and threw their bras and girdles (symbols of the pressure on women to conform to beauty standards) into a 'freedom trash bucket' (ibid.: 113). To understand what led to women's discontent in the late 1960s, some answers can be found as far back as the Second World War (ibid.: 134). Following the war, a fear of social instability led governments to emphasise the importance of gender roles and social welfare policies were based on the assumption that there was a male breadwinner (ibid.). Under the 1950s 'decade of the housewife' and the influence of the Cold War, the United States political landscape was more conservative and suspicious of 'radical' movements. It was difficult for feminists to put forward alternative views. The image of the 'perfect housewife' was at odds with the realities of women's lives in the late 1950s and 1960s.

The publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) captured the frustrations of white, middle-class, suburban American women and "stimulated debates about the position of women" in the family (ibid.: 137). Inspired by the tactics of black civil rights movements, women organised collectively to challenge gender roles. In 1966, Betty Friedan, along with labour and civil rights activists, established the National Organisation of Women (NOW) to "bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now" (Legates, 2001: 348). Activism and organisation expanded across North America and Europe during the late 1960s and 1970s. The 'personal is political' became one of the most famous slogans of the women's liberation movements. Consciousness-raising encouraged women to reassess their personal lives and to "negotiate an autonomous identity beyond those associated with family duties" (Whelehan, 1995: 13). Feminists drew attention to the way consumerism and advertising used women's sexuality to sell goods and populated the idea that women's only value was in their beauty (Hannam, 2013: 142). There were challenges to the 'sisterhood' that second-wave feminism promoted in North America and Europe as it was considered a movement dominated by white, educated, middle-class, heterosexual woman and their concerns. The movement led to changes that aimed to enhance women's position, including equal pay, sex discrimination laws, and the legalisation of abortion (ibid.: 155). Violence against women came to be viewed as structural rather than the act of a few individuals. Second-wave feminism helped develop a new language to discuss the discrimination women faced and that 'sexism' was not only embedded in institutions such as the workplace and family, but in the meanings of masculinity and femininity, which were constructed in the media, advertising, and everyday language (ibid.: 156).

5.1.2 Rising Hemlines and Youth Subcultures

The 1960s revolutionised women's dress beyond the traditional glamour of the 1950s. For those under the age of 22, new subcultures emerged in the US and the UK such as the mods and rockers (Bleikorn, 2002: 20). By 1963, youths in London began identifying themselves as 'the moderns' or 'mods' for short (ibid.). Although they were originally male dominated styles, Mary Quant (a notable British fashion designer) is credited with creating the miniskirt for mod women (ibid.: 23). The miniskirt was adopted by many young women in the UK, America, and Europe (ibid.). At first, the miniskirt was defined as a hemline two inches above the knee, but within a year the two doubled to four inches (ibid.). Prior to this, during the Second World War women's hemlines rose higher than those in the 1930s but after the war they plunged back down due to Christian Dior's 'New Look' in 1947 (ibid.: 24). The New Look included longer skirts and hourglass feminine shapes following the more masculine military styles that dominated during the war. The full skirts and long pencil style skirts lasted from the late forties to the early sixties and were worn by women of all ages (ibid.: 26). However, the miniskirt introduced styles for younger women and became a popular choice for those under 26. Mary Quant became the first British designer who created fashion for mass production as she believed her designs should be affordable for a mass audience (ibid.: 29). In 1962, Quant signed a licensing deal with the American retail chain 'J.C. Penny' which allowed her designs to be manufactured on a large scale across the States.

'Youth' was an emergent category in post-war Britain and one of "the most striking and visible manifestations of social change in the period" (Hall & Jefferson, 1990: 9). The term 'Youth Culture' is premised on the view that "what happened to 'youth' in this period is radically and qualitatively different from anything that had happened before" (ibid.: 15). It can also suggest that certain ideological interpretations - such as age and generation - mattered most, or that youth culture was classless or a class itself. Post-war youth linked with wider expansions of leisure and fashion industries targeted at the 'teenage market' (ibid.: 15-6). It is important to understand the ways youth groups fed off 'things' provided by the market and how the market tried to expropriate and incorporate things produced by sub-cultures (ibid.). Therefore, for these authors, the market category of youth is important in understanding 'youth' as an emerging cultural category.

The teenager category marked a new biographical space between school and job-and-family adulthood, where young people had disposable income and free time without family responsibilities (Slater, 1997: 165). Hebdige's (1979) work considered the available cultural resources, such as consumer goods, leisure, fashion, and music that were appropriated and reassembled through a process of 'bricolage' into meaningful patterns that could be understood as a response or strategy through which youths coped with their contradictory situation (in Slater, 1997: 165). For example, mod culture consisted of Italian suits, scooters, short hair, and soul music and the style could seamlessly flow from school, work, and leisure. The objects they chose were an attempt to differentiate themselves from the world of their parents, beyond the scope of their teachers and bosses (p.166). However, Slater argues that "being active in one's consumption – as opposed to being a manipulated mass cultural 'dope' – does not mean being free (textually or socially) let alone oppositional" (p.171). Within cultural studies, the consumption practices of 'groups on the margins' were considered creative, with political meaning, rather than irrational, subordinated or manipulated (p.171). However, the more mundane forms of 'mainstream consumption' continued to be viewed as conformist, manipulated, and non-oppositional as they did not appear specular or expressive. As a result, if a subculture member wears an Italian suit, *he* is a working-class hero, whereas someone not on the margins is viewed as unthinking and not active. McRobbie (1980, 1984, 1991) has also highlighted the overly male analyses of subcultures that were often uncomfortable places for women as their creative expression in material culture can be reduced to being a 'slag' by members and non-members (Slater, 1997: 172). Slater argues her work treads a fine line between acknowledging conformist consumption as active *and* oppositional.

Sociologists agreed that there was a "turning point in economic and cultural production after the 1960s" that became especially entrenched by the late 1980s (Warde, 1997: 2). David Harvey (1989) reported that there was an intensification of a postmodern structure that replaced the previous Fordist modes of mass production (ibid.). Some postmodern theorists suggest an enhanced level of individual freedom during this shift and the erosion of social group membership. For example, the upper- and middle- classes of the 19th and 20th centuries had their own distinct taste, which some argue is no longer the case due to a decline of class (p.8). Bauman (1988) argues consumption appears to be a realm of freedom, but it causes stress to individuals as they are faced with consumer choice. In postmodernity, individuals construct their own selves as older systems of class and hierarchies fade away, they must define themselves through "the goods and practices they possess and display" (Warde, 1997: 10). However, Warde is critical of this view for the emphasis on the exaggerated practices of consumer decision-making. On the other hand, Bourdieu shows how in France in the 1970s, "classes can be identified by their consumer patterns" (p.9). Warde concludes that although consumers make many choices, they ultimately draw on shared sources of guidance to make their selections (p.3). The analysis in this chapter shows that, although there were new constructed lifestyles for men and women emerging in the 1960s that offered a 'freedom' in consumer culture from the confines of domestic life, the lifestyles were bound by social class and age for women. What was acceptable for middle class women was negotiated through age and responsibility, as young middle-class women could wear miniskirts and engage in dating, but older middle-class women were not encouraged to consume the same products or engage in the same lifestyle.

5.2 The Introduction of the Miniskirt

I will begin this analysis by outlining the gradual rising hemlines in *Vogue* and how this shaped the construction of women's subjecthoods. In the August 1958 issue, *Vogue* featured a dress where the hemline was above the knee (Vol.132, Iss.3: 64). The article shows activewear for women and the models are photographed posing next to trees. The dress is a pinafore style and, although the hemline ends an inch above the knee, it is worn with a black full-body thick underlayer that covers the entire body (only the hands and face are on show). Therefore, a shorter hemline is introduced in *Vogue* but the underlayer does not reveal the body the way the mid-60s miniskirt does as the legs are not on show. The article argued the outfit is useful for colder climate outdoor sports such as skiing and therefore not a part of everyday dress in the late 1950s. This shows that a skirt above the knee was for sport and worn with a thick underlayer, so the legs were not on display.

The most typical hemline in *Vogue* during the early 1960s was below the knee. In a May 1960 issue of *Vogue*, an advert by clothing company 'Jamison' featured two women wearing typical feminine dresses with the hemlines below the knee. One dress is reminiscent of the 1950s 'New Look' A-line, and the second is a slim, 'pencil' style skirt (Vol.135, Iss.9: 12). The women that were drawn in the 1960 advert were much softer than the previous chapter's flapper/art deco style woman with long limbs and a straight figure. The description states they are "subtly sophisticated dresses" and offer a language of traditional femininity. The illustration blurs the women's limbs which emphasises the clothing rather than the body. In a different *Vogue* editorial feature, models are photographed wearing silk evening dresses with the hemline ending below the knee (Oct 1960, Vol.136, Iss.6: 176-7). On the second page, the women's legs were not shown, indicating that the body was not as important compared to showing the dress. The emphasis was on the clothing and a modest sense of femininity.

During the early 1960s, women were addressed as 'ladies' or 'women' in the magazine and the models represented a sensual Hollywood glamour. The models posed in conservative ways and were often featured alongside men or children in adverts. However, in the mid-1960s *Vogue* presented more artistic expression in the photoshoots. As hemlines rose, the previous emphasis on sophistication or family life was replaced with a construction of femininity that is playful and youthful. The *Vogue* reader is sometimes addressed as a 'girl' in the mid-1960s and the previous language that addressed the reader as a 'lady' disappears. Alongside these changes is the introduction of the miniskirt with a hemline up to the mid-thigh. In August 1965, *Vogue* featured Mary Quant's designs (the designer of the miniskirt). The text stated that 'The big boom of young British fashion ideas is reverberating straight across the U.S.A now…real fashion finds in kicky clothes with lots of verve, lots of fun" (p.122). This was a part of *Vogue*'s 'Bargains in Chic' feature, indicating that it was aimed towards younger readers on a lower income. In 1966, an article titled 'The New Romantics' (see Figure 8) was aimed at a similar youthful audience (Aug, Vol.148, Iss.2: 66-79). The 'new romantics' are described as having a "swing in their hair and optimistic spring of their walk: by their charm and gaiety and bone-deep attractiveness. They're the girls of today, and believe it – they're the prettiest girls in the world" (p.66). This shows how young women were infantilised and referred to as 'girls', which contrasts the previous use of 'ladies'. In April 1967, *Vogue* featured an article titled 'The Beautiful Trailblazers' where they state: "a tiny bright top and the tiniest skirt, this for the girl with marvellous, long, sun-gilded legs" (p.156). Again, the clothing is aimed at 'girls', but the model featured is a young woman. The title also suggests that the youthful are trailblazers in fashion and create new trends. The 'girls' mentioned in these articles are associated with being the prettiest and most beautiful, emphasising a continued idealisation of youth.

In the ‘New Romantics’ photoshoot, the young women were photographed dancing which creates a new constructed femininity in *Vogue* that is very different to the conservative Hollywood glamour that featured in the early 1960s featured. Below the dancing ‘girls’, the text states that: “Enough light to read by and a hem that never stops dancing. A float of silvery paillettes to wear—prettiest-girl-in-the-world style—with long, loose, shining hair and little silver slippers” (p.69). The ‘girl’ featured wears a dress covered in sequins and the hemline reaches the mid-thigh which shows the construction between the miniskirt and young subjecthoods. In the article ‘Matching Tops and Legs’ (Aug 1965), the text claims: “the smallest of mini-skirts – short and jumping, swinging from the hip”. The miniskirt is also associated with movement, dancing and swinging.

As previously discussed in section 5.1, the youth subcultures of the 1960s were associated with the new leisure pursuits for teenagers and young people with free time (Slater, 1997) and *Vogue* show their inclusion and idolisation of this new category. According to Welch’s teleoaffective formations (2020: 69), the 1960s is viewed as ‘emancipatory consumerism’ which consisted of a ‘creative revolution’ where existing dominant formations are destabilised. For instance, the psychoanalytically informed ‘motivational research’ that emerged in the 1930s was overlooked by the quantitative methods of ‘scientific marketing’ and, in the US, McCarthyite hostility (Tadajewski, 2006; in Welch, 2020: 70). Although avant-garde modernism can be found as far back as the 1920s, the late 1960s and early 1970s are viewed as a “widespread revalorisation of creativity and authenticity” and found resonance with the “bohemian, countercultural values of libidinal emancipation” (ibid.). The shift from a glamorous, modest sensuality to a playful, more revealing, and youthful subjecthood. In *Vogue*, the shift towards emancipatory consumerism and a creative revolution is represented in the new constructions of middle-class femininity associated with the miniskirt.

The new 'girl' figure is seen in *Vogue* in the 1965 and 1966 articles. Although second wave feminism is associated with the late 1960s and early 1970s, it is important to note that Betty Friedan's '*The Feminine Mystique*' (TFM) was published in 1963 and sparked a critique of the construction of the housewife in consumer culture. TFM was one of the most influential and radical critiques of consumerism in the post-war period (Nava, 1996; in Martens, 2009: 5). Martens highlights that the book connected with themes of domesticity, the suburban housewife, the critique of consumerism and McCarthyism (ibid.). TFM argued that there is a problem with no name, but the *feminine mystique* refers to women growing up "no longer knowing that they have the desires and capacities the mystique forbids" (1963: 68). This was upheld by commercial cultural literature, especially women's magazines (Martens, 2009: 5). Rather than keeping women in the home, Friedan's work argued that "the really important role that women serve as housewives is *to buy more things for the house*" and this is the real business of America (1963: 206-7). Friedan stated: "Somewhere, someone must have figured out that women will buy more things if they are kept in the underused, nameless-yearning, energy-to-get-rid-of state of being housewives" (ibid.). As a result, consumerism did not enhance or facilitate women but stood in the way of women recognising their "human intelligence and energy" which could be used for purposes other than housework and buying (1963: 232 in Martens, 2009: 7). TFM was a best-selling book that sold nearly 3 million copies in the first three years of print. In *Vogue*, there is a demise of the housewife figure in the mid-1960s issues and she is replaced by a newly constructed 'girl' that is linked to the mod youth subculture. The feminine subjecthood is not tied to family life or the home anymore, instead the 'girl' is out in the public sphere as she dances and enjoys herself. Therefore, the shift towards a gendered emancipatory consumption may have been influenced by the critique of the housewife and a destabilisation of traditional ideas of women's modesty and middle class sexuality in magazines.

Figure 8: US *Vogue*, The New Romantics, Aug 1966

In addition to feminist critiques of constructions of the housewife in consumer culture, Cross (2000) highlights how other critiques of consumerism emerged in the mid-twentieth century that may have impacted young women's lifestyles. He traces the rise of environmental concern such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) which attacked the use of pesticides but raised the ecological costs of consumer culture, and Vance Packard's *The Waste Makers* (1960) that critiqued the 'throwaway spirit' of the 1950s and planned obsolescence (p.150-1). It was believed that the late 1950s mass consumer society threatened individual creativity, and affluence made older generations weary of the 'push-button age' that was making children 'lazy'. The success of the Russian Sputnik over the American space program in 1957 exemplified these fears (p.152). In the late 1960s, Marcuse argued that the hope for liberation could be found among "young middle-class intelligentsia, and among the ghetto black populations" who saw the emptiness of affluence, were excluded from it, and therefore not duped by commodities (in Cross, 2000: 153). The rise of the hippy movement from the mid-1960s inspired communities free from old hierarchies and conformity (p.154). Jerry Rubin, a self-appointed countercultural leader, stated "Our message: Don't grow up. Growing up means giving up your dreams" (ibid.). Cross highlights that this may have been an irresponsible denial of duty to family and country. This rejected the idea that culture delivered the masses with freedom and also rejected the confines of work and the home (p.155).

The 1960s and 1970s was a period of emancipatory consumerism that featured a "resonance with bohemian and counter cultural values of libidinal emancipation" that challenged the traditional ethical, affective, and aesthetic norms (Welch, 2020: 70). The advertising industry did not simply adopt new cultural expressions due to a quantitative importance but because they were regarded "as an important precursor of things to come, of a post-materialistic and post-conformist age" (Arvidsson, 2003: 182). The shift from the traditional styles of a conservative middle-class subjecthood towards the mid-1960s young woman who was free from domestic duty is adopted for its 'modern' values. This shows that the construction of a fashionable subjecthood continues to be based on values of modernity that are crucial to consumer capitalism that featured in the previous chapter. Therefore, the wider critiques of mass consumption and the representation of women as glamorous housewives may have opened up the ability for the magazine to experiment with a less conservative middle-class femininity and introduce subjecthoods that were not linked to the family or the home, supporting a shift to emancipatory consumerism. The miniskirt highlights how these changes in wider culture shaped middle-class women's subjecthoods in *Vogue*.

An example of the way *Vogue* constructed women's lifestyles outside the home is highlighted by a Max Factor makeup advert in May 1965 (Vol.145, Iss.9, see figure 9). The lifestyle of this new 'girl' subjecthood featured across 12 photos that follow a woman through her typical day. Most of the photos featured her outside the home as she engages in work and dining out with a man. It is suggested that she is on a date with a man and in nineth picture, she stands outside being embraced by him in daylight (insinuating it is the following morning), then in a cafe with him. The text on the advert states: "For those unexpected days that go into evening [...] Who knows... tonight you may not get home till after breakfast" (p.68). This advert contradicts a subjecthood that emphasises family life and having a husband. Instead, the make-up advert proposes the idea of a more casual, intimate relationship, implying the woman does not live with the man she is seen with in the photos. By stating "tonight you may not get home till after breakfast" suggests a form of sexual freedom where she is not expected to marry or live with a man she is intimate with. However, the woman in this advert is not a typical 'mod' that featured in the miniskirt photoshoots. She works in an office and eats out in refined restaurants. Therefore, rather than adopting the subculture, it was adapted to feature a cosmopolitan lifestyle of eating out in restaurants and café's, rather than the typical subcultural settings of underground cellar clubs, discotheques and record shops (Slater, 1997: 166).

McRobbie's (1990: 217) work shows that 'girl' mods often could not engage in the full range of the subcultural activities as the 'boys' could due to safety reasons. For instance, they could hang out in groups in cafes and record shops, but did not loiter on streets as the men did. However, she does highlight that the girls within Mod culture were usually in some sort of work, such as in boutiques, cosmetics, and secretarial jobs which had an element of dressing up and going to work 'in town' or big cities (ibid.). The mod subculture loosened the bonds between mothers and daughters as it "undermined the girls' self-conception and orientation towards marriage and the family" (p.218). Therefore, *Vogue* includes adverts that include this wider shift in women's lives. The subjecthoods for women in *Vogue* expand in the mid-1960s to include a lifestyle away from the home, family life, and marriage. Therefore, what was acceptable for fashionable middle-class women changed in *Vogue*, creating a 'fun' lifestyle of dating, going out, and paid work. The subculture is expanded and democratised for *Vogue* readers who might not be a 'mod' but can take part in the youth market of consumption and leisure away from responsibility. It shows how the feminist critique of the housewife figure is adopted in *Vogue* but combined with anti-feminist values of attracting a partner. The wider politics is removed, and the projects of consumer capitalism are emphasised. As a result, notions of freedom are informed by the entangling of feminist politics (that critique the housewife) and the projects of consumer capitalism (to create new markets, diversify and standardise products). *Vogue* translates and entangles wider feminist thinking with the values of consumer capitalism to construct new 'modern' subjecthoods for fashionable young women.

The Max Factor advert can be contrasted with an earlier subjecthood in *Vogue*'s 1962 issue. A previous cosmetics advert asks: "Are you a 1962 woman?" and lists 12 different statements and corresponding pictures that apply. The advert claimed that research shows "women today are much different, in many ways, from what they were in 1952. Here are new-found truths about American women. If 9 or more of these statements apply to you, turn the page to discover the completely new beauty ideas created for you" (p.75). The statements include:

FIGURE 9: US *VOGUE*, MAX FACTOR, MAY 1965

1. You have children.
2. You live in a big city.
3. You're dressed by 8:30 A.M.
4. You wear eye make-up all day.
5. You're acutely diet-conscious.
6. You wear more than 5 colors.
7. You remember Valentino.
8. You take daily showers.
9. You're over 25.
10. You take tubs to relax.[19]
11. You live in air conditioning.
12. You have a job.

The 12 statements here contrast the 12 photos in the Max Factor advert that show a different lifestyle. There are some similarities, such as work, living in a city, being slim, wearing make-up, and having a job, but the 1965 advert emphasises a sexually liberated life and does not focus on mundane aspects of life. The 1962 advert highlights having children as a main aspect of their target audience, whereas the Max Factor advert does not place an importance on family life but casual relationships and having fun outside the home. Therefore, the ways the youthful lifestyle was appropriated and incorporated in *Vogue* is shown between the two adverts as the woman's typical days differ. The 1965 Max Factor advert emphasises dating, eating out, and not going home, whereas the 1962 makeup advert highlights having children and the home (with showers, air conditioning). The two constructed women are very different, and the adverts prioritise different aspects of their lives.

The changes here reflect the critique towards the housewife and domestic duties of middle-class women that were also challenged by second wave feminism, environmental concerns of consumption, and youth subcultures. Arvidsson (2003:

---

[19] Take tubs = Taking a bath

130) argues that the mid-sixties featured a 'New Woman' who "used goods as tools for self-realization" and women's magazines changed their material make up to feature more cosmetics and beauty products. These women consumed, not to "fulfil the needs of her family, but primarily to fill the void that characterized her existence" (p.130). A tension emerges between *Vogue* who celebrate the 'girl' who consumes, versus feminisms such as Friedan's *the Feminine Mystique* (1963) that points out this 'void' of consumerism. Also, the shift women's subjecthoods in *Vogue* in the mid-1960s shows how *Vogue* adopts some feminist values but combines it with anti-feminist values and a prioritisation of the projects of consumer capitalism, showcasing a longer history of entanglement. However, rather than a tension, the magazine positively embraces the critique of the confines of domesticity and appropriates the youth culture subjecthood of the 'girl' as she aligns with *Vogue*'s stylish woman who consumes cosmetics without family duties. The 'girl' becomes a tension in the adverts that express age anxieties for women, and questions whether housewives can be classed as a 'girl'. This constructs a discourse where youth is a closed off category in gendered consumption. It constructs older women's subjecthoods outside the definition of a 'fashionable woman'. This is exemplified by a link between 'youth' and being modern and fashionable, that featured in the previous chapter, and closed off modernity to older women.

5.2.1 Age Anxious

The language of 'girlhood' and 'youth' that centres around the miniskirt in *Vogue* from the mid-sixties constitutes feminine discourses of age anxiety and creates tensions for women who must decide if they are young enough to partake in the idealised 'girl' subjecthood. The language associated with the miniskirt includes movement, jumping, and a playful 'girl'-like energy. There is a continuation of the idealisation of youth that was associated with movement and transformed women's freedom to move into something that aided the 'beautification' of the body. The miniskirt's age appropriateness for *all* women is questioned. In *Vogue*'s August 1966 issue, a Newton Elkin shoe advert states in large text: "How short should you wear your skirts? What are your legs like? What shoes are right for you?" (p.34). Immediately, the reader is faced with the anxiety of choosing the appropriate skirt length and tasked to judge their body, much like the corset discourse. In smaller text, the advert states that:

> "A little girl of six can be enchanting in a thigh-length skirt, but how enchanting is it on her mother? For the woman who wants to be up to the fashion split second, but who also wants to be an elegant beauty, we think mid-knee to an inch above is as short as her skirts should go" (ibid.).

The advert offers a 'solution' by arguing: "don't be afraid that not wearing a mini-skirt will make you look old fashioned. If your clothes get the benefit of shoes that are contemporary in line and design, your whole look will look "right"" (ibid.). The shoe advert exploits the associations of the miniskirt with youth to address an older audience who may feel they do not fit into the 'girl' category. Ewing's (1974) work suggests that teens and young adults did not have an exclusive fashion until the rise of youth culture in the 1950s. Despite the emphasis on being youthful and slim in the 1920s, the 'modern' corset allowed all women to mould their bodies to the 'correct', fashionable shape and was not a product only for young women. However, in the mid- to late sixties, the miniskirt is a youthful style that can no longer be achieved by simply reducing flesh. The mini skirt in *Vogue* is constructed as a youthful subculture, one that older women should be anxious about copying. This furthered the diversification of fashion and created niche markets for aged categories, it represents how feminist and anti-feminist values are bound up with the projects of consumer capitalism and construct complex gendered norms and values of consumption.

The aged categorisation is further exemplified in a Newton Elkin advert, where a juxtaposition emerges between being "up to the fashion split second" but also "an elegant beauty" (p.34). The text suggests that the new miniskirt and youthful fashions are not representative of 'elegance'. Similarly, a Rona advert that featured in *Vogue*'s

November 1966 issue echoes this concern as the heading asks: "Can fashion be considered an investment? [...] Like cars, some clothes are built for mileage and some for the moment. To have a wardrobe that doesn't obsolete itself, buy what you like, bypass the fads" (Vol.148, Iss. 8: 57). The split between what is 'trendy' versus 'elegant' continues as they argue "Can you imagine that fabulous Italian film beauty in a mini-skirt?" Here the miniskirt is directly mentioned as a garment not suitable for a glamorous actress. The Rona advert also argues that to build a wardrobe that will not obsolete, they should spend more.

In the generational tensions that emerge between following fashion and creating a stylish fashionable woman, a more 'traditional' subjecthood is constructed. Bourdieu's theories of consumption highlight the classed constraints on consumption 'choices' and taste (Warde, 1997), the research here highlights that the gendered consumption norms that are constructed in *Vogue* include age categories as well as class. From this, the sexualisation of women in *Vogue* is bound by age and ability to be/look youthful. Furthermore, being a housewife restricts the ability to engage in a youthful subculture that prioritises consumption and leisure. As a result, the fashionable woman in *Vogue* is constructed as one that 'chooses' a 'modern' lifestyle of having fun and buying the latest trends, such as miniskirts, over a traditional subjecthood associated with Hollywood glamour or domesticity which highlights a tension between values of consumer culture and traditional femininity or patriarchy.

However, women's consumer culture maintains the values of youthfulness but combines it with a new aged category of clothing, women are encouraged to further critique and categorise themselves. The new categories of youth also segregate older women from the values of sexual freedom. As a result, only some women are invited to partake in the new youthful trends as others are cast out due to *Vogue*'s prioritisation of youthfulness. It could be suggested that *Vogue* creates two market segments, one for younger, fashionable women and one for older women, to continue to diversify consumer culture. However, it reveals the pervasiveness of youth as a category in gendered consumer culture that intensified in the mid-1960s as a response to youth culture and the miniskirt. The analysis also shows that emancipatory consumerism did not sexualise everybody in the same way. Therefore, the gendered exploration in this case study highlights further complexities and nuances to emancipatory consumption and how it created age anxieties. These categorisations of young women versus older women comes to be important in the following case studies and a part of feminist academic debates on generational segregations between women. The emphasis on the young, beautiful body is also a main theme in postfeminist critical analyses that, as the case studies on the corset and the miniskirt have shown, have a longer history within consumer culture.

5.3 Focusing on the Body

In the following section, I will expand on the emphasis on the female body. The miniskirt photoshoots featured a clear shift towards a focus on women's bodies which can be compared to early 1960s representations of the body. In a photoshoot that showed the miniskirt and patterned tights, the legs were the central focus (Aug 1965, Vol.146, Iss.2: 128-137). Visually, the camera is positioned at a low angle, so the model's legs take up a large proportion of the page. The models also stand in interesting positions compared to earlier decades; their poses indicate movement rather than static stances, opposing the previous 'subtle sophistication' of Hollywood glamour. The mid-1960s photoshoots show the models as playful and active rather than the static and sensual women in the early decade. It can be argued that this shift is part of a wider style in advertising towards creative and expressive consumerism (Welch, 2020). However, it is not just experimenting with camera angles as the photoshoot makes the legs and youthful movements the focus that contrast the early 1960s adverts and articles that did not emphasise the body or femininity in this way.

The focus on the body is also featured in tights adverts. An ‘Actionwear’ tights advert in *Vogue*’s August 1968 issue stated that: “In a year when anything goes, we’ve got something to go with everything” (Vol.152, Iss.3: 22). In smaller text:

> “To show or not to show, that is the question. Either way, Actionwear stockings are the answer. Because you can get them in the right style for your style. And because they fit the way a girl with good legs and a groovy dress deserves to have her stockings fit” (p.22).

Therefore, whether a woman chooses to show more skin or less, Actionwear can support both decisions. The advert ends by stating: “All in all, Actionwear stockings have what it takes to give you whatever you want. That’s the long and short of it” (p.22). The final wording of ‘long and short of it’ continues to reference women’s new choice of wearing a long or short skirt. However, the statement that their products “fit the way a girl with good legs and a groovy dress deserves” indicates that this choice is only available to ‘girls’ with ‘good legs’ who follow fashion by wearing a ‘groovy dress’. The *Vogue* reader must decide for themselves if they fit into this category, which creates further anxieties around the new youth rules of dressing. It continues to show how *Vogue* constructed a youthful subjecthood for women that was associated with raised hemlines.

The revealing of the legs is confined in *Vogue* and comes with new rules of dressing. The adverts also show that wearing short skirts without tights is not appropriate, as an advert by Bur Mil Cameos tights reveals (Feb 1965, Vol.145, Iss.4: 22). The company advertise their superior quality tights that are less likely to rip (or create a ‘run’) due to finer stitching and ‘runguards’ at the top and bottom. The advert highlights an impracticality of wearing tights and their unsustainable wear. Revealing more of a woman’s leg is a part of fashion, but the option to do so without tights or high socks is seen as inappropriate for everyday dress. In *Vogue*, the appropriate situations to have bare legs in public are at the beach or during sports. For instance, in a 1964 issue of *Vogue*, legs are revealed in short skirts in a photoshoot in the

Australian outback (Vol.145, Iss.9: 116-145, 200-203). The caption states: “cropped walkabout-skirts here – with the same leggy action as shorts” (p.136-7). Other skirts are described as “Sports Clothes – Action length” to highlight that they are suitable for sports only, some are described as tennis or golf skirts. The models featured are white, young, slim women, their skin is much more tanned than in other fashion articles. Therefore, visually *Vogue* hint that revealing the body in this 1964 issue is linked to sports, warmer climates, and being in the sun. Much like the ‘modern’ corset, the miniskirt is linked to women’s movement but also slimness and beautifying the body through tanning. It shows how *Vogue* navigated what was appropriate for middle class women’s bodies and confined revealing the body to sports or wearing a miniskirt with tights.

The shift towards synthetic materials as new, innovative and modern continues in this case study from the previous corset study. Tights were often considered a new product to be worn by young, modern women and emphasise a further reliance on synthetic materials in fashion. The synthetic continues to be closely constructed to ideas of modernity and, in the case of the miniskirt, what is youthful and innovative. There is, therefore, an ongoing entanglement between young women’s subjecthoods and the preoccupation with new, synthetic, cheaper fashion that remains problematic in the 21st century environmental concerns. Another environmental concern highlighted by this case study is the practice of sun tanning that becomes essential for fashionable subjecthoods but an activity that can require air travel. The previous article features women in the Australian outback, many miles away from the US audience. Travel features dominate the issues of *Vogue* during these decades and encourage travelling for sunnier weather. The case study highlights how environmental issues in the 21st century can be recognised in the consumer capitalist projects of the 20th century. In *Vogue*, these projects are embedded in the construction of women’s subjecthoods and idealised as a part of the practices of youthful, modern, fashionable women.

5.3.1 The Nude Body

The analysis of *Vogue* showed an introduction of the naked body in the magazine in the late 1960s. In *Vogue*'s 1969 'Fashion Forecast', a model is featured topless, only wearing tights and briefs in the photo. Her head is not visible in the picture, making her bare torso and legs the central focus, her body is at a 45-degree angle away from the camera. Therefore, less of her body is exposed than if she faced the camera directly. Next to her is a model who stands in a small bikini facing the camera, her hands behind her back so her body is on display, her face is shown in the picture. The subtitle for this feature is: 'Doing your under thing – the least you can do', implying they are showing the smallest undergarments and bikinis that women can wear. Here, the magazine shows what is acceptable for middle-class femininity in terms of modesty. *Vogue* reshape how middle-class women can express their sexuality and to what extent, where topless models do not show their face.

In a small picture on the same page, *Vogue* photograph a model wearing two different types of tights. The first reach her waistline, whereas the other tights only reach the hips. The higher tights are noted for women who "need a bit of help". It is implied here that 'larger' women need tights to make their bodies look more 'streamline' around the hips and waist. *Vogue* continue to create 'slim' women as a norm and the idea that the 'larger' women must conform their bodies to fit the ideal. Also, by not photographing women unless they are slim, they imply that the 'large' body should not be seen or is not a representation of a fashionable woman to be featured in *Vogue*. From this, modernity and slimness continue as a norm for fashionable women from the 1920s into the late 1960s. The previously mentioned Australian outback photoshoot also introduces aspects of nudity (May 1964, Vol. 145, Iss. 9: 116-145, 200-3, see Figure 10). A model wears a 'white terry cloth toga' that can be used to "wrap around a bathing suit or, as here, nothing but skin" (p.132). The model lays across a rock wearing the toga, and where the cloth gapes at her hip it shows that she wears nothing underneath and only covers her stomach and chest are clothed. On the following page a model wears a 'white terry cloth romper' and the hemline reaches the top of her thighs, showing a garment shorter than a mini skirt that is appropriate at the beach. *Vogue* experiment with the appropriate representations of sexuality for middle-class women. Revealing the body was often confined to activities involving the sun and sports or depicted in tights adverts.

Women's bodies are revealed and normalised due to the need to tan the skin. In the article 'SunQuest – fashion for brighter shores' (Jan 1969 Vol. 153, Iss. 1: 138-159), a model is photographed sitting on a beach, she wears a jumpsuit that buttons down the front which is unbuttoned and pulled to one side to reveal one breast. In the text description, *Vogue* state "a shirt-topped short black jumpsuit opened to the sun" (p.139). The image is a close up of her torso, neck and face but the model tilts her head backwards so only the underneath of her chin and jaw can be seen, not her face. Much like the previous examples, the model's faces are hidden when they are photographed nude in the magazine. This shows how *Vogue* shape nudity in the magazine and redefine it from pornography. On the following page, a model's bare back is photographed, indicating that she is topless on the beach. The text states: "Beckoning the body and seducing the skin, bright sun warmth filters down through salty sea-shimmered air" … "just an early morning's swim from the Nassau shore, it has moments as secluded and remote as that further Eden: a place to bare the soul – or the bosom" (p.139). On the following page, a model lies face down in the sand, topless in a pair of jeans. Her one breast can be seen from the side, but it is covered with sand stuck to her skin, her face turned away from the camera (p.140). On the next page, a woman lays on the beach in a black swimsuit that features a mesh panel in the front. The mesh panel exposes the middle of her chest and stomach. The photograph features her thigh close to the camera as she leans back, her head is tilted backwards so again, her face is not seen, and her body remains the central focus. The text states: "a black organza panel filtering the sun, from neck to inches past the navel" (p.140).

The nudity in the late 1960s is in stark contrast to how swimsuits were presented under editor Jessica Daves in the 1950s and early 1960s (1952-1962). The majority of the swimsuits featured under Daves are illustrated in the early 60s issues and are usually high waisted bikinis that cover the navel. In a May 1960 issue, *Vogue* present "10 different swimsuits for two different women", the most revealing swimsuit is a bikini that shows the navel and is described in the text as a suit "of near-bikini bareness". *Vogue* advised that it is only to be worn in a private pool, but useful for when the "sun is too good to take lightly" (Vol. 135, Iss. 9: 196-7). Under editor Diana Vreeland (1962-1971), however, women's bodies are more exposed. In a June 1963 issue, a model was photographed model lying on the beach wearing a black bikini where her navel and waist are on show. The model's stomach takes up 2 pages of the magazine to show the zoomed in close up of the bikini. Historical research on women's magazines shows that revealing the navel was considered unacceptable in America in the 1950s (Hunt-Hurst & Scarborough, 2013). The navel was increasingly accepted across the 1960s, a shift that took place during the changing artistic representation and sexualisation of women's bodies in magazines (ibid.). There is a further emphasis on 'beautifying the body in the sun' during this era and the normalisation of sun tanning practices. The body continues to be a site of discipline and self-policing for women in *Vogue* in the 1960s; the thin body is idealised, and the glorification of youth develops alongside youth cultures and the miniskirt. The postfeminist sensibility of a regulated, beautified body that is at the centre of media discourse in the 1960s. This shows that the groundwork for the postfeminist sexualised body was developed in previous periods and is a part of larger shifts in consumer capitalism, including youth culture markets and the democratisation of fashion. Therefore, sexualisation is bound up with consumer capitalist discourses of choice, youth, and what it means to be modern and fashionable in the West.

It must be noted that sun tanning is a practice for white women and centres white standards of beauty as a norm. As Sara Ahmed (1997) highlights, for white women, tanning is "an adornment rather than a stain, as 'a paying attention to the body' and a detachable signifier" (1997: 160). However, as a mixed race or woman of colour, Ahmed argues that the colour of her skin was a stain, viewed as "a sign of natural

Figure 10: US *Vogue*, Australian Surfing, May 1964

criminality" (ibid.: 159). White women can therefore adopt the hyper-sexuality of Black women without the injustice or 'stain' element (ibid.: 163). This foregrounds the centrality of whiteness in *Vogue* and the problematic issue of tanning as a beauty practice for women.

In the 1960s, *Vogue* magazine promotes a wide range of sun tanning products and discusses sun tanning as a norm or a 'must' for *many* women (namely, white women). As previously shown, the increase in miniskirts and more revealing swimwear that shows more skin in warmer climates is often normalised by a discourse of trying to 'take advantage' of the sun and tan more of the skin. The company 'Coppertone' advertise their 'Royal Blend' suntan body lotion in *Vogue*'s June 1963 issue, stating the product "can make you a sun goddess". The advert 'Pick Your Tan' by Jacqueline Cochran promotes a product that allows women to control the intensity of their tan with their suncream (May 1964, Vol.145 Iss.9: 56). Within the text, they emphasise that the lotion "helps keep your skin young in the sun". The adverts show that the emphasis on sun cream is not to protect from the sun but to aid the suntanning process. Suntanning practices are closely linked to women's ability to reveal their body in the public sphere and the raised hemlines allow them to show off tanned legs. In a January 1965 issue, a model is shown walking across a beach wearing a black A-line silk miniskirt without tights. The text identifies that "Where the sun is, here's the action [...] worn with miniature skirts and a long, racy stretch of suntanned legs". It can be argued that in order to reveal the legs without tights, *Vogue* are normalising the idea that legs should be tanned. In the following pages, more miniskirts are featured arguing that they are "fashion for the sunnier shores". Therefore, the miniskirt can only be worn without tights in warmer climates, this places a boundary on what is appropriate for middle class sexuality. The emphasis on sun tanning also adds another beautifying practice that women should partake in and manage.

Overall, the revealing of a woman's body in *Vogue* happened gradually across the 1960s until nude and topless women featured in 1969 issues. This impacted the designs of clothes for women and what parts of the body could be revealed through clothes. In 1969, for instance, fashion trends began to reveal more of a woman's chest. The January 1969 Fashion Forecast featured dresses with deep V-necklines, some almost reach the navel. One dress has a mesh panel that runs vertically under the bosom, it reveals the models rib cage and front of her chest. The caption for this dress states: "Veil the midriff with sheer black: transparency links two parts black crepe and the party lasts till dawn". The dresses offer new opportunities to show the body towards the end of the 1960s, showcasing the normalisation of young women revealing their bodies in *Vogue* over the decade that redefined what is acceptable for young middle-class women's clothes.

The sexualisation and revealing of women's bodies was not only present in *Vogue* but also in men's magazines that constructed new lifestyles away from the pressure to conform to family life. Soley and Reid's (1988) research into magazines between 1964 and 1984 shows that female models are nude more often in the mid-60s than in the 1980s (p.964-5). The table below displays the findings of their research. More female models are featured nude in women's magazines compared to men's magazines in 1964, whereas in 1984 women's magazines, the number of nude women halves.

Men's Magazines	**1964**	**1984**	**Women's magazines**	**1964**	**1984**
Female models featured nude (per cent)	6.5	6.2		6.9	3.1

TABLE 1: SOLEY AND REID (1988) FINDINGS

It is important to note that men's magazines at the time were also carving out a new lifestyle for young men who did not wish to conform to marriage and prioritised consumption. Men's lifestyle magazines in the late 1950s and 1960s, such as *Playboy* and *Esquire,* were the site of this new masculinity (Osgerby, 2005). The consuming masculine subject became "increasingly pervasive amid the consumer boom of the 1950s and 1960s" and the 'swinging bachelor' replaced family responsibility and work ethic with revelling in a sybaritic world of leisure (p.100-101). Dines (1998: 40) argues that, as Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) reflected on the impact of domesticity for women in the mid-twentieth century, the effects of "this suffocating domesticity on men" was underexplored. Magazine *Industrial Design* (December 1957, Vol. 4, Iss. 12: 33-4) questioned what the housewife did with her time when children are at school now that technology has relieved her of housework (in Haralovich, 1989: 68). According to Dines, men's magazines such as *Playboy* adopted this anti-woman, anti-domesticity ideology and constructed a new and controversial anti-marriage position (p.44). However, Ehrenreich's *The Hearts of Men* (1983) finds it problematic to associate the collapse of the masculine expectation as breadwinner with the changes in women's lives, as a result of second wave feminism (p.12). Instead, she locates this collapse of the breadwinner well before the revival of feminism "and stemmed from dissatisfactions every bit as deep" (ibid.). In the fifties, "conformity" became the code word for male discontent – the masculine equivalent of what Betty Friedan would soon describe as 'the problem without a name' in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) (Ehrenreich, 1983: 30). Therefore, men also strived for lives outside the confines of married, family life before the critique of the housewife. The cause of the bachelor magazine is contested but they both show an increase in the construction of a male consuming subject.

To create the consuming male subject, men's magazines worked hard to remove the feminine associations of consumption by featuring sports and "titillating pin-ups" to uphold a heterosexual masculine appeal of reading a magazine (Osgerby, 2005: 102). The bachelor pad lifestyle of hedonist masculinity created a shift from the masculine norms of probity, restraint, and thrift, towards prioritising consumption, leisure, and immediate gratification (p.110). From this, the bachelor subjecthood in men's magazines was constructed as a man who refused to conform but was no less a man.

He was actively heterosexual but rather than being intimate with with a wife, with lots of young, beautiful women (ibid.). Therefore, men's consumer culture was not only about consuming goods but also the consumption of women. Dines (1988) argues that *Playboy* magazine positioned itself as featuring 'tasteful' pictures of nude women but also as a lifestyle magazine for men who wished to mix up "cocktails and an hors d'oeuvre or two [...] inviting a female acquaintance for a quiet discussion on Picasso, Nietzsche, Jazz, Sex" (featured in the first edition of *Playboy*, Hugh Hefner's letter to the reader; in Dines, 1998: 46). In men's magazines, female nudity was transformed into an upper-middle class lifestyle of consumption and carved out a new acceptable life for men who did not wish to conform to marriage and family but could retain their heterosexual status.

Overall, both *Vogue* and Playboy magazine normalised female nudity and non-conformity to domesticity in the 1960s for middle class men and women. Instead of family values, the magazines promoted the value of hedonistic lifestyles that centred on individuals and pleasure over responsibility and domesticity. However, from this narrative, the female body was sexualised as it aided men's assertion of heterosexuality. If a man was unmarried, he could engage with sexualised images of women and commodified women to assert his heterosexual image as he could not be accused of not marrying because he was homosexual. *Vogue* followed the trends of sexualised and nude women in men's magazines but kept nudity to the boundaries of sun tanning practices and tights adverts. Therefore, the young female body was entangled with notions of freedom from social pressures to conform and an alternative lifestyle of pleasure and consumer capitalism. This freedom from conformity, however, was sexualised in men's consumer culture and catalysed women's consumer culture to do the same. *Vogue* played a part in the normalisation of middle-class women's sexualisation and nudity but kept it contained to sun tanning practices in the late 1960s. There are tensions here between the critique of conformity and domestic drudgery that is shared with feminisms. However, it is translated in *Vogue* into an importance of pleasure and the pornographisation of the text. It shows that the feminist and anti-feminist entanglement that constitutes contemporary postfeminism has a longer history in *Vogue*. The case study has shown how feminist values are adopted but the projects of consumer capitalism are prioritised.

The sexualisation of women's bodies continues into the 1970s under the tensions of second wave feminism. Under this influence, the sexualised body is sometimes linked to the lack of wearing a bra. In May 1975, *Vogue* include a 'Beauty and Health' feature on perfumes accompanied with a photoshoot of a man and woman. The couple are pictured facing each other, the woman looks directly at the man as he holds her with his hands on either side of her chest. He stares directly at her chest and she wears a dress with a deep V-neckline. The pose is very provocative and sensual and the description about the image states that "if you have to ask what to wear in the way of a bra, this may not be the dress for you; this isn't the moment for anything else on the body – but perfume" (p.103). This photoshoot suggests that not wearing a bra will seduce men. *Vogue* appropriates a second wave feminist anti-bra stance but transforms it into a heteronormative compliance, making the lack of a bra sensual rather than political. The magazine supports women not wearing a bra but to attract men. *Vogue* translates the political act into a patriarchal one that upholds uphold heteronormative standards.

On the following page, the man and woman are photographed in another suggestive pose. The man bites the woman's ear lobe and the text states that she has put perfume on her ear lobe. A following page features the couple again, the woman stands with her back to the man as he is shown removing her bra (see Figure 12), both smiling, subtly translating not wearing a bra from a feminist standpoint into wearing a bra to enhance male pleasure. Another page shows an 'open-air sundress' that is slit "all the way up the sides" to further express the seductive and heteronormative overtones of the photoshoot. In the final photo they run, and he reaches towards her, gripping her breast as she moves away. The poses indicate that he desires her and aggressively grabs her body. The text states that her satin dress has "just enough covering to catch the scent of perfumed skin and send out the message…*vite-vite!*” (p.114).[20] It is important to note the anti-feminist themes here that are not attempting to drive women back into the private sphere, but normalising male violence and sexual aggression through the images that suggest women’s sexual ‘freedom’ and heteronormativity. The models evoke a seductive relationship where the man desires the woman, and she can achieve this desire by wearing perfume to entice him. The conformity to the status quo operates at a visual, fantasy level that seduces women into wanting to be the object of a man’s desire. But it also repudiates feminist political protest against the bra and asserts a patriarchal status quo. The photoshoot is under Grace Mirabella, *Vogue*’s most ‘feminist’ editor; this shows how the magazine produced patriarchal images during second wave feminism, rebuking feminism in a ‘sexy’ and unserious way.

The pervasive heterosexual culture of the 1960s and 1970s in *Vogue* can be viewed as a part of the informalisation processes theorised by Wouters (2004). The 1960s is seen as a period of cultural revolution for some sociologists and it is suggested that there was a decline in the ‘spirit of discipline’ in the sphere of consumption (e.g. Bell, 1976, Martin, 1981, Lasch, 1978), which led to informalisation (Wouters, 1986) where rigid or established patterns of consumption dissolved (Warde, 1997: 13). Informalisation especially impacted dress, manners, and social disciplines around eating (ibid.). From the 1920s to the 1960s, Wouters highlights that the social ascent of certain groups – working classes, women, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, youth - spurred on this relaxation of manners. In particular, Wouters (2004b) shows how female emancipation in the West (between 1890-2000) has shaped manners and practices disappearing of chaperonage, new rules for situations such as public transport, public dances, dates, and the workplace. The new rules or relaxation of manners between the

---

[20] Vite-vite – French translation: Quick-quick!

Figure 11: US *Vogue*, The Story of Ohhh, May 1975

sexes is due to the ways women's sources of power and identity have changed. Another aspect of informalisation between the sexes is what Wouters terms the 'lust balance' (2004b: 124-6). He finds that from the 1980s onwards, with rapid accelerations in the 1920s and 1960s/70s, there was a sexualisation of love and an eroticization of sex (p.48). These changes centred on a 'lust-balance' question which asked: "When and within what kinds of relationship(s) are eroticism and sexuality allowed *and* desired?" (ibid.). For instance, in the Victorian era, sexual intercourse was perceived as *his* 'right' and *her* 'marital duty' (p.48).

In the 1920s, courting manners changed and young people began to go out alone on 'dates'. From the 1960s, the sexual longings of all women were recognised and discussed which led to an up-rooting of the traditional lust balance. Castells (1997) argues that the second-wave feminist movement was successful in deconstructing the assumption of natural gender differences and helped denaturalise tropes in heterosexual relationships, but also helped pave the way for homosexual relationship acceptance. The analysis of *Vogue* shows how this process of informalisation is tied to values of consumer culture as young middle-class men and women are offered an escape from the confines of family life and domesticity that is replaced with more sexualised relationships and less pressure on marriage and family. In *Vogue*, the feminist critique of the housewife figure was an opportunity for further consumption of fashion and the revealing (or sexualisation) of the body. From this, sexualised and nude women featured more in 1960s magazines and became normalised to an audience of middle-class women.

Aspects of wider feminist politics were adopted in *Vogue*, such as women's freedom from domesticity, and the liberation from a boring and responsible life. These values were entangled with the ability to reveal the body and partake in a 'girl' subjecthood of dancing, shopping, and 'going out'. A new feminine subjecthood was created during this period that is linked to the fashionable miniskirt and entangles notions of consumer capitalism and women's freedom from the home and domestic responsibilities. Notions of women's freedom were (re)constructed as freedoms within consumer capitalism to choose pleasure and goods, not a freedom from oppression. New constraints were imposed on women, including heteronormativity, an importance on being perceived as 'pretty' and 'fun', and having a commodified and sexualised body that must be disciplined and maintained to attract and keep a male partner. This resulted in the silencing of many second wave feminist concerns. The individualised freedoms that were constructed in *Vogue* were not about social justice and equality but promoted sexualisation and women's objectification. Therefore, the entanglement of feminist and anti-feminist values restricted discourse of women's solidarity and promoted the 'freedom to' choose individual pleasures that propel the projects of consumer capitalism. In *Vogue*, the analysis shows how a foundation for a postfeminist culture is built during the second wave of feminism that combines both feminist and anti-feminist values into an entanglement with the projects of consumer capitalism.

5.4 Feminism in *Vogue*

The previous discussion highlighted the importance of second wave feminist values, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), youth culture markets and the introduction of Mary Quant's miniskirt, that impacted the construction of American women's subjecthoods in *Vogue*. During this time, *Vogue* hired a new editor, Diana Vreeland (1963-1971), who was seen as more creative and transcended *Vogue* beyond its previous focus on conservative femininity. However, Vreeland was not seen as a feminist, whereas her successor Grace Mirabella (1971-1988) was. Some feminists were interviewed in *Vogue* under Vreeland in the May 1969 issue. When Mirabella took over in 1971, she included Germaine Greer (April 1971 issue) and Gloria Steinem (June 1971 issue) featured in *Vogue*. Betty Friedan was interviewed in March 1982, a decade later, on her new book *The Second Stage*. She reflected on *The Feminine Mystique* and the frustrations of men and women following women's liberation. This section will discuss how these feminists were presented in the magazine and the tensions that arise (or are avoided) in the interviews.

In *Vogue*'s May 1969 issue (Iss.153, Vol.9), anthropologist Margaret Mead was featured as a feminist (1901-1978). Mead is not usually considered a leading voice of second-wave feminism and was often critical of feminists because she supported "public norms on premarital sex, motherhood, and marriage" (Shankman, 2018). This suggests that *Vogue* included 'feminist' voices that are not considered radical as a way to be *seen* as engaging with feminist politics. In the interview, Mead supported the status quo in a way that made *Vogue* seem engaged with women's issues. The article on Mead was titled 'Where American Women are Now' and reflected on "A world of couples instead of families or groups" (p.176). Mead claimed that women are separated from one another in the 'world of couples' and if another woman enters the home of a couple she is seen as a threat. She concluded that "women today are living in a world where they have a false sense of freedom and, correspondingly, a false sense of frustration" as people believe women have been freed from the home and have equal opportunities. She demonstrated that women "must dress and make up, smile and allure, cook and entertain, as the ads say they should", while echoing the male belief that women have enormous and threatening freedom (p.247). As a result, she argued that "men feel they are threatened" yet women "are more deeply dependent upon being chosen" than a generation ago (p.178). Through this narrative, Mead normalises the structures of heteronormativity and the idea that women should attend to their appearances and 'feminine' qualities to attract a male partner. She offers some critique, but it does not challenge the structure of consumer capitalism or directly attack the feminine beauty principles promoted in *Vogue*.

In the same issue, *Vogue* featured an article written by Mary Ellmann, an American writer and literary critic who is noted in the magazine for her work *Thinking About Women* (1968). Ellmann is known for reviewing *The New York Reivew of Books, The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic,* and *The American Scholar*. Her work is cited for introducing the concept 'phallic criticism' to writers of both sexes and is sometimes noted as one of the first feminist literary critics. In *Vogue*, Ellmann's *Thinking About Women* is described as "a book that owes nothing to Betty Friedan, Ashley Montagu, and Simone de Beauvoir, and, in fact, makes their thinking shallow as a pan" (p.122). Here, *Vogue* critique notable feminist writers but do not expand on their claim. In the magazine, Ellmann writes a piece titled 'In America, The Great Brain Divide', arguing that women are rarely considered as intellectual as men are. She argues against American meritocracy, claiming "if the way up was working hard for other people, Black women would fill up the whole Senate by now" (p.244). Ellmann unpacks the social construction of men's intelligence over women's, and the impact this has on employment and leadership. When *Vogue* introduced Mary Ellmann's work briefly on page 122, they discuss her book but in the second sentence they introduce her husband. Before describing Ellmann's own background, they state her husband, Richard Ellmann, is a notable professor of English at Yale. Her son is also mentioned as attending Harvard and her two daughters are briefly noted. *Vogue* ironically uphold Ellmann's claim that men's intelligence is more respected than women's as they mention her husband's qualifications and not her own. Mary Ellmann also attended Yale university, but this is not highlighted in *Vogue*. Therefore, *Vogue* ironically uphold the idea that men are more important than women and their intelligence is prioritised over her own.

In April 1971, Germaine Greer is featured in an article by Kathleen Tynan for *Vogue* magazine. The heading states: "Germaine Greer, a woman so abundantly liberated she likes men" (p.131) to assert her heterosexuality and therefore construct her as not too 'radical'. The interviewer, Tynan, states herself as "something of an Uncle Tom in the field of Women's Liberation" and that she has been "sympathetic but not militant toward the embattled lady liberationists", arguing that she read Betty Friedan and Kate Millett books and protested about women's pay (ibid.). The interviewer states that this all changed when she read Greer's book, *The Female Eunuch* (1970). Tynan states that the book explained how women are "circumscribed by the institution of marriage, propagandised on romantic love, we suffer not from penis envy […] but from the castration of our true female personality" that this is "not the fault of men, but of our own, and history's". Despite Greer's critique towards institutions such as marriage and the romance genre, men are not to be blamed in *Vogue* and the criticism is placed on women and 'history'. Therefore, a deeper feminist critique is stunted in the magazine and criticism shifts from structural to the individual, or normalised as a part of history that cannot be changed.

The article reflects on Greer's success, her qualifications, involvement in the entertainment industry and her physical appearance, rather than her work. The article ends by informing the reader that Greer's upcoming work will focus on women's education and women's contribution to culture. The final sentence reads: "She is a super heroine and we need more like her". Though the tone is positive, when exploring Greer's work, the emphasis is on her support of men in her feminist theory rather than her ideas on motherhood as oppressive or the unrealistic expectations placed on women by magazines (Taylor, 2020: 23). *Vogue* translates feminism so that it does not threaten heteronormativity and Greer's critical thinking is not fully addressed. The type of 'feminism' that *Vogue* includes is, therefore, one that does not challenge norms and values, but by including a piece on Greer, the magazine appears to engage and support feminism.

When Gloria Steinem is featured in the June 1971 issue (Vol.157, Iss.10: 90-2, 150, 158) she is described as "thirty-five, a major writer on politics, mainly for *New York* magazine, is perhaps the most attractive activist in Women's Lib, and an outspoken, unyielding crusader for the causes she believes in" (p.90). Smith discusses Steinem's physical appearance in depth and her sexual allure, going into further details about the clothes she wore on the day she gave a speech about gender roles: "a blue-print challis mini dress that could be wadded up for a hankie. Her shoes are still the sling Chanel type. Her Alice in Wonderland hair, with its blonde streaks, falls artfully over her bosom" (ibid.). The article includes segments of her speech, that she argues:

> "This is not a frivolous revolution [...] We will never have a less violent society until we realize that manhood doesn't depend on the subjugation of other people and womanhood doesn't depend on submissiveness or being cheap labor"
>
> "Money and success are not sexy [...] Masculinity isn't measured by the size of a paycheck"
>
> "If a woman gets her identity from a man or plays the game as a conspicuous consumer, a sex object, it teaches her to use slaves' tactics in order to 'win'"
>
> "There is a myth, just as there is about Blacks, that women don't like each other and can't work for one another. Isn't that just the most incredible *shit*?"

Out of all Steinem's points made in her speech, the *Vogue* writer opts to focus on her use of swearing in a room full of people, stating only *she* could get away with that language as a woman, as she isn't afraid she'll ruin her 'femininity quotient' (p.91). The article continues to retrace Steinem's personal life and only the final page reflects on women's liberation. She states, "Women's Liberation is very important to me, but in a way it's just a part of life now, not a cause", she later claims however that it was listening to 'the radical Women's Lib group Redstockings' discuss abortion experiences that made her realise "women are oppressed together, and so, have to get together" (p.105). The feature offers another engagement with feminism, but the woman's physical appearance is discussed at greater length than her political ideologies. The author appears in awe of Steinem, but only because she is a political woman who is feminine and meets Western beauty standards. Steinem's engagement with beauty practices, such as highlighting her long hair blonde, makes her a mysterious paradox of rallying against systems of oppression yet engaging with femininity. The issues themselves become background in the writing and Steinem's appearance is centre stage. For this reason, a serious discussion of the realities of oppression cannot materialise, and the reader is not fully confronted with the political figure as she is transformed into a celebrity who upholds feminine beauty practices, despite her claims that conspicuous consumption teaches women to be slaves in order to 'win'.

In March 1982, *Vogue* featured an interview with Betty Friedan by Sherry Henry (Vol.172, Iss. 3: 376-7, 420-1). The subheading stated "From the woman who changed our lives with *The Feminine Mystique* – a new appreciation for men, nurturing, and the family" (p.376). Again, *Vogue* immediately show Friedan's support for heteronormativity. The article claims that TFM "brought the hidden yearnings, frustrations, and – yes, say it openly – rage of women into the open for society to share and dispute" (ibid.). Her second book, *It Changed My Life* reflected on how TFM changed many lives, and Friedan's next book, *The Second Stage*, is reported by *Vogue* to reflect on the frustrations of both men and women. The third book reportedly explores the consequences of women's liberation, discussing how women will deal with the position they are now in, she states "we're not worms anymore, but we're not butterflies either" (p.376-7). To expand on this, Friedan includes the experience of her daughter who asks: "I work thirty-six hours in the hospital, twelve off. How am I going to have a relationship, much less kids, with hours like that? I'm not sure I can be a Superwoman. I'm frightened that I may be kidding myself. Maybe I can't have it all" (p.377). Frieden argues that women may face sacrificing their need for love and nurturing for their career success but there are still areas in the world where being born a female means second-class citizen. Here, there are elements of 'post-ing' feminism as an issue that is not so much a priority for Western women as it is for 'other' women.

Friedan is sympathetic towards young women and states "what young man was ever told *not* to be Superman, not to aim for the highest rung of his career ladder – just because he needed to express his biological generativity or, for that matter, perpetuate the human race?" (ibid.). As a result, men are responsible for the next stage of gender equality, they must recognise that they have never had to choose between family or work and must step in to help women maintain both. It is a restructuring of the home and work that is required to allow all men and women achieve their potential in life, but “it was *men* who segregated the workplace, and *men* who, at home, crossed their arms and refused to change” (p.377). She reasserts, however, that not every man is the enemy, but there *are* many men pushing to beat the Equal Rights Amendments and take away the right for women to control their bodies. In this article, issues of feminism are unpacked and discussed in depth with an engagement of both the personal lives of women, politics and the law, and historical oppression. Friedan is given space to discuss her theories without an emphasis on her appearance or clothing, as seen in previous articles. Rather than viewed as a celebrity, Friedan is addressed as an academic and can explain her feminist viewpoints and work. However, feminism is constructed as a burden for women as they now must juggle careers and family life. Rather than large structures of capitalism or patriarchy, Friedan individualises sexism and argues that men must change, but not all men.

The articles featuring ‘feminists’ show how *Vogue* does not fully focus on their views until the 1980s, in an ‘aftermath’ of the ‘second wave’. It shows how *Vogue* accepts feminist values once they are more mainstream but continues to uphold heteronormativity at the centre of the writing. They prioritise the idea that all women need to work on their appearance and a general, underlying theme that men are better than women. The women are sometimes transformed into celebrity figures where their appearance and heterosexuality is more important than their politics. The discussions also seek to avoid ‘blaming’ men or to individualise sexism and diminish their critiques of structural issues. *Vogue*, therefore, present the ‘feminists’ in their own intended way that normalises heteronormativity and constructs feminism as a burden for women. The ability to engage with feminist critique is managed and restricted in *Vogue* under dominant ideologies of heteronormativity and avoiding ‘blame’ on individual men.

It must also be stated that, although *Vogue* began to include people of colour in the magazine during this period, white woman continued to centre the discussions and the representation of feminism. In Tulloch's (2016) work, *The Birth of Cool*, the importance of style, fashion, and an aesthetic of 'cool' for black men and women in Britain, America, and the African diaspora across the 20th century. Despite this, *Vogue* remains centred on white identities and fashions, not showcasing the activism and liberation through dress from other liberation movements. The magazine is dedicated to representing feminism as a white woman's movement, from those who uphold a status quo and heteronormative acceptance. In addition to this, *Vogue* normalise an exclusion of people of colour and the continuation of ethnic inequalities, or whiteness as a standard.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

Overall, this chapter has shown how values of feminisms are entangled with the projects of consumer capitalism and, in *Vogue*, constructions of Western women's freedom in the mid-twentieth century emerge from this. The miniskirt becomes popular during a time where the housewife figure was called into question by emerging feminisms, or 'second wave' feminism, and there is also an introduction of a 'new woman' as a consumer category who can consume for herself and not just her family. *Vogue* adopts this criticism of the housewife without the feminist politics and Marxist analysis. Instead, the critique of middle-class women confined to domesticity is used to open up space for the projects of consumer capitalism and constructing a new fashionable subjecthood. The fashionable 'girl' is a young middle-class woman who can partake in consumer culture and leisure without the pressure or responsibility of being a housewife and she is 'free' to shop and engage with commercial spaces. This fashionable subjecthood is linked to the mod subculture and the miniskirt as she enjoys a life without responsibility and can buy lower priced clothing aimed at younger people. She is also found in the adverts in *Vogue* where young women are free to date and 'go out', rather than focus on family life or marriage. 'The consumer' that is constructed is similar to those in men's magazines where consumer culture offers another alternative to family life, of pleasure and dating. A new gendered consumer category is formed that is tied up with feminist politics and feminist critiques of the housewife, which *Vogue* encourages due to the commitment to modernity as a value of fashionable subjecthoods.

Furthermore, revealing women's bodies to the camera becomes more popular and entangled with the rising pleasurable consumption and subjecthoods constructed for middle-class men and women at the time. The delay of family life is combined with the casualisation of heterosexual relationships. Men who do not marry must express their heterosexuality through their lifestyle of consuming women, dating, and sexualised images. Therefore, the freedom from family for young middle-class men and women is deeply tied to heteronormativity and consuming pleasure, finding 'freedom' in consumer cultural values, and revealing women's bodies. The values of feminist values are therefore adopted and entangled with anti-feminist values. When feminists are included in the magazine, their politics is emphasised as heteronormative and individualised to diminish feminist structural critique or collective values. The wider processes of sexualisation, individualisation, and youth markets are linked to the emancipatory consumer processed of the late 1960s and early 1970s where new creativities allowed for greater sexual expression. This sexualised image is often restricted to young women and creates anxieties for 'older' women. *Vogue* continues the emphasis on the young, slim body that was seen in the previous chapter and a further split between older and younger women. This aids the projects of consumer capitalism that create niche markets and adopts emancipatory consumerism. The analysis showed that there are gendered complexities to this emancipatory consumerism as it does not sexualise *all* women and creates classed and aged boundaries. *Vogue* is a part of the emancipatory process of making nudity acceptable for middle class women and offering them a 'freedom' from responsibility and domesticity through consumer capitalism but does not create space for feminist values that are critical of consumption and creates stricter aged categories for women.

Part II

In part II, the following two case studies are presented: 3) The Questioning of the Fur Coat and 4) (Un)Sustainable Fashion. The case studies were chosen because they capture tensions between fashion and environmental and ethical concerns in the late 20th century and early 21st century. This part explores how US *Vogue* magazine engages with the controversies around clothing made with animal fur and how they respond to the concerns and the role fashion plays in damaging the environment. The visual discourse analysis investigates the way *Vogue* recognises or avoids its role in the climate crisis and harm towards animals. The analysis questions: how do discourses in *Vogue* come under pressure from wider climate and animal activists' arguments and in what ways does *Vogue* adapt to or resist these changes? The analysis of how environmental ethics and an ethics of care for non-humans come to shape the construction of women's subjecthoods in the late 20th and early 21st century. I examine:

1. What subjecthoods are constructed for women in *Vogue* during the 20th/21st centuries in relation to a) feminist politics and b) environmental/ethical concerns?
2. How do wider political and cultural issues come to inform definitions of what a fashionable woman is?
3. What tensions arise between the values of consumer capitalism and a) feminist politics, and b) environmental politics during the periods of liberation and environmental/ethical concern?
4. How do the tensions between values of consumer capitalism and wider political issues entangle and impact gendered consumption norms and values?

6. Questioning the Fur Coat

In the latter half of the 20th century, the fur coat is commonly associated with bourgeois femininity in America and Europe. The fur coat has a long history in dress and the recent bourgeois symbolism is not its only historical, cultural meaning (Dyhouse, 2010: 23). Fur clothing has long been used by those living in the Arctic Circle, including Greenland, Northern America, Serbia, and the Russian Far East. The fur industry brought former insular countries and cultures to the "nexus of an increasingly interdependent and connected world". This industry "spurred the colonization of eastern North America, and the fierce competition to control the region's fur trade pitted European nations against one another" and resulted in the expulsion of the Swedes, Dutch, and French from the continent (Dolin, 2011: 18-19). The main trade in North America was beaver, otter, and buffalo pelts sold by pilgrims to London, as they fled to escape religious persecution, and sold to purchase supplies in the new land. Also, fur trappers were among the first white men the Indigenous Americans had seen, meaning this trade shaped North American culture and led to the near extinction of many species (p.19-20). The late 1800s and early 1900s saw the implementation of laws which regulated the killing of animals for fur (p.21). More recently, Inuit hunters have battled with laws on the seal killing ban (The Guardian, 2015). This shows that fur garments have a rich history in human economies, cultures, and fashions that have shaped nations and changed over time.

The chapter showcases how *Vogue* struggles with the tensions posed by animal rights activism and the decline of the fur industry in the late 20th century. It also explores how *Vogue*'s narratives are shaped by this wider politics and the entanglement of consumer capitalist projects and an ethics of care towards non-humans. These projects include the emergence of CSR (corporate social responsibility), CRM (cause-related marketing) and an increasing democratisation of clothing that offers cheaper clothing to more people. The chapter also explores how *Vogue* responded by attempting to rebrand the fur coat, how faux fur was introduced, the disappearance of animals, and how in the 21st century *Vogue* represents animal fur as a sustainable, environmentally friendly material.

Although animal rights and environmental protesters were active across the 20th century, the 1980s featured fierce campaigns against fur, including direct actions against the media, ‘the consumer’, and profit-minded corporations (Beers 2006: 162). Large crowds of anti-fur protesters would block furriers’ stores, splash paint on fur coats, and show photographs of the suffering animals (ibid.). Anti-fur activists also gathered at seal hunts to “document atrocities and wave banners, sometimes intervening by spraying paint on the seals’ coats and covered the seal pups’ bodies with their own” (ibid.). Greenpeace’s Rainbow Warriors circled whaling and tuna boats and a new generation of antivivisectionists picketed outside laboratories and printed rabbits blinded by bleach and lighter fluid in the press (ibid.). As a result, “fur sales dropped to new lows, tuna companies promised ‘dolphin-safe’ tuna, the International Whaling Commission imposed a moratorium, the Canadian government halted the harp seal hunts, companies renounced the practice of testing products on animals and veal consumption plummeted by 63 percent” (p.162-3). Beers argues that, unlike the mild campaigns from 1945-1975, the 1980s campaigns ended rather than modified cruelties. The 1980s also achieved cultural success as animal rights became a part of the social mainstream. The anti-fur lobby influenced the symbolic values of fur, especially by depicting the “bourgeois female consumer as morally responsible for the exploitation and oppression of other humans and animals” (Hahn & Yang, 2001: 58). The number of fur sales decreased between 1950 and 1979 but witnessed a plunge between 1985-1990 (Emberley, 1997: 1-2; Ewing, 1981: 143; Nadeau, 2001: 168; in Strege, 2014: 426). In the late 1990s and early 21st century, almost all high-street shops use faux fur and the majority of luxury fashion houses have banned real fur. In 2019, the stock of ‘vegan’ fashion garments increased by 258 per cent across the UK and the US (*Vogue* Business, 2019).

Much like the corset in the previous case study, the fur coat is an example of a garment that *Vogue* continues to sell to women during a time of demise. The case study focuses on the fur coat (over other fur garments such as hats and gloves) as this garment was the target of the campaigns against fur. It represented a bourgeois femininity, the audience of *Vogue* readers that *Vogue* represents. Prior to the investigation, I was aware that *Vogue* was a site of pro-fur in the late 20th century. The magazine editor, Anna Wintour, is known to be pro-fur. Pamela Anderson stated that she despises Anna Wintour because “she bullies young designers and models to use and wear fur” (The Guardian, 2008). In 2005, Wintour had a tofu pie thrown at her fur coat by animal-rights activists. When asked “what action she would take as a result of the incident she simply answered: ‘Wear more fur’” (British *Vogue*, 2010).

In the quantitative analysis of key words in *Vogue*, shown in Figure 13, ‘faux fur’ was first mentioned in the 1950s and steadily increased, while ‘fur coat’ decreased from the 1960s to the 1990s. In the 1990s it featured a slight rise and increased again in the 2000s when there was a resurgence. However, as the chapter will show, in the 1980s fur was not always discussed explicitly and sometimes a faux fur coat is referred to as a ‘fur coat’ in *Vogue*. Therefore, quantitative data is difficult to rely on as the language of fur changes in the 21st century.

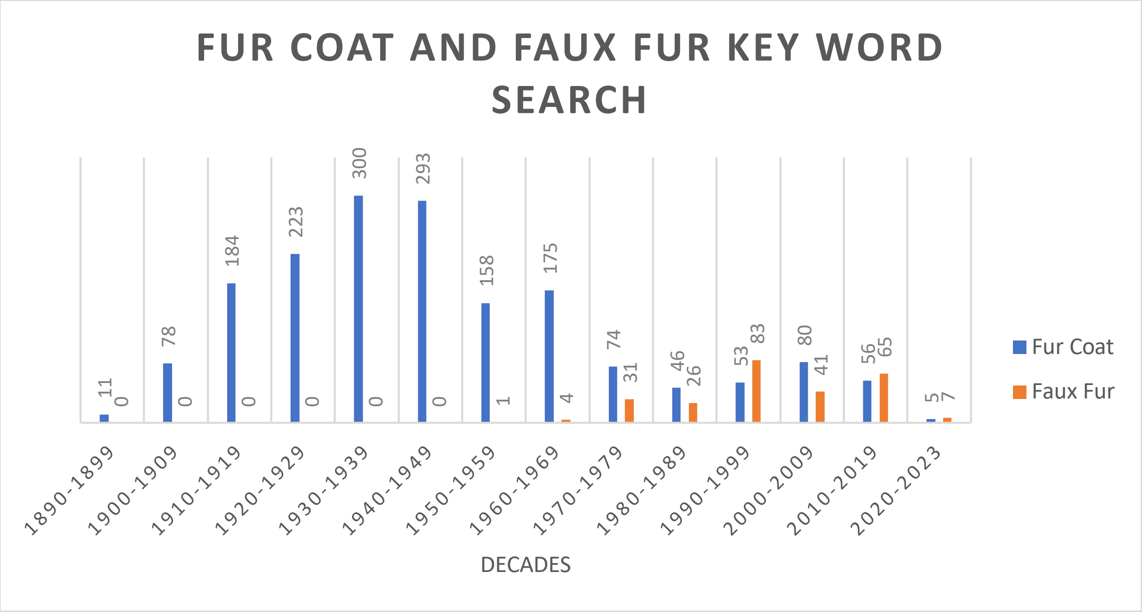

Figure 12: Fur Coat and Faux Fur Key Word Search

6.1 Rescuing the Fur Coat

During the peak of animal rights protests in the 1980s and 1990s period, *Vogue* directly engaged with the animal rights organisation PETA and maintained its stance in favour of wearing fur. The analysis indicates that the magazine continued to uphold the bourgeois, fur-wearing subjecthood, countering the critique of the fashion industry with scientific discourse and anthropocentric narratives that reinforce values of modernity and status quo.

6.1.1 Defending Bourgeois Subjecthoods

A 'Mink International' advert from December 1982, stated that "Life is too short and winter's too cold to go without Mink" (Vol.172, Iss.12: 152). The advert featured a photograph of a man and a woman, the woman wears a long fur coat, and the man puts his arm around her, kissing her head. He carries a pine tree to suggest it is Christmas time, he does not wear fur but a thick wool jumper and light trench coat. The advert reinstates in small print that Mink International has "the finest mink from Scandinavia, America, Canada and the Netherlands" (ibid.). By stating that the winter is too long and life too short, the advert evokes a hedonist, individualist narrative. An ethics of care requires a recognition of interdependence of the world to make decisions and their consequences (Godin, 2022). These adverts employ a language that disconnects fur from its animal origins and transforms it into a simple material. Rather than acknowledging the animal, the focus shifts to the pleasurable sensation and warmth of fur in the advertisement.

In September 1985, *Vogue* featured fur coats in a piece titled 'Fast Track Furs' (Vol.175, Iss.9: 646-653). The photoshoot depicts women adorned in opulent fur coats as they board airplanes and a yacht, evoking a luxurious and upper-class lifestyle. The long real fur coats match the bourgeois subjecthood often targeted by animal rights activists, showcasing how *Vogue* defends this image and practice. The first coat is a long black 'sheared natural ranch mink' by Donna Karan priced at $16,500, with the model leaning against the wing of a small airplane, her foot resting on a small luggage case (p.646). On the following page, another model wears a 'natural Russian crown sable' priced at $100,000, draping around her body as she leans on the door of a small plane. Accompanying the image is the assertion: "What instantly puts this year's fast-track fur in a special class: the sheer luxury, the all-out quality of the fur itself, impeccably crafted in natural color. No tricks. No gimmicks. No special effects, just a heightened sense of style" (p.647). The subheading emphasises that pure fur is made without tricks, gimmicks or special effects which places these fur coats in opposition to the fake, artificially produced, fur. Symbolically, *Vogue* elevates real fur to an elite status, drawing parallels with the aviation theme of upper-class seating. Much like the disparity in price between seats on a commercial aircraft, Vogue segregates fur into its own exclusive category, accentuating the classed dimensions of real fur. However, the mention of the animal is relegated to a small caption alongside the designer and price. The distinction between real and fake fur coats lies in the disparity in quality and associated lifestyle, with the magazine unabashedly endorsing the bourgeois subjectivity traditionally associated with fur coats, despite protests, situating themselves against an ethics of care towards animals.

Fur coat photoshoots frequently featured pet dogs despite animals rarely appearing in other types of photoshoots in *Vogue*. On the final pages of this fashion feature on furs, a model is photographed standing on a yacht with two large dogs wearing a coat described as ‘natural baum marten’ priced at $20,000 (p.652). The model wearing the coat holds the lead of one of the large white dogs and both dogs wear collars to indicate their status as her pets (see Figure 14). The dogs are panting and appear happy but the model's face is stern and she stares into the distance, she clutches her fur coat and does not look at the dogs. In *Vogue*’s August 1987 issue, a model walks a large dog wearing a reversible fake leopard coat with a black Persian lamb lining (Vol.177, Iss.8, see Figure 15). The woman wears big black sunglasses and holds the large dog by the chain collar around its neck. In a smaller picture on the same page, the model swings her arm back as though the dog is pulling her and the inside of the coat is revealed to the viewer to show the lamb that can be reversed to serve as the outer lining (p.314). In the images, the woman looks stern as she walks the large dog around a city wearing the reversible coat. On the following page, a model wears a mid-length coat made from opossum.

In 1977 (Oct, Vol.167, Iss.10), a model wearing a fur coat is also featured with a large dog, a cream Great Dane that she keeps on a tight lead as she stares sternly into the camera. In October 1985 (Vol.175, Iss.10), a model is photographed running across a street with two miniature poodles, clinging onto the fur coat and wearing large sunglasses. The coat is described as “A terrific colour – very rare natural Canadian pearl cross fox – a terrific big scale, combining into – what else? – a terrific coat”, priced at $18,500. The women featured in these photoshoots with dogs have stern expressions and usually wear large black sunglasses around the city to further emphasise their cosmopolitan look. Dogs rarely featured in fashion photoshoots in *Vogue* in the mid to late-twentieth century, but they were photographed in many fashion features on fur. The presence of dogs suggests that *Vogue* attempted to construct a hierarchy of animals in the magazine. The visual inclusion of the dog as a companion pet and a fur coat that kills an animal suggests that one species is less

FIGURE 13: US *VOGUE*, FAST TRACK FURS, SEPT 1985

FIGURE 14: US *VOGUE*, FASHION FURS: A NEW BEAT, AUG 1987

deserving of life than another. *Vogue* upheld this view in these features and proclaimed their pro-fur stance and created further tensions with animal rights activists. In these features, *Vogue* constructs a subjecthood of a bourgeois woman who is stern and uncaring but views dogs as pets. The subject is classed, and her attitude suggests that she does not need to care for the origins of the luxury commodities in her possession.

Animal rights activists targeted this symbolic image of bourgeois femininity in their campaigns (Emberley, 2004: 6). A notable example includes the film 'Sammy and Rosie Get Laid' (1987). Here, the feminist, anti-imperialist, lesbian activist character spray-paints an 'X' on the back of the fur coat belonging to the property developer's wife (Hahn & Yang, 2001: 57). The scene was referred to as a "feminist allegory on the limits of gender in representing economic violence capital-intensive property development, an accessory to the crime of exploitation and oppression", which ultimately critiqued the heterosexual, fur-clad bourgeois woman (ibid.). The photoshoots show how *Vogue* attempted to uphold this subjecthood that signified an oppressive and exploitative power. The magazine also constructed a disconnection between the bourgeois woman from the ethical issues of the products she buys and shops for. The disconnection can be seen as commodity fetishism of the fur coat as bourgeois women were encouraged to overlook the harm to animals that are raised in animal rights protesting for a prioritisation of the luxury and classed symbolism implemented onto the commodity. However, unlike Marx's (1867) theory of commodity fetishism (which absolves the goods from human labour), the bourgeois woman's fur coat is absolved of nonhuman harm. In addition to defending the bourgeois fur coat, *Vogue* also directly attacked the image of animal rights activists in the late 20th century.

6.1.2 Animal Rights Activism

In a September 1989 issue of *Vogue*, Fred Barnes discussed the animal rights group PETA (Vol.179, Iss. 9: 542). The heading announced: “No longer dismissed as weirdos, animal-rights groups are now threatening medical research”. The article stated that “PETA and its allies aren’t limiting their agenda just to barring cosmetics firms from testing products on animals, preventing the slaughter of furry beasts for their pelts alone, and halting cruelty in laboratories. Now the movement’s goal is to end all medical research that uses animals to study diseases and test remedies” (ibid.). By stating the “slaughter of furry beasts for their pelts”, the use of animals for their fur is reduced to a primal act of ‘killing a beast’. The animals are (re)presented as something that is dangerous and should be killed, which reinforces anthropocentric discourses and diminishes an ethics of care towards nonhumans. The fight against animal testing for medical research is justified by PETA by arguing that better sanitation, rather than animal research, has improved human health and technology, and cell cultures can be used as alternatives to animal research in medicine. However, the article countered this argument with statements from medical doctors: Dr. Michael DeBakey who pioneered coronary bypass surgery and the artificial heart; Dr. Thomas Starzl who performed liver transplants in children; and William Bennet who researches drug addiction, are all quoted for their denouncing of PETA’s efforts. *Vogue* upholds scientific discourse over an ethics of care towards animals. As Finkelstein (1997) highlights, women’s fashion magazines often adopt masculine discourses of mastery and control (usually over the body), and here similar masculine discourses are embedded in the article which counteract a potential feminist ethics of care towards nonhumans. The author used male, scientific experts to counter PETA’s co-founder Ingrid Newkirk’s philosophy that: “Animal liberationists do not separate the human animal, so there is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights” (ibid.).

In this piece, Barnes focused on medical research rather than PETA’s views on the cosmetic or fashion industry’s use of animals, and therefore he avoided the tensions between animals and women's fashion. The article gave a voice to scientists and medical research and ignored Newark's claims that medical research could utilise computer technology and cell cultures instead of animals. As a result, the potential post-human philosophy is ignored and reputed in the name of scientific progress and the protection of humans against harmful diseases. In the December 1989 issue of *Vogue*, letters from readers to the editors of the magazine are included in a feature called "Talking Back". Reader Trayce Englund from Forest Hills (NY) is critical of Fred Barnes' column on PETA, arguing that the article was "misleading and biased" as "animal rights activists are trying to *change* medical research methods from the archaic and cruel to the more reliable and humane" (p.70). They stated that "Animal experimentation is neither the only nor the best way to obtain scientific information. Less than 6 percent of all animal experimentation has a direct influence on medicine. Millions of animals should not have to suffer and die for research when alternative research methods are available" (ibid.). Another reader, Doug Percival from Silver Spring (MD), argued that the column "repeats the most overblown claims of the animal research industry and misrepresents proposed legislation regarding laboratory animals" (ibid.). The reader opposes Dr. Wyngaarden's statement that major achievements in medical research have depended on the use of animals. They argued that the work which led to the development of the polio vaccine in 1949 used "human cell cultures, several years before Salk and Sabin developed vaccines using monkey kidneys" (ibid.). The responses show how *Vogue* readers critically engaged with the article and expressed a disappointment in the magazine's anti-animal rights stance.

The discussion of PETA continued into the 1990s and *Vogue* reproduced anxieties around the animal rights group in an article in July 1994 titled 'PETAphilia' by Charles Gandee (Vol.184, Iss.7: 28, 30). The subtitle stated that "if PETA has its way, more than fur will soon be flying. Say goodbye to wool, silk, and leather, to meat, fish and dairy – even biomedical research as we know it. Charles Gandee considers the extremists who advocate rights for rats" (ibid.:28). Immediately, the *Vogue* article continued an anti-PETA stance. One of the pictures in the article included a group of PETA activists who stormed the *Vogue* New York offices on 30th September 1993. The activists hold up a sign that reads 'Fur Shame' and below they hold pictures of dead animals, including a leopard. Next, they included the 'I'd Rather Go Naked than Wear Fur' campaign that featured Christy Turlington naked. The article highlighted a PETA campaign that explained how Jeffery Dahmer killed his victims, put the body parts in the fridge and their bones in the bin, to later be consumed by the killer. The campaign stated, "If this leaves a bad taste in your mouth, become a vegetarian" and "Non-violence can begin at breakfast, with what you eat" (p.28). The campaign stated that researchers found a link "between childhood animal abuse and multiple acts of violence towards human beings" (ibid.). The author then argued that this statement from PETA makes a "vertiginous leap from childhood meat eater to cannibal serial killer" but does not consider why not every child that has bacon and eggs for breakfast ends up becoming a killer/cannibal. Gandee claims that when these questions are posed to PETA, they argue that dramatic impact is the point, not logic.

The article pointed out that PETA founder, Ingrid Newkirk, made an analogy regarding the Holocaust, stating that "Six million people died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses" (ibid.).[21] When questioned about this, she argued that "Slaughterhouses are Auschwitz's for animals. Fur farms are Buchenwald's for animals. Remember that situation and be upset that six billion individuals are going through those things today, only it's called fried chicken" (ibid.). The author claimed that PETA has "recently enjoyed such a remarkable ascendance in social standing that it now appears to have replaced both AIDS and homelessness as the cause célèbre du jour" (ibid.). In this article, *Vogue* highlighted PETA's attacks on the fashion industry but avoided a discussion on it. Instead, the topic of the article changed from fashion to another industry, in this case, food and charity. PETA are written about as an illogical group but also one that gained attention and was removed from other concerns such as AIDS and homelessness. *Vogue* attempted to construct animal rights as less important than human-centred causes.

---

[21] PETA's comparisons to the Holocaust have been controversial (Deckha, 2008). Survivors of the Holocaust sometimes draw these comparisons, please see Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz and Alex Hershaft for examples. Others, such as PETA member Roberta Kalechofsky and Abraham Silverman, are against such comparisons and that agonies cannot be compared with others. The ADL argue the use of Holocaust imagery from PETA is disturbing and antisemitic.

Here, it could be argued that PETA plays a part in civilising processes around meat eating. By comparing chicken slaughterhouses to human genocide, the co-founder raises the uncivilised and unethical treatment of nonhumans. As Elias's work highlights, throughout the Middle Ages the taming of aggressive behaviours and violence coincided with an increased sensibility towards suffering (in Wouters, 2004: 200). The growing sensitivity changed manners, such as bringing a knife to one's mouth at the dining table (ibid.). It also meant that "the slaughtering of animals and carving of their meat were removed from the public scene into slaughterhouses" and carving meat took place in the kitchen rather than on the dining table (ibid.). Here, animal rights groups cause a tension for *Vogue* as they suggest that norms of meat-eating are uncivilised, and therefore rupturing what it means to be 'modern'. The magazine engaged with the tension by constructing animal rights philosophies as illogical or anti-scientific. Animal rights arguments contribute to limiting the choices of products available to humans. An ethics of care for nonhumans, therefore, goes against the values of consumer capitalism and *Vogue* uses masculine and anthropocentric narratives to counter these narratives. Overall, the discourses *Vogue* constructs uphold status quo patriarchal structures of capitalism and anthropocentrism but raise tensions for the magazine's engagement with what it means to be modern. The bourgeois subject, who does not care for the harm caused to animals, is symbolically reconstructed as traditional in wider culture and *Vogue* struggles to grapple with this changing landscape for upper- and middle-class women.

6.2 Rebranding the Fur Coat

The symbolic meaning of the fur coat is contextual and changes over time. It was a popular garment in the West among men and women as a practical winter garment from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Fur-trapping played a crucial role in the beginning of the North American economy, but as demand started to outstrip the diminishing supply of wild animals, farming fur became popular (Dolin, 2011). From the 1860s, mink farms were the main source of pelts and fur was no longer used in just the lining or the collar but the whole coat. By the 1920s, fur farms with American minks were established in Britain and by the 1950s there were 400 mink farms. The fur coat remained a popular choice for women across the 20th century. Although some argue that in the twentieth-century West, the fur coat is mainly a display of wealth, Skov (2005) contends that it continued to be a practical garment for many reasons. For instance, developments in indoor heating meant that warm woollen undergarments and flannel petticoats were discarded, which required warmer outdoor clothing (Skov, 2005: 21).

Developments in transportation such as trains, planes, and cars meant that bodies were exposed to more extreme temperatures (Ewing, 1981). Wilcox (1951: 157; in Strege, 2014) highlights that in the early 20th century, large fur coats were popular with men and women for driving. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, fur businesses had trouble keeping up with the changes in garment production (Skov, 2005: 22). For example, synthetic fibres and colourfast dyes made clothes easy to wash and decreased the hours spent ironing (Schneider, 1994). Also, the price of manufacturing garments decreased, and the average family spent less of the household income on clothes during the late 20th century (Lipovetsky, 1994). Wilson (1985) states that by the 1960s, young people in both America and the UK bought their clothes off the rack (ie. without alterations). It was not until the mid-1970s that fur manufacturing became exported on a large scale to keep up with faster production (Skov, 2005: 23). As a result, the fur industry was competing with faster paces of consumption and lower prices, but working with a garment that required highly skilled workers and a slower pace of manufacturing.

In the 1960s, the variety and creativity of furs boomed to try to entice a younger generation that stopped buying mink due to its associations with traditional femininity (Strege, 2014: 426). To adapt, fur coats appeared with combinations of more than one colour and new patterns of stripes and geometrics were introduced. However, the fashion for spotted cat fur ended with the introduction of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 which protected big cats, seals, and otter species (p.424). Beers highlights that the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was founded in 1966 and almost 700 other organisations were formed for animal rights in this decade (2006: 3). By 1967, the number of animal rights groups reached 1,000 and following the 1975 publication of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*, the movement witnessed an explosion. Currently, there are over 7,000 organisations that represent over 10 million members to lobby, agitate and educate on issues of the rights and treatment of non-humans (p.3). In *Vogue*, the political tensions are apparent in the way the fur coat is casualised and the magazine begins to include faux fur.

6.2.1 Casual Fur

The 1980s featured a proliferation of anti-fur protests conducted by groups such as Greenpeace, Lynx, PETA, and notable celebrities joined the cause (Skov, 2005: 3; Beers, 2006). Examples of anti-fur slogans included: "It takes forty dumb animals to make a fur coat; it takes one to wear it" and the "Rich bitch/poor bitch" that featured a wealthy woman wearing a coat and a fox caught in a leg-hold strap, designed by Linda McCartney (Emberley, 1988; in Skov, 2005: 3). Therefore, the fur coat came under scrutiny from animal rights activists and created tensions with an ethics of care towards (especially furry) animals. Another tension occurred in the gendered and generational symbol of fur. The younger generation of women in the 1960s and 70s associated the long fur coat with post-war traditional femininity, Hollywood glamour, and the 1950s New Look (Strege, 2014; Skov, 2005) that mod subcultures rejected in place of the miniskirt 'youthful' styles. As a result, *Vogue* reconstructed the fur coat as playful or more casual to attract younger women, with new styles, patterns, and possibilities. For instance, in *Vogue*'s January 1970 issue (Vol.155, Iss.1) a 'fashion forecast' for the year highlighted the "fur-lined coat" as a main trend, described as "back with a bang" (p.94). The fur-lined coat was a trend in US *Vogue* in the 1940s and 50s as it combined the warmth of fur at a lower cost during wartime.[22] The 1970s coat does not copy the Second World War formal and structured coat, but rather a casual, parka-type coat. The article continued that "every length is gung-ho – what matters is only that within there's the warmth and luxury and seductiveness of fur against your skin, and the outside may be wool or heavy, heavy canvas" (p.94). The coat featured a mink lining and a patterned canvas outer lining. It created the appearance of a more casual coat on the outside but kept the real fur lining.

Here, *Vogue* subverts the traditional fur coat and hides the fur under a casual canvas lining. Although this is not the peak of animal rights activism, where protesters sometimes splashed women's fur coats with red paint, it shows how there is an attempt to casualise a coat that uses real fur and is designed in a way that does not mimic the large bourgeois fur coat associated with traditional femininity or the military styles of the Second World War. Therefore, *Vogue* combines 'modern' styles that are popular with young women with a continuation of traditional practices, much like in Chapter 4 on the corset.

---

[22] See Figure 16 for the key word search on 'Fur Lined Coat' in US Vogue.

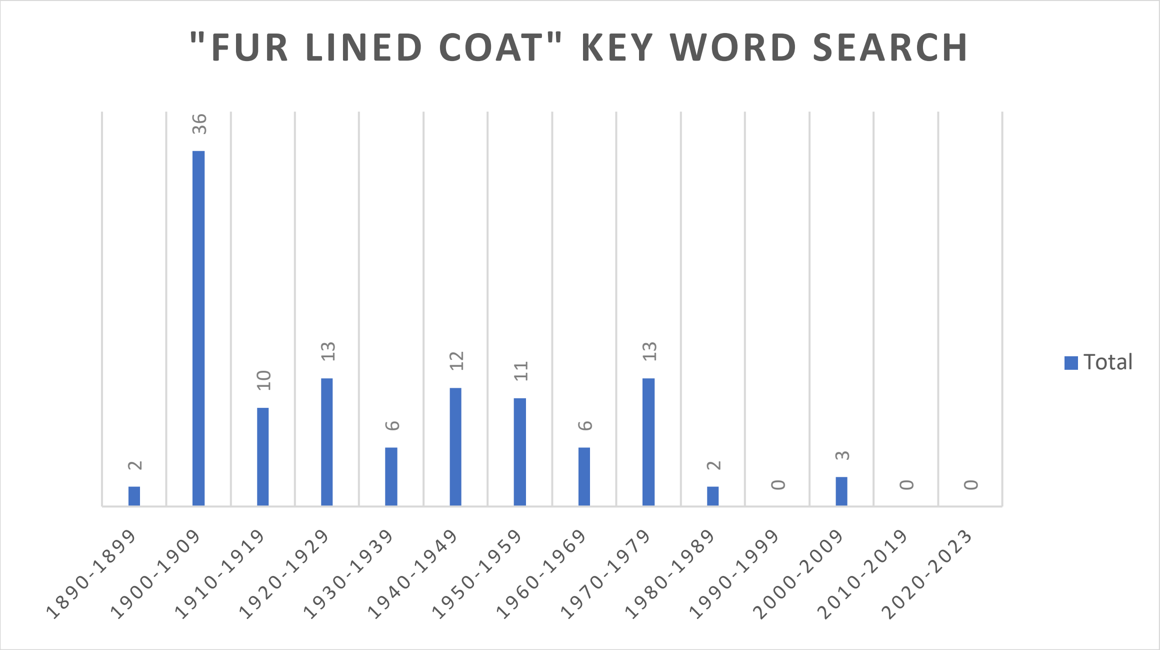

FIGURE 15: 'FUR LINED COAT' KEY WORD SEARCH

A decade later, in December 1982, "*Vogue*'s Last Word on Fashion" included a section on fur. The piece stated that "there was a time, once, when a woman "dressed up" to a fur; times have changed… and so, too, have the number of demands you can make of a fur" (p.330). *Vogue* argued that the "glamorous long-haired fox, lynx, and fisher – full-scale coats – look best, most modern, with pieces that are pulled-together but easy-going", they suggested pairing it with more everyday clothes such as wool stockings, knitted sweaters, and flat shoes. In October 1985, *Vogue* featured a large fox fur coat that had a hood, they stated that it was easy-going as it was "reminiscent of a parka", however, the outfit underneath (a black ribbed sweater, black leather skirt, dark tights and polished heels) makes the 'sportif' coat appear formal enough for the streets of Paris where the photoshoot took place (Vol.175, Iss. 10: 552, see Figure 17). Here, *Vogue* experiments with the fur coat as a garment that can be 'dressed down' and not associated with traditional bourgeois femininity.

Rebranding fur as 'new' and in opposition to the 'traditional' look continued across the decades and *Vogue* kept up this discourse into the early 1990s. *Vogue* featured a 'Fur Report' in September 1990 and discussed how 'traditional' fur coats are out of fashion, but 'new' and 'fashionable' fur coats are back (Vol.180, Iss.9: 224, 240, 248, 262). The subheading informed readers that 'drenched with color and worked like fabric, fur is suddenly becoming a major player in the wardrobe" (p.224). Karl Lagerfeld argued that "Status is what got fur in trouble" and fashion "houses with only 'traditional' furs have trouble today" (ibid.). Designer Mary Jane Marcasiano, a designer who opted to incorporate beaver anoraks and short silk trenches lined with mink into her fashion line stated that "for the thirtysomething generation who've never worn anything so unabashedly glamorous, fur is suddenly fun" (ibid.). The following pages showcased an array of brightly coloured mink coats and sheared fur; therefore, it did not mimic the traditional plush long-haired coats that are associated with the previous 1980s bourgeois coat.

Here, *Vogue* continued to promote 'modernity' and 'change' as key elements in fashion. While they subtly engaged with the wider critiques of using fur in fashion, the magazine subverted the tension of the harm towards animals they transformed it, into a stylistic issue, and argued that 'fashion houses with only traditional furs' are in trouble. The magazine rewrote the unpopularity of real fur and an ethics of care towards non-humans into class-based issues and innovation in fashion, avoiding the topic of the animal. This analysis shows how *Vogue* decentred values of caring for non-humans into values of consumer capitalist innovation and offering something 'new'. Only the companies that do not take the consumer capitalist value of changing fashion and creating new trends seriously were in 'trouble'. Therefore, the tension caused by wider political issues is translated into a tension between 'modern' and 'traditional' uses of fur. As a result, *Vogue*'s casualisation of the fur coat shows that they kept up with wider trends of casual clothing and combined the traditional practice of using animal fur with the wider culture. The magazine, therefore, situated itself as modern to remain relevant to young, modern women, yet continued traditional practices. The idea that a 'thirtysomething generation' has been deprived of fur also constructs the human use of animals as a luxury that is 'fun' and a choice

FIGURE 16: US *VOGUE*, FAKING IT, SEP 1990

that was taken from women due to wider political. Therefore, wider political tensions are constructed as something that limits consumer choice and is against values of consumer capitalism. The 'reality' of killing animals for fashion was avoided in the magazine and the discussions remained on a human-cultural level, evoking the pleasure of wearing fur and reducing its unpopularity to a classed war that was separated from nature.

In addition to the humanist themes, Skov (2005) suggests that anti-fur campaigns adopted the trend towards the casual, youthful and sexy to popularise their political position. She argues that the 'I'd rather go naked than wear fur', which started in 1990, photographed popular model Chrissy Turlington naked against a blank background with the slogan at the top. The campaign used youthful, 'perfected' nude bodies to attack the middle-aged women who were associated with 'traditional' fur coats. She claims that this attack was against the older body that used the fur coat to age in style and regain a sense of sensuality (p.25). Therefore, the fur coat is attacked for a lack of youthfulness and modernity. Also, the fur coat does not fit with the faster fashion consumption or the detraditionalization of social class distinction in the latter half of the 20th century. The changing discourses around fur occurred in *Vogue* before the peak of anti-fur protests in the 1980s which shows a tension in fashion that is linked to other factors than the politics of animal welfare. As a result, *Vogue* showcases that the decline of fur as fashion is more complex than simply responding to animal rights campaigning as it is also tied to the consumer capitalist projects of faster production and democratisation.

The casualisation of fashion that began in the 1960s and continued across the 1970s (with the popularisation of jeans) can be linked to wider trends of informalisation in society (Wouters, 2007). The 'expressive revolution' that occurred in these decades challenged codes of authority such as the youth countercultural movements that shaped this attitude (2007: 174). The processes of detraditionalization and informalisation come from the blending of social classes and the liberation of minority groups. As a result of less hierarchy, displays of social superiority were considered inappropriate (Wouters, 2004b: 206). From these wider sociological theories, the questioning of the fur coat is part of wider cultural/social movements against authority and clothing that expresses a ‘superiority’, or luxury in this case. However, *Vogue* attempts to reshape the fur coat as modern and in keeping with these wider trends and social values by disassociating it from social class.

6.2.2 Faux Fur

In *Vogue*, faux fur is included across the 1980s and 1990s and shows how wider political values come to inform definitions of a fashionable woman. Faux fur is cheaper and resolves the tensions between bourgeois women’s ability to wear fur and feel stylish, supporting an ethics of care towards animals. However, the way *Vogue* includes faux fur comes with new tensions and complexities.

In July 1970 ‘Fashion for Fake Furs’ showcased a range of faux fur coat alternatives. The first page stated: “It’s a fake-quake – stampeding into fashion now. Fake furs, greater looking than ever before, the coats everyone – *everyone* – will be wearing. Curly, shaggy, wild, warm, spotted, striped – whatever animals are, they are” (p.94). The first coat has a shaggy texture with alternating-coloured horizontal stripes, the text states that it is “Mongolian [lamb] in spirit, fake as they come” (p.94). The second page shows two fake fur coats with a black and white spotted pattern, they are described as “Snow leopards, faking it together” (p.95). The coats in this feature often have a leather belt at the waist or are paired with leather boots. A coat on page 98 is made from real ostrich feathers and a coat on the following page is stated as “faking a fur not yet invented – perhaps long-haired hippopotamus (why notamus?)” (p.99). The article mixes faux fur with leather and real feathers.

The piece shows how animal hierarchies are present in the controversies towards using animals in fashion. The animals that were mainly protested against in campaigns include charismatic megafauna such as leopard, seal, mink, rabbit and fox.

In the Global North, cultural animal hierarchies shift and change over time, which shapes the perception of animals that are deemed appropriate to use in fashion. Moore (2018: 37) highlights that speciesism does not only apply to the ranking of humans over animals, but a more specialised determination of which animals are worthy of care, protection, attention, and love. For instance, Mary Phillips' research on scientists testing on companion animals in laboratories found that they viewed the test subjects as "ontologically different from the pet dog or cat at home" (Bekoff and Goodall, 2002: 47, in Moore, 2018). The article shows how *Vogue*'s inclusion of faux fur emphasised how the animal rights campaigning at the time did not always challenge the values of an ethics towards non-humans but sometimes strengthened animal hierarchies. Also, the article featured puns and jokes about the animals that faux fur attempts to mimic, showing that synthetic fur has a playful, youthful edge compared to more sophisticated or glamorous real fur.

In the September 1990 issue, there is a segment on fur coats called 'Faking It' (Vol.180, Iss.9: 620-7). The subheading explained that "Ironically, just as real furs are beginning to look fake (with bright colors, wild patterns), faux furs are beginning to look real" (p.620-1). The opening statement highlights that *Vogue* viewed faux fur as simply another consumer option as they continued to showcase real fur alongside it and did not take animal ethics seriously. The first page featured two white women standing in the street of a city, they are talking and wearing short brown fur coats that end at the mid-thigh. The caption for this image stated that "new technology allows faux fur to be softer, more lightweight", priced under $400. On the second page, the model wears a similar coat and sits outside a cafe with satin gloves and large sunglasses, she wears a baseball cap with the faux fur coat. The caption stated that for the designer "Adrienne Vittadini, fake fur is 'carefree and spunky,' a way to add texture" (p.620-1). Designer Randolph Duke argued that the fake fur coat is "plush like a teddy bear" and "envelops you like a cocoon" (p.625). On the final pages, the model is photographed wearing a variety of shorter faux fur jackets, the caption states: "sporty shapes done up in faux fur are glamorous enough for evenings uptown, casual enough for breakfast downtown” (p.626). In the final picture, the fake fur jacket is a casual zip-up style with a hood, styled with leggings and a t-shirt.

Here, *Vogue* played with the aesthetic of faux fur, suggesting it could be ‘glamorous enough for evenings uptown’ but also ‘casual enough for breakfast downtown’ (p.621). The faux fur coat can be worn in many settings, not just glamorous events or for winter practicality. Faux fur becomes both an alternative to harming animals for fashion and an option for those who do not wish to be associated with the bourgeois traditional coat. Therefore, faux fur enables further consumption of the aesthetic of animals as fashion, rather than eliminating a fur coat from the fashionable woman’s wardrobe entirely. However, the inclusion of faux fur shows that, despite the magazine's pro-fur bias, the magazine ultimately succumbs to wider politics and the demise of fur-wearing practices. The examples of rebranding the fur coat show how *Vogue* battled with the tensions raised by animal rights activism, informalisation processes, and a shift towards faster, more democratic demands in fashion. The fur coat is associated with an older world of investing in garments made by highly skilled workers and traditional industries, all of which do not align with consumer capitalist values of modern, democratic, mass-produced clothing that keeps up with trends and youthful styles.

6.3 The Disappearance of the Animal

Another important aspect of how *Vogue* magazine navigated the wider politics of an ethics of care towards non-humans is the discursive disappearance of the animal that featured across the 20th century. In the early 20th century, when *Vogue* magazine featured real fur garments, the animal was discussed openly. In an article titled “The New Parisienne” from July 1916, *Vogue* showcased new fashions from Paris that incorporate animal fur (15 July 1916, Vol. 48, Iss. 2: 33-38). The article title stated that the ‘New Parisienne’ is “hoopless and in furs”, and “not because of the weather, for of late the sun shines in Paris, so perhaps it is because Russia is an ally that all

Paris goes fur clad beneath the summer sun" (p. 33). The Parisienne woman wears "generous collars and cuffs of fur – rabbit, of course. Every one wears this fur; one wonders what the poor rabbit wears" (p.35). The use of the rabbit is discussed openly. Another caption stated that "the collar is just one more rabbit gone" (p.35). The use of the word 'just' implies a flippancy towards the animal's life. However, the animal is mentioned directly, and the animal's death is not avoided.

In the late nineteenth and early century, a lack of squeamishness towards animals as fashion garments was evident in the way they were made. For instance, many fur garments featured stuffed baby animals, including squirrel and kitten heads on muffs and trimmings (Dyhouse, 2010: 25). The range of animals available from the 1920s included badger, fisher, skunk, wolf, polecat, squirrel, must, ox, monkey, raccoon, wombat, and wallaby (ibid.). The fur coat reached its pinnacle of variety and popularity in the early twentieth century for fashionable women (Strege, 2014: 420). In the 1920s, more exotic species were used for the coat trims, including monkey, leopard, and ocelot (Ewing, 1981: 127, Blum, 1981: 116; in Strege, 2014: 420). Seal fur was a popular status symbol in the twentieth century. From the 1880s, the population of Northern seals dropped by 80 per cent. In 1911, the United States, Canada, Japan and Russia signed the ban on open water hunting of seals (Mirovitskaya et al., 1993: 23-5; in Strege, 2014). After the First World War, single whole fox skins (including the head and paws) were worn (ibid.). Coats of muskrat, marmot, opossum and Russian ponyskin appeared in Sears catalogues after WWI.

After the Second World War, new varieties of fur became popular, including spotted wild cats that were both real and imitated to look like leopard and ocelot (Strege, 2014: 423). The US Fur Products Labelling Act (FPLA) was introduced in 1951 which meant the animal species must be clearly identified on the garment label which stopped the misnaming of products and fraudulent furs. In the 1950s, mink became the most popular fur choice and was associated with the New Look that featured furs without the animal head or paws (p.423). It could be suggested that the FPLA's introduction led to greater consumer awareness about the type of fur the coat was made from which meant that mink appeared to be increasing in popularity but because it had been fraudulently named as wild cat. Over the next few decades, mink was worn by some of the most famous actresses and models for the fur company 'Blackglama' with the slogan 'What Becomes a Legend most?', emphasising the link between fur, glamour and Hollywood (ibid.). Mink farms increased from the 1860s and reached a peak in the 1950s (Barnes, 2020). Therefore, as some animals were protected by the law from hunting and trapping, the farming of mink was normalised, and the animal was not protected from being used for fur coats.

The analysis of *Vogue* shows that in the late 20th century, fur was marketed differently and there was a disappearance of the animal. In the late 1970s, fur was sometimes advertised in *Vogue* with a link to the animal, but it was not as openly discussed as it was in the early 20th century. It must be noted that the overall amount of text in fashion editorials and adverts decreased across the 20th century, but the link between the garment and the animal was still present in this decade (Lebovic, 2019). In October 1977, a *Vogue* fashion feature titled "Paris Couture" included a fur coat. The model was photographed swirling in a large fur coat and as the coat swishes the photo captures the many tails that hang at the bottom of the coat. The text description reads:

> "The all-out glamour – and modernity – of Ungaro for day or night…[…] Ungaro's most sweepingly dramatic coat – the coat that makes you think differently – adventurously! – about fur. A big wide swing of a sable coat – like a Mongol emperor's – thick full pelts worked vertically, each ending in its own tail, with tails sweeping around the hem, a scarf-of-tails wrapping the throat (and no lining! – the inside of the coat is the inside of the pelts)" (p.269).

The animal is explicitly mentioned, and this feature does not hide the many animals used to create it through the numerous tails incorporated into the garment.

In the same issue, *Vogue* included a double-page advert from Royal Black Velvet (Oct 1977, Vol. 167 Iss. 10: 230-1). The advert showcased three fur coats, the text on the advert stated that they produce the 'World's Finest Dark Ranch Mink', and a small paragraph claimed that the products are "A new dimension…Nothing tells today's exciting fashion story as convincingly as fur…the new dimension of Royal Black Velvet Mink" (p.230). The 'new dimension' referred to here is the velvet look of the fur, it does not look like a traditional thick fur coat but a shorter-sheared velvet. The second page stated "Royal Mink designs by Goussan Goutlai…the lyrical pale shades of Royal Mink…and the sophisticated appeal of Canadian Lynx" (p.231). The animals that are used are featured in the text and are clear to the reader. However, discussions of animal death were not as explicit as they were in the early 20th century.

In the 1980s, Bukhara Furs (Aug 1980, Vol.170 Iss.8: 104-5) showcased their fur coats with a small list at the bottom of the advert to inform the reader about what types of animals are available. The animals included: Shadow Fox & Coyote, Grey & Red Fox, Canada Majestic Mink, Polar Raccoon, and Persian Lamb (p.104). Despite the list, the advert featured a photograph of six models wearing the different coats. The advert did not label the coats explicitly, but the list was on the first page of the advert. The choice to list the animals separate from the coats themselves creates a subtle split between the coat and the animal. In the same issue, a Revillon advert featured a model wearing a long white fur coat. The text on the advert stated that "For many, Revillon is an ideal. It is design perfected in only the most glorious of furs. It is the transformation of imagination into reality. Of dreams…captured and caressed. Revillon is a coat, a jacket, a fling, a flaunt! of fur that a woman holds and thrives in as she would in love" (p.106). The text evokes ideas of fantasy and hard-to-achieve luxury, highlighting the expense of a fur coat and the classed barriers. The caption stated that the model wears "EMBA© mink, designed by Jean-Paul Avizou" (ibid.). EMBA is the name of The Mutation Mink Breeders Association, formed in 1942 to create a breed of mink, that was mutated to achieve lighter colour fur without the use of dyes. The animal is not highlighted in the text until the second paragraph.

Across the 1980s, whether a coat was faux or real is not explicit and instead only the brand name indicated that the fur coat was real. A fur coat advert from Samink in *Vogue*'s December 1982 issue featured the fur coat spread on the floor like a rug. The text on the advert states: "The best skin next to your own…Samink" (p.88). The animal is not explicitly mentioned in the advert, but the brand name 'Samink' signifies it is a mink coat. The use of the word 'skin' subtly informs the reader that this is not fake fur. Therefore, the link to the use of mink is more subtle than previous adverts. Similarly, in a Valentino fur advert from September 1985, a model is photographed in a long grey fur coat. The brand name 'Valentino' is printed in large text and the logo appears twice. The word 'Furs' is in very small text at the bottom of the advert and there is no description of what kind of fur the coat is. The link to the animal is entirely removed. In the same issue, a Saks Jandel advert showed a model wearing three different fur coats. Similar to the Valentino advert, the text on the advert only stated the brand name in large print with no reference to fur or animals.

To replace the discussion of the animal, the focus on fur shifted to the feel, the luxury of the garment, its warmth, rather than the animal itself of where it originated. For instance, in an article titled "Fur Appeal! Mink" in August 1980, *Vogue* discussed the uses of mink fur as a *material* and did not reference the animal. They ask readers to "forget everything you ever knew or thought about mink because, this year, it's completely unpredictable!" (p. 102). The article discussed the ways mink can be used: "You can dye it, shear it, strip it, suede it, rib it, ribbon it, weave it, knit it, quilt it. The one thing that's hard to do – resist it!" (ibid.). The new qualities included the colours it could be dyed, "from saffron, green, and khaki, to rose, garnet, wine, purple, plum, eggplant. Often in combinations of colors, sometimes so complicated that the designs are worked out by computers" (ibid.). But they stated that "what hasn't changed: it's still luxurious, light-weight, long-lasting" (ibid.). Here, mink is discussed as a simple material, with no reference to the animal involved.

The images in the article showcased the fur as samples of material. The link to the animal is severed through a language and visual display of mink fur as a simple fabric to be used in fashion. In addition to this, an advert for Cezanné Furs by Paul Schorr Furs was embedded into the article in the bottom left corner of the page. The advert featured a woman wearing a short fur coat, but the article did not state what type of fur or the animal(s) it had come from. The text informed which stores Paul Schorr fur can be located. As Skov (2005) mentions, fashion attempted to make fur modern by increasing its variety and a sense of newness that is detached from the traditional bourgeois feminine image, and in this case, the link to the animal. *Vogue* is not subtle when it asks the reader to "forget everything they know about mink" to remove the wider political campaigns against animal furs in fashion.

The research highlights how, during a period of animal rights activism, *Vogue* resolved this tension by separating the direct link to the animal. A feminist ethics of care requires an understanding of interdependency when making consumer decisions and the impact they have on the climate or those involved in the chain of producing the product (Godin, 2022). In these adverts, the language used breaks the link with the animal and transforms fur into a simple material. The animal is not referred to explicitly as it had been in the earlier 20th century and the information about the animal fur becomes smaller and less obvious in the latter part of the century. Instead, the luxury of fur is heightened and the pleasurable feel and warmth, the sensation, becomes a focus. Therefore, the human is at the centre of the discussion rather than a care for non-humans. It could be argued that, like PETA's campaign that engaged with civilisation processes of removing suffering, *Vogue* attempted to civilise fur coat marketing to also remove animal suffering. Therefore, it followed PETA's modernising techniques and used it in their own marketing. The individualising narratives can also be linked to emerging postfeminist and neoliberal emphases on the self and prioritising pleasurable consumption. The alienation of the commodity lays the groundwork for later postfeminist sensibilities of the self and consumption as a site of feminine pleasure.

Despite the fading discussion of animals in the magazine, it is clear from the above examples that mink became the most popular animal used for fur in the late twentieth century. This was due to the use of 'wild' animals which became problematic in the late 1960s and eventually illegal in the early 1970s. The tension was resolved by using mink, a more 'acceptable' and domesticated animal to kill as it is farmed rather than trapped or hunted. The disappearance of the animal in fur adverts and articles in *Vogue* across the 20th century shows how an ethics of care for non-humans posed a tension for the fashion magazine, one that reshaped the norms and language around fur coats. The research shows how a wider ethics of care is entangled with the construction of the fashionable woman. This popularity of fur decreased which impacted gendered consumption norms and values. The middle-class glamorous fashion that involved harm towards animals could no longer be mentioned directly and there was an increased squeamishness towards fur.

6.4 The Return of Real Fur

In the 21st century, the magazine rebrands real fur as 'closer to nature' and therefore a sustainable option to the issues of waste and the disposability of clothing. Due to the anxieties around fast fashion's harm to the environment, fur is repositioned as a 'solution' to a contemporary problem. There is an attempt to make fur appear modern by combining it with wider environmental concerns. It is reconstructed as an investment that will last, keep the user warm, and naturally biodegrade. *Vogue* situates fur in the tensions between longevity and disposability of fast fashion that are linked to wider environmental issues. The environmental issues include resource use due to the lack of durability, the waste of garments, and pollution from the fashion industry to make vast quantities of clothing that is not durable. The marketing does not include the way that hunting for fur has led to the near extinction of many species. It also does not consider the impact farming for fur has on environments, such as the

American mink escaping into the UK and becoming an invasive species, or the environmentally harmful chemicals that stop the fur coat from decaying.

In October and November 2018, *Vogue* featured adverts from 'Natural Fur', a campaign that showcases fur coats as "the responsible choice" in the current global climate crisis.[23] The adverts feature a column of writing that argues: "Since time immemorial, people have adored fur – the most natural of fibres, renowned for its innate elegance, its warmth, its grandeur". The piece claimed that it is "vitally important" that the younger generation recognises the need to wear fur due to the "rising concern regarding the impact of plastics on our oceans and land" which "makes our decisions about what we wear, how we consume, and how we live more important than ever" (Nov 2018, Vol.208, Iss.11: 126). The campaign argued that "a beloved fur is often handed down from grandmother to mother to cool modern daughter – and if it is cheerfully remodelled along the way, so much the better! But then again, there is nothing quite like the first time you see your own initials embroidered in the satin lining of your very own fur coat" (ibid.). The final point stated that "when this treasured, resolutely earth-friendly item is finally ready to be discarded, it will completely biodegrade in a matter of months […] the globally-conscious young woman, sensational in sable, mischievous in mink, fierce in fox- represents the epitome of responsible chic: an informed consumer intent on doing good while looking great" (ibid.). The advert continues earlier generational constructions of women and the idea that young women are 'modern' and, in this case, cool. But rather than rejecting their mother or grandmother's styles, they should now embrace them.

---

[23] On the campaign website (wearefur.com), Natural Fur display their collaboration with Vogue magazine clearly (https://www.wearefur.com/fur-fashion/vogue-x-natural-fur/). The page features the statement made on the advert and includes all the photoshoots with fashion brands that use fur, including Fendi, Oscar de la Renta, Roberto Cavalli, Elie Saab and Carolina Herrera. The campaign includes a video showcasing the furs. Despite posted 4 years ago, the video has 5,138 views, 35 likes, and 1 comment.

It suggests that the younger generation's avoidance of fur is problematic, so *Vogue* reverse the previous narrative that young women know better.

The campaign constructed the practice of wearing fur to fit with more contemporary concerns for the environment and plastic waste. Real fur is positioned as the 'ethical' choice when wanting to wear a fur coat in contrast to faux fur, which is plastic and ends up in a landfill where it will not naturally degrade. It is also normalised through a history that reaches back to the beginning of mankind. The advert constructs the relationship between people and wearing animal pelts as normal and inescapable, therefore women *must* now choose between buying a faux plastic fur coat or a real fur coat that will naturally erode. The advert avoids the option to not wear a fur coat at all and therefore upholds a consumer capitalist discourse of style and choice as a priority over ethical matters, even when the topic is an ethical one. It also specifically targets 'young' women who are 'globally-conscious' in the advert, (re)presenting sustainability as a younger generational concern.

The rebranding of fur as 'closer to nature' avoids the tensions with the ethical issues of this fashion that were raised in previous decades. For instance, animals can become at risk of extinction, such as the snow leopard that was hunted for its pelt and bones (Li & Lu, 2014: 208). It is a tradition among people in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Xinjiang to make hats, coats, or decorations from snow leopard skins, they are also hunted for their bones in traditional medicine and considered livestock predators (p.209). The Chinese Government supported the killing of livestock pests to support the economy and set up stations to purchase wildlife products or export, which resulted in an average of 1,000 kg of leopard bones collected annually between the 1950s and 1980s (Wen, 1993; in Li & Lu, 2014: 210). In 1988, a law was introduced to protect the snow leopard and it was listed as a Class I national protected animal. Hunting became a criminal offence, and the sale and purchase were prohibited. The cultural work that is done to classify an animal as either a pest or in need of protection greatly impacts the treatment of the species (Moore, 2018). *Vogue*'s cultural work in the 21st century on fur attempts to open up the idea that animal fur could be a possible solution to human-made environmental issues, such as fashion waste and the overconsumption of resources. The magazine plays a role in trying to shift the perception of the use of fur from ‘harmful to animals’ towards being a solution to the problems of fast fashion. The thinking is anthropocentric and attempts to renormalise fur fashions without an ethics of care for non-human entities as a part of the narrative for sustainability. When entangled with a stylish subjecthood for women, there is the ability to sell animal fur as a ‘solution’ to the continuation of stylish practices and environmental degradation. It shows how *Vogue* continue to rebrand fur to keep it as a stylish piece in feminine fashion and does not take animal or environmental politics seriously.

In 2019, *Vogue* included the opinions of luxury fashion house designers and their stance on using animal fur in fashion that obscures the ethical concern of animals as fashion (Sept, Vol.209, Iss,9: 312, 316). The article reported that fashion houses such as “Burberry, Chanel, Gucci, Versace, Balmain, Maison Margiela, and Giorgio Armani” have stopped using fur, but miss out other brands such as Calvin Klein (fur ban 1994), Vivienne Westwood (2007), Tommy Hilfiger (2007), Ralph Lauren (2007), Tom Ford (2018), Michael Kors (2018) who have also banned fur. In the article, *Vogue* featured an equal number of fashion designers who are against fur as there are for to create a balanced argument despite most fashion designers no longer using fur. Donatella Versace is quoted stating: “I don’t want to kill animals to make fashion – it doesn’t feel right” (ibid.). Silvia Fendi disagrees, arguing that it is a natural fabric and “everyone is into natural things!” (ibid.). Despite this, Fendi still makes faux fur from natural fibres such as chiffon, cashmere, and wool as they:

> “like to give people the freedom of choice, and I think that this is the most important issue, one to be taken seriously – but where do you stop? Do you stop using fur but still wear leather and eat meat? It is important to understand the source – just as you want to see, for example, how the

> chickens who produce your eggs are treated, you want to see where the fur comes from. I believe in total transparency – for every material we use, we have a certificate that you can trace" (p.312, 316).

Fendi conjures aspects of what Gabriel and Lang (2015) refer to as the 'menu society' and the individualisation of decision-making. The designer emphasises a freedom of choice and options over political arguments and conjures the rational, informed consumer (p.27). Ultimately, the argument constructs 'the consumer' as having a right to know how their products are produced and it is their responsibility to choose what to buy. The fashion house responds to the wider politics of animal rights by offering more *choice* and transparency.

Danish designer Astrid Anderson argues that "The Nordic mentality has always been about sustainability – we have a strong history of buying less and buying better", and also supports the idea that fur is the most sustainable material. Anderson claims that their mother still owns a fur coat bought 25 years ago. Instead, it is fast fashion that is the problem in their eyes and "we need to consider the environmental impact of producing fake fur", arguing that there are nuances to the debate. They conclude: "Why is it that I can talk to a vegetarian and maybe be inspired, and there isn't a bucket of red paint involved?" (ibid.). Here, the split between the 'rational' fashion industry versus the 'irrational' animal rights activist continues from the earlier PETA articles. Anderson evokes fantasies and romanticises Nordic mentalities, but it is animal rights activists who are positioned as radical, emotional and illogical.

The founder of 'House of Fluff', Kym Canter, argues that faux fur is a modern fabric and they speak on behalf of young people, stating that this generation do not see real fur as a status symbol, instead, they define luxury as innovation and sustainability. This reconceptualises wider environmental politics into a consumer capitalist project that continues norms and values of luxury fashion. Canter states that they "have created a faux fur made from 100 percent recycled ocean plastics" (ibid.). Lastly, Olivier Rouseing from Balmain states that they decided to not use fur around a year and a half ago after watching many documentaries on the fur industry. The designer argues that “now suppliers are working to make sure that faux fur can look like a real fur” (p.316). Rouseing contemplates that perhaps people who do not agree with wearing fur may not want to wear fake fur, and as a result, fashion is simply interested in following a trend. Overall, he claims that “we need to be careful – and we need to believe in what we do” (ibid.).

In this piece, the pro-fur designers often use the argument that ‘fur is natural and sustainable’ compared to faux fur which is plastic. It is only Astrid Anderson who engages with the fact that an animal is killed in the process by stating that “It is an emotional subject” (p.316). Concerns for animal extinction or the environment are removed, and the argument is reduced to the emotion around the death of an animal and the future of fashion consumption. On the other hand, those who no longer use fur discuss it as an outdated practice that is not compatible with ‘modern’ times. It is constructed as a movement led by a younger generation that avoids the history of animal rights protestors throughout the 20th century, and this political history is not a part of their decision.

The magazine constructs environmentalism as a young person’s concern. In the following chapter, I will explore *Vogue*’s relationship with young environmental activists more thoroughly, but here I will discuss the inclusion of a young indigenous American model, Quannah Chasinghorse who advocates for the climate (Oct 2021, Vol.211, Iss.10: 132-139, see Figure 18). *Vogue* states in the subheading that Chasinghorse “takes fall’s best feathers and furs – both real and faux – into Colorado’s wide-open spaces” (p.132). The model wears a variety of couture clothing with feathers and fur hats across the 8 pages, surrounded by the natural rocky Colorado landscape. However, the captions state that the garments are all faux fur, except for a Ralph Lauren hat that is described as simply a ‘fur hat’. However, Ralph Lauren went fur-free in 2007 which makes this hat faux.

The ‘real fur’ that *Vogue* highlights in the title is hard to find. All the fur pieces featured in the photoshoot are labelled as faux and the brands used all follow a fur-free policy. The only exception of animal use is an ostrich feather garment. Ostriches are domesticated and farmed mainly in South Africa and their feathers are harvested at “the most humane time” when the blood vessels and nerves detract from the shaft of the feather” (The Guardian, 2023). However, it is reported that ostrich farms are sometimes raided by ‘feather bandits’ who strip the feathers which sometimes kills the bird (ibid.). In the UK, the last remaining feather factory produces garments for set pieces, Scots pipers bonnets for the military, and boas for Strictly Come Dancing, but feathers are also bought around Europe for dance festivals, cabaret, and other costumes (ibid.). *Vogue*’s use of real fur appears vague and hard to spot, yet they boldly state on the first page of the feature that Chasinghorse wears fur, both real and fake. Here, they make a claim that is not supported by the fashion designers and only faux fur is used. However, there is the use of ostrich feathers that were not as heavily attacked by animal rights campaigns but still contribute to the harm and use of animals for fashion.

In this piece, Chasinghorse argues that she can bring her experiences as an indigenous American into the fashion world to make sure “more and more people like her will feel seen”, something she did not experience growing up (p.138). *Vogue* claims that the model incorporates native jewellery into her style and sometimes into photoshoots. However, in this particular *Vogue* photoshoot, no traditional jewellery is used, only high fashion pieces. In this interview, *Vogue* creates a split between Chasinghorse’s ‘home life’ which is closely linked to nature, versus her modelling career which is glamorous and provides her with new experiences to travel and meet people. Though she claims she is able to bring her experiences as an Indigenous woman into fashion, it is difficult to see this in the *Vogue* photoshoot as she wears only couture pieces. This suggests that *Vogue* use Chasinghorse’s Indigenous American identity to promote fur and feathered fashions and does not aim to decolonise the document or provide her with a platform to voice or represent her culture.

As a result of the vague use of real fur, *Vogue* utilise Chasinghorse's identity as an indigenous American, and her strong links to nature, as a way to rebrand real fur as a part of fashion. Fowler (2013) argues that there has been a resurgence of cultural appropriation and commodification with the consumption of Native American-inspired clothing and accessories in the 21st century. Celebrities from ethnic backgrounds can sometimes partake in the commodification of ethnic authenticity to produce the "safe consumption of difference" (Mukherjee & Banet-Weiser, 2012: 149). Native Americans represent a simpler life for Westerners who cannot imagine a world as they are irrevocably connected to technology (Fowler, 2013: 46). Through this constructed 'simplification' of existence, Native Americans are often viewed as belonging to two opposite cultures, making it impossible for them to be viewed as culturally complex (p.48-9). The split leads to a resurgence of the seventeenth-century 'good Indian vs. bad Indian' stereotypes, where only Native Americans who adopt a homogenous identity and can be consumable for Americans, especially themes of spirituality, environmentalism, and primitivism (p.49). The 'bad Indian', on the other hand, represents danger and immorality, one who cheats at "the expense of the white man" and does not engage with the spirituality and nature that Americans wish to see (p.50). Chasinghorse's identity also shows how *Vogue* constructs ethnic minority women as having a closer relationship with nature.

Indigenous systems of thinking, that prioritise harmony with nature and are oppositional to Western thinking, offer ways to think through the climate crisis. In *Vogue*, this link to nature is used to reincorporate fur into fashion that is justified by a Native American identity. Chasinghorse's acceptance of high fashion glamour carves out a subjecthood that bridges the world of fashion and the natural world. As a result, rather than decolonising the magazine, *Vogue* uses Chasinghorse's Indigenous identity to reintroduce 'natural' animal furs and feathers. As a result, an 'exotic' identity is entangled in *Vogue*'s tension with environmental politics and an ethics of care towards the planet, and Chasinghorse is used as a method to resolve the magazine’s pro-fur stance in a world that views animal fur in fashion as harmful, unstylish and anti-modern.

Figure 17: US *Vogue*, Gaining Ground, Oct 2021

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter shows how the subjecthoods constructed for women at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century grapple with a wider ethics of care for non-humans and, later, issues of sustainability and a care for the environment. Two changes occur during the period of analysis. Firstly, there is a shift from traditional to modern fashion that does not include the outdated fur coat. Secondly, there is the reassertion that luxury and opulence is acceptable. During the period of ethical concern and animal rights activism against the bourgeois fur coat, *Vogue* complicates the image of fur in a variety of ways. The magazine introduces a casual image of fur, one that can be disassociated with the traditional bourgeois fur image that is attacked by activists. The fur coat is made 'casual', which coincides with an introduction of faux fur that is cheaper and can be used in more casual or playful ways. In addition to this, *Vogue* includes coats with fur linings where the wearer can hide their support of animal cruelty but continue fur-wearing practices in a period of concern for the welfare of animals.

A discursive disappearance of the animal is also tracked across the century to disassociate fashion and animal suffering and symbolically detaches the animal from the fur coat. *Vogue* also reproduces dominant animal hierarchies in the photoshoots with faux fur by including feathers and leather, which highlights the complexity of animal rights protesting and how the care for non-human species contains hierarchies that shift across contexts and time. The animal rights protests against the fur coat are accepted in dominant Western thinking as they protect charismatic megafauna, compared to vegan philosophies that aim to protect cattle/livestock or birds. *Vogue* also depoliticise the changes in the status of the fur coact, shifting it into a discussion of class and traditional vs. modern fashion, rather than of wider animal rights activism. More recently, *Vogue* attempted to reintroduce fur as a 'natural' material that is more environmentally friendly due to the lack of plastic and the ability to biodegrade. There is a tension here that complicates the shift to Welch's (2020) promotional sustainable consumerism that emerged in the 1990s. *Vogue* continues to reject a shift towards sustainable promotion and continues to uphold an uncaring, bourgeois subjecthood. As a result, the fashion industry can be seen to struggle with this change in wider attitudes towards consumerism and instead adopts a patriarchal, capitalist ideology of science against an ethics of care for animals or the environment. These tensions are not fully explored in broader studies of gendered consumer culture.

Overall, the chapter shows how the magazine, and its construction of what is suitable for a stylish, middle-class feminine subjecthood, is challenged by animal rights activism and a shift from high-skilled manufacturing and investment pieces towards faster trends and production. Fur coats also symbolise a bourgeois femininity that is not democratic and only available for a select few, a practice that aligns with *Vogue*'s classed audience, but contradicts their values of ‘youthfulness’ and ‘modernity’. The magazine battles with these contradicting values within consumer capitalism across the decades until it can utilise sustainability as a marketing technique and the consumption of indigenous cultures.

7. (Un)Sustainable Fashion

The focus of this chapter is on 'sustainable' or 'green' marketed fashion that features in *Vogue* in the contemporary 21st century issues. I explore how environmental decline and wider environmental politics pose a challenge for *Vogue*, but also how *Vogue* responds by entangling some of the well-rehearsed postfeminist sensibilities into its narratives on how capitalism can save the West. The surge in criticism towards the fashion industry for its unsustainable practices and the harm fashion waste causes the environment creates tensions for *Vogue* magazine as they are seen as a cultural intermediary involved in the process of peddling fast-paced fashion trends and creating a consistent demand for new clothing. The demand for more conscious production of goods is referred to as 'ethical consumption' (Lewis & Potter, 2013; Barnett et al., 2005) and while it is not a new phenomenon, "it has gained popularity since the 1990s with more emphasis being put on the power of consumer actions to create social, economic, and environmental change" (Hawkins, 2012: 7). To briefly investigate how US *Vogue* have responded to this tension, Figure 19 shows the number of times 'Sustainable' is featured in US Vouge, presenting an emergence in the 1990s.

It is important to note that the reason the environment has become a political tension in *Vogue* in the last decade is due to the attention on the fast fashion industry for creating textile waste and contributing to global warming. As a result, many fashion brands are reflecting on their unsustainable production, and fast fashion companies are promoting garments made from recycled materials and information on waste or sustainable initiatives. Welch's (2020) teleoaffective formations analysis highlights how 'promotional sustainable consumerism' has emerged in the last 10 years or so and suggests this to be a notable part of CSR marketing for brands.[24] If brands can promote their ‘authentic’ commitment to the environment, they can offer their audience the ability to purchase an authentic environmentally committed identity. The chapter explores how *Vogue* engages with this style of sustainable marketing and how narratives of sustainability and the environment create tensions for *Vogue* who support the fashion industry.

The analysis shows that the magazine responds to the tension between environmental concerns and consumer capitalist values in *Vogue* in multiple ways. Firstly, *Vogue* constructs an ‘eco-chic’ celebrity who incorporates an ethics for the environment to boost their reputation and branding as a celebrity. The celebrities analysed are all related to the fashion industry, through modelling or fashion design. The environmental activism of these celebrities is translated in the magazine in three ways. Firstly, the eco-chic celebrity integrates values of consumer choice and the consumer-citizen. Their activism is enacted by supporting ‘authentic’ sustainable brands. Secondly, the celebrity figure is recognised as a postfeminist entrepreneur who finds ‘solutions’ within consumer capitalism. Thirdly, the subjecthood is discussed with aspects of ‘magical femininity’, where she is constructed as emotional about the environment and her activism is overlooked. Overall, the subjecthood shows how an entanglement between neoliberal and feminist values is continued through the celebrity. Another way *Vogue* engage with environmental activism is through ‘youth climate activists’ who advocate for the environment but also support the fashion industry. These figures normalise a subjecthood that can care for the planet and uncritically engage with the fashion industry. This figure is another example of how discourses of postfeminist entanglement engage with wider environmental politics and create further tensions with the way the environment is perceived and engaged with. The analysis also shows how *Vogue* distances the causes and impacts of environmental destruction. For instance, the harmful production of fashion that takes place in far-off countries (such as Bangladesh) is a focus and the geographical locations where people suffer from climate change are distanced and 'othered'. The West (and particularly the American audience) is constructed as protected from the climate emergency due to this distancing. The harmful impact of the fashion industry on the environment is isolated and conversations do not link geographical or ecological issues together.

---

[24] Promotional Sustainable Consumerism is explained in section 2.2.3 (Literature Review) and section 7.2.1 in this chapter.

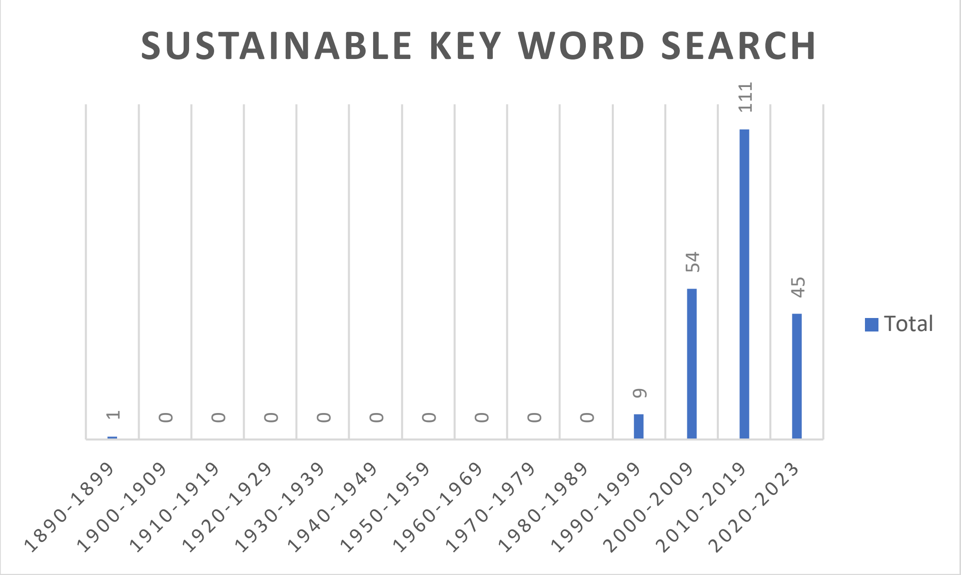

FIGURE 18: 'SUSTAINABLE' KEY WORD SEARCH

Scholars highlight that, unlike the food or cosmetic industry, the fashion industry does not have a "single organisation or governmental body to regulate any specific 'code-of-conduct' [...] it remains up to individual consumers to navigate their way through the offerings of fashion brands" and deciding what is genuine (Beard, 2008: 447-50).[25] Individuals must trust corporate promises that are made about sustainability or fairness (Godin, 2022). The lack of certification in the fashion industry enables companies to brand themselves as green or sustainable without much evidence. Ethical fashion has become "an economic imperative, not just a moral one" (Brinton, 2008; in Beard, 2008: 449). For this reason, this case study does not focus on a particular item of clothing like the previous cases. This decision is to ensure a wide array of practices and products that are constructed as 'sustainable' can be analysed. However, the focus on the construction of subjecthoods is a key focus, much like the previous chapter's exploration of a bourgeois woman who wore fur was a subjecthood which raised a tension for animal rights activists. Here, it is the 'eco-chic' celebrity and youth climate activists that are analysed as they engage with the tensions that exist at the intersection between environmentalism and the capitalist fashion industry.

---

[25] Beard explains that the lack of information in the fashion industry may be due to the lack of health concerns of clothing poses for the body (Petit, 2007; Beard, 2008:448). Kate Fletcher (2008) also notes that the fashion industry has a far more complex chain of supply and manufacturing than food. For instance, a garment may take zips, buttons,

In this chapter, I will discuss how *Vogue* is a part of the meaning-making for what constitutes sustainable or environmentally friendly in fashion. The visual discourse analysis also reveals how *Vogue* represents eco-femininity and includes narratives of 'magical femininity' for celebrities and hopeful young climate activists. In addition to this, *Vogue* navigates interesting dynamics of the 'stylish' that sits in opposition with the 'environmental'. The discourse that emerges within the contrast between the fashionable and the environmental places a hierarchy in fashion garments: that they must be stylish first and sustainable second. As a result, *Vogue* constructs subjecthoods for stylish women who care about the environment.

---

threads, linings and fabrics from many different sources. Beard notes that in this complex industry, logos and brands are the only thing consumers can latch onto with any confidence but are wary of being misled.

7.1 The Eco-Chic Celebrity

One of the ways *Vogue* engages with the connection between the fashion industry and the climate crisis is through the eco-chic celebrity: a feminine subjecthood that combines environmental ethics with style and fashion. The reason this combination is a novel category in *Vogue* is because 'style' has previously been constructed as antonymous with what constitutes eco-friendly. In wider culture, 'eco-fashion' is often associated with the 1960s and 70s hippie movements of "shapeless recycled clothing" (Joy et al., 2012: 288). Therefore, environmentally conscious clothing is seen as an opposition to the type of fashion that *Vogue* represents. As an example, a Keen footwear advert states: "What can we learn from the world's ugliest sandal about ~~sustainability~~ fashion?" (March 2023, Vol.213, Iss.2: 134-5). The advert plays with the constructed idea that environmentally conscious fashion is 'ugly'. It suggests that the footwear was made for sustainability rather than fashion, but by striking through sustainability and placing fashion into the sentence, it shows the new connection between sustainability and fashion. As a result, one of the ways *Vogue* engages with a shift towards sustainable and environmentally conscious fashion is through celebrities whose reputation is bound up with an environmental politics, but they are still stylish, fashionable and glamorous.

Scholarly work on the celebrity highlights that these figures resolve contradictions within liberal democratic modernity: "The persistence of a social hierarchy within a social structure in which everyone is ostensibly equal and capable of equivalent achievement" (Fletcher, 2015: 2). Celebrities are people who have managed to achieve "uncommon status and prestige through their superior personal (ie. authentic) qualities" (ibid.). They come to represent a paradox where 'everyone can make it' but you must have uncommon qualities and charisma to claim it (ibid.). The celebrity also resonates with neoliberalisation in a variety of ways. They uphold philanthrocapitalism which legitimates the self-regulating business and corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns (ibid.: 9). Celebrities also help to sell the idea that individuals can "contribute to social causes primality through 'ethical' consumption of socially and environmentally sustainable commodities rather than direct political engagement" (ibid.). They distract from capitalism as the source of environmental decline and poverty through exciting, exotic, glamorous fantasies in environmental campaigns. This takes place through celebrity endorsements that work through a process of 'image meaning transfer' through which the brand is associated with the attributes of the celebrity and *vice versa* (McCracken, 1983: 310-321; in Littler, 2007: 241). Littler highlights that celebrities need exposure on a variety of platforms and to maintain a 'good' reputation, cause-related endorsements are a cost-effective way of achieving this. In *Vogue*, the environmental celebrities include model Gisele Bündchen, fashion designer Stella McCartney, and director/businesswoman Livia Firth. The following section will discuss how these women are presented as an acceptable feminine subjecthood that bridges the stylish, chic woman with environmental consciousness.

7.1.1 Gisele Bundchen

In July 2018, *Vogue* featured a thirteen-page spread on the Brazilian model Gisele Bündchen that characterised her as a "model turned climate warrior" with an interview on her activism and a photoshoot in a Mexican jungle (Vol.208, Iss.7: 63-73. 122-3). The feature describes her as one of the most successful models in history, but she hopes her environmental legacy will outlive her as she is tired of "epithets like *glamazon* and *Brazilian bombshell*" (p.68). Bündchen's desire to be seen as an eco-activist as opposed to a glamorous model is not highlighted as a feminist value in the magazine. The author argues that Bündchen is not like other supermodels of her time, such as Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell, who are often seen at fashion events with champagne in hand, as she argues "glamour does not interest [her], and she insists it never did" (ibid.). Instead, she teaches her two children about gardening, beekeeping and compost. The writer informs that the model's vocabulary consists of love, energy, and vibrations, she practices yoga, meditation, gratitude, non-judgement, and positivity (p.68).

Bündchen is viewed as an eco-activist due to her history of planting trees in Nairobi's Kibera, known as the largest urban slum in Africa; helping to detoxify the river near her hometown, Horizontina; starting a clean water initiative; and starring in *National Geographic's* docuseries *Years of Living Dangerously* on the link between deforestation and climate change. Bündchen is also a goodwill ambassador to the UN Environmental Programme since 2009 and was invited by French President Macron to speak to world leaders about the contamination of the global water supply and other industrial assaults. Her activism began when PETA protested at the Victoria's Secret fashion show with signs that read "Gisele: Fur Scum" in response to her recent contract with the furrier Blackglama. She states: "Suddenly it dawned on me. I was in the hamster wheel", and the shock led her to investigate the fur industry. After her research, she decided she would no longer do fur campaigns and she must be responsible for the choices she makes. Here, Bündchen's activism is translated into a neoliberal narrative of individual responsibility that is not connected with a larger, structural criticism of an industry or anthropocentric philosophy. It is also a narrative that supports consumer capitalism and ideas of 'the consumer' having an individual responsibility to make 'choices' in the market.

In the interview, Bündchen is constructed as a 'different' type of model, one who is interested in individual wellness over material or social capital, not following the usual model pursuits of parties and glamour. These are aspects that go against *Vogue*'s priorities and the typical construction of a fashionable woman. With this in mind, she does not represent the 'eco-mother' type from Littler's (2013) research on the 'yummy-mummy', who is considered unstylish and viewed as a threat to the other mothers whose lifestyles are closely tied to consumer culture. Instead, Bündchen's lifestyle of yoga and meditation coincides with a mainstream Western trend towards wellness culture. For instance, yoga has been one of the fastest-growing and most profitable businesses in the wellness industry (Luna Mora & Berry, 2021: 401). Contemporary yoga brands are proliferated with images of white, slim models, and since the mid-2000s, there has been a rise of *yogalebrities* who promote a luxury yoga lifestyle (Luna Mora & Berry, 2021: 405-6). Scholarly research highlights that yoga is body-centric and represents the contemporary normalisation, discipline, and control of the female body (p.403). Brice et al. (2022: 5) highlight that the wellness and yoga aesthetic for white Western middle-class women often accompanies an ideology of "higher and better morals" as it promotes a neoliberal control of the body. The yoga body follows postfeminist sensibilities as the practice is transformed from spirituality to exercise that encourages women to be comfortable in their bodies and 'if you feel good, you look good' ideologies (Luna Mora & Berry, 2021: 414). Therefore, Bündchen is not constructed as the alternative eco-mother (as seen in Littler's 2018 work on the 'yummy-mummy') but instead, a part of modern wellness culture that supports hegemonic values of postfeminism, neoliberalism, and consumer capitalism. Bündchen offers women the ability to engage with environmental concerns and modern New Age practices that do not threaten stylish consumerism.

In this piece, Bündchen also represents 'magical femininity'. The notion of 'magical femininity' is a woman who does not challenge the social structures of sexism (or in this case, the fashion industry that harms the environment) and makes space for herself within capitalism (Littler, 2016: 8; Tincknell, 1991: 272). Magical femininity represents the idea that an individual can "put her energies in the right direction" and, through work and consumption, can achieve a solution to large structural issues and inequalities. Littler also highlights that this 'magical' element downplays women's skills and their labour, emphasising 'passion' instead (Littler, 2017: 14). Bündchen is constantly referred to in the piece as passionate and positive, the author claims that when speaking about the environment she becomes "so passionate about her subject that tears emerge at the edges of her blue eyes" (p.68). The article highlights her cooperation with brands and organisations that promote the environment. As a result, her care for the environment is mentioned but contains elements of magical femininity.

Bündchen is promoted as a passionate individual who takes part in charity initiatives and self-discipline. Therefore, her climate activism fits with narratives of feminine passion and emotion and a postfeminist language of empowerment and celebrity success. *Vogue* use Bündchen to write a patriarchal profile of 'an eco-activist' who upholds the norms and values of neoliberalism and consumer capitalism. Here, the values of postfeminist success do not align with the political eco-activist who seeks to protect the planet. However, Bündchen's interview continues to emphasise postfeminist narratives of individual success, responsibility, and consumer choice. Wellness and self-care are some of the ways Bündchen engages with a 'lifestyle' that is marketed towards women where Eastern philosophies are commodified into practices of postfeminist sensibilities of a disciplined body and mind.

Further on in the interview, Bündchen's views on the harms of the fashion industry are expanded on. Bündchen claims that "Fashion ranks [amongst] the most polluting industries in the world, and toxic wastewater from textile plants poses a consistent threat to the global water supply" (p.72). She claims it is not just an environmental issue but a social-justice one and she seeks to protect both the visible and invisible creatures of the rainforest. *Vogue* also note that every day, women and girls devote 200 million work hours collecting water, the equivalent of 28 Empire State Buildings, to highlight the amount of water that is wasted in the production of clothes (p.72). There is some criticism allowed in *Vogue*, but it is swiftly redirected towards scientific innovation and the solutions are situated with consumer capitalism. Following Bündchen's critique, the article shifts to Theanne Schiros' research that produces sustainable, kelp-based textiles for sneakers and knitwear as a solution to the issue raised. Here, the magazine presents the discussion of the environment as one that can be solved by human scientific innovation and diverts Bündchen's concern for social justice and non-humans towards innovation in consumer capitalism. The solution to environmental issues is within further consumption. Also, the issue of water waste is constructed as a problem for humans in the ‘Rest’ of the world, rather than the West, which distances the issue.

The article continues to explain that the model is keen to work for fashion brands who show a commitment to sustainability, which is defined as ‘being willing to consider their impact on the environment, carbon footprints, replenishing materials and using natural dyes’. *Vogue* reports that “between eight and thirteen million tons of clothing end up in landfills every year, anything beautifully made and built to last qualifies as sustainable” and Bündchen argues that we must consider the price of making beauty. As a result, the discussion supports the idea that the fashion industry must continue but should rely on new production practices rather than challenging the practices of consumers or the structures of consumer capitalism. Instead of an activist, Bündchen is represented as a consumer who chooses to work with brands that she believes align with her morals and ethics, rather than emphasising the ways she works with charities and governments.[26] The article also includes fashion designers who innovate new methods of ‘sustainable’ fashion production to promote the idea of continuing consumption at an accelerated rate but with new, innovative methods. Overall, Bündchen is used in *Vogue* to construct a new type of feminine subjecthood, that incorporates a care for the environment but rests on a consumer's ability to *choose* environmentally friendly fashion over challenging consumer capitalist practices. Therefore, the eco-chic celebrity upholds practices and values of consumer capitalism with a postfeminist emphasis on choice and lifestyle.

---

[26] E.g. Gisele Bündchen is introduced in Vogue as an eco-activist who is a goodwill ambassador to the UN Environmental Programme and was invited by the French President Macron to speak to world leaders about the contamination of the global water supply and other industrial assaults, but this is not explored in the article further (see page 256).

7.1.2 Stella McCartney

Stella McCartney is a British fashion designer known for sustainability, anti-animal cruelty and vegan fashion brand; her brand continues her celebrity parents' (Paul and Linda McCartney) vegetarian values. McCartney's five-page spread begins with a picture of her surrounded by her four children and plants (Jan 2020, Vol.210, Iss.1: 64-7, 98). She argues her brand aim was to do away with animal cruelty in fashion and, although faux fur was already on the market, it still included glues made from animals. McCartney views the use of animals as uncivilised: "I imagine Vikings sitting around a pot" and using an entire elk to make food and fur clothing, she states "Wow – we're still there" in response to the continued use of animal fur in fashion. McCartney positions her brand as innovative, using materials that seek to avoid harm to the environment and animals as 'modern', and the consumption of animals as barbaric. Here, she evokes similar 'civilising' principles of animal rights groups from the previous chapter.

The article lists the ground-breaking ways McCartney recreates popular materials in innovative ways to make 'sustainable', ethical fashion. For instance, she uses corn fibre to mimic faux fur, creating a biodegradable alternative. The piece highlights that it takes four goats to make a cashmere sweater, but the animal grazing results in destruction and desertification. From this, she opts for alpaca farming as it is less destructive. McCartney claims she is trying to show that "change is not scary" and enjoys working with innovators – that it is a viable way to do business, keeping the desirability of fashion, not sacrificing style or coolness to work this way, that it is about keeping a balance (p.98). She explains that her flagship store in London features paper-mâché walls from the shredded office waste, there is also a silver birch grove and a moss-covered rockery brought from the McCartney family farm in Scotland. She explains that she wanted to bring nature into the experience of shopping.

For *Vogue*, this helps them showcase a commitment to the 'modern' and innovative values in sustainable fashion without critiquing the consumption of fashion or the wider harm McCartney's trend-setting brand has on fast fashion. For instance, 'Stella McCartney' recycled polyester handbags range from around £500 for a small size, up to £1,500 for a larger bag. Her famous chain-detailed large tote bags are often replicated (or duped) and found made from PU leather on Amazon for around £20, showing how her handbag trends are copied and consumed by those who may not be able to afford her line. Therefore, her emphasis on 'keeping the desirability of fashion' and style balanced with sustainability means that she does not challenge the fashion industry's practice of creating trends. As a result, her trend-setting handbags appear as fast fashion 'dupes' that copy her fashionable designs but are not sustainable. From her emphasis on the power of technology and innovation that create alternatives and opportunities to continue high fashion in the current climate crisis, McCartney's brand does not challenge the overconsumption of fashion and therefore creates further tensions. The article shifts the focus onto innovative practices to tackle environmental challenges, yet allows for further consumption and 'trend-setting' that creates waste and harm to the environment.

Rather than seeking to transform the fashion industry, McCartney profits by offering an alternative to animal-based products, therefore the care towards the non-human, is transformed into a gap in the market and opportunity for profit. She can be seen as another example of magical femininity, a woman who benefits from capitalism and does not challenge structures. Her entrepreneurialism is presented as a passion for the environment over her skills. McCartney keeps more sustainable methods exclusive to her luxury brand and those who can afford them. Fast fashion continues to produce microplastics and waste whereas 'sustainable' garments are restricted to those with the money. Therefore, *Vogue* constructs a classed approach to environmentalism through consumer capitalism, where only wealthy fashionable women can explore sustainable fashion without challenging the values of consumer capitalism and excessive consumption.

7.1.3 Livia Firth

In December 2012, Livia Firth was featured in an article titled ‘Green Dreams’ (Vol.202, Iss.12: 332-5).[27] Before meeting her husband Colin Firth, Livia Firth was a film producer but started a business, EcoAge, with her brother in 2009. EcoAge is a consulting company that advises fashion businesses on how to improve their environmental impact. She also started the ‘Green Carpet Challenge’ which encouraged celebrities to wear environmentally friendly dresses/suits or to re-wear past outfits to draw attention to humanitarian and environmental problems in fashion. Firth argues “We have been brainwashed that fast fashion is democratic. But it is not for the people who make it! Women are led to believe that it’s their right to buy a t-shirt for $5. Do these women know who made that t-shirt?” (p.334). The article explains that Firth’s approach is gentle as she takes designers “by the hand” and says, “Let’s do this together, and in four years you can announce that you have done a beautiful thing”. This shows that Firth is offering brands a chance to gain a ‘good’, environmentally friendly reputation. Here, she is represented as ‘gentle’ and encouraging designers rather than a radical, outspoken environmentalist. This image of Firth constructed by *Vogue* continues the themes of magical femininity. In addition to this, much like McCartney, Firth works exclusively with luxury brands rather than the fast fashion brands that she previously critiqued.

The article encourages ethical consumption through discourses of blame and individual action. Barnett et al. (2010: 8), building on the work of feminist political philosopher Young (2003), argue that by convincing consumers that their small actions contribute to the production of harm, it becomes equally convincing that there is not much the consumer can do about the issue; one individual may feel they are not able to impact sweatshops on their own (ibid.). From this individual blame discourse, Young offers an alternative approach that shows the ways actors may understand themselves to be responsible and their capacity to act. Therefore, political responsibility does not arise simply from being connected to events, people, places, and processes but varies along vectors of power and the capacity of the actor to change things (p.8). Young's work highlights that it is not enough to tell stories about networks of connection but to consider who has the power to influence. In the case of sweatshops, the actors include trade unions, anti-sweatshop associations, international humanitarian organisations and internet activists. The individuals are then supporters of these causes, as critical mass shoppers or agents of corporate change (p.9). By utilising this post-moralist view, Livia Firth's foregrounding of consumer knowledge encourages individual blame over the complexity of the actor's power and influence. As a result, *Vogue* situates itself as an actor with minimal power and Firth views herself as a supporting actor, rather than these two actors having much more power than a critical shopper. Unlike the interviews with Bündchen and McCartney, where *Vogue* constructed a new feminine subjecthood of eco-chic fashion, the interview with Firth is critical of consumer 'choices'. However, the interviews all emphasise the reputation of brands that change their production to more environmentally friendly ones, discussing scientific innovation as a way to 'solve' the fashion industry's problems, and increasing the authenticity of particular brands over others. Therefore, the role of a sustainable woman is constructed into making better choices when shopping for luxury fashion, there is no activism or change of practices.

---

[27] Livia is referred to as Livia Firth in Vogue but has recently separated from Colin Firth, her maiden name is Giuggioli. In this work I refer to her as ‘Livia Firth’ to match the sources and avoid confusion.

The article states that Firth is involved in a project with popular luxury brand, Gucci, to make the world's first 'deforestation' handbag and she is described as whizzing to New York to attend a luncheon with first ladies and "then scoot back to London for a textiles conference". *Vogue* argue that it isn't 'all glamour' however as Firth practices what she preaches at home. Apparently, her children's clothes are hand-me-downs from friends, and she mends clothes where she can to avoid buying new ones, in addition, all the food is organic or fair trade. Firth's lifestyle therefore mixes cosmopolitan travel and domestic sustainability, creating a bricolage of contradiction and continuing to construct a space for middle-class stylish women to partake in both their cosmopolitan lifestyles that harm the environment and a 'sustainable' one.

On the other hand, the representation of these celebrities does not include their political engagement. For instance, Livia Firth frequents climate protests and her EcoAge message is that "We must destroy fast fashion". In 2015, Firth spoke extensively about the harm of fast fashion with CNN News. At the Trust Women conference, she announced a "ground-breaking study to establish the legalities for a global standard on wages" and that the paper will establish "legal fundamental rights for a living wage across all borders" (CNN, 2015). In an interview with The Guardian, she argued: "It is the human cost, not the type of fabric used which is almost the primary cause of environmental pollution. If [brands] could not produce so much clothing so cheaply by using slave labour, you wouldn't have the environmental impact" (The Guardian, 2019). The evidence shows that, in other interviews, Firth is highly critical of fast fashion and emphasises the crisis of cheap clothing more firmly than in *Vogue*. This shows that *Vogue* subvert its power in the fashion industry, and avoids its role in the climate crisis. *Vogue*, instead, focuses on innovating sustainable materials (through the likes of Stella McCartney figures).

Vogue separates itself from engaging with wider aspects of fashion's harm to the environment by focusing on luxury sustainability and avoiding how high fashion aids this environmental destruction. Furthermore, by representing the women's politics as a 'magical femininity', *Vogue* replaces their interviewees' critique towards fashion's politics and structures as a feminine care for the environment, or 'passion'. As a result, the celebrity's capacity to inform and challenge the fashion industry is transformed into an acceptable form of stylish feminine subjecthood. In the magazine, the women are positioned under a postfeminist narrative of individual empowerment and consumer choices. The reconstruction of these women shows that a postfeminist entanglement between anti-feminist and feminist values also incorporates a similar anti-environmental and environmental politics. In addition to this, the projects of consumer capitalism are prioritised in the engagement with environmental politics.

Overall, the climate crisis is seen as an entrepreneurial opportunity for these women, to make money and improve their reputation, and they are linked to postfeminist sensibilities that promote entrepreneurial, individual success. The celebrity itself is a neoliberal success story, and these women uphold these values. All three women are able to operate as environmental activists because they have been successful at gaining visibility. In Bünchen's case, she gained visibility as a model, whereas McCartney and Firth rose to fame through nepotism. The construction of an eco-chic celebrity suggests that in order to influence environmental politics, one must first gain visibility for their opinion to matter. It furthers neoliberal narratives of individuality over collective matter. Environmental politics, in *Vogue*, is reconfigured into a passion for individuals and their individual consumer choices, rather than a political movement that requires collective action. In the interviews, *Vogue* transforms the environmental emergency into a capitalist opportunity as the discussions often find 'solutions' to the damage of the fashion industry in scientific innovation in consumer culture available to wealthy Western women. As a result, the magazine navigates the tensions between fashion and climate crisis through a positive emphasis on technological innovation and the capitalist, entrepreneurial women. The women do not challenge the structures of capitalism but uphold hegemonic norms of consumption. They offer a fashionable feminine subjecthood that incorporates a care for the environment but alongside the continuation of harmful consumer practices of valuing style over the earth.

7.2 Youth and Climate Activism in *Vogue*

In addition to interviewing celebrity environmentalists, *Vogue* also engages with youth climate activists. In this section, I will highlight how *Vogue* introduce and navigate the tensions between youth culture and an ethics of care for the environment, which focuses on ethnic minority girls. This demonstrates how the magazine continues to discuss the environment through celebrity individuals. One of the most famous youth climate activists is Greta Thunberg who is seen as a "celebrity conservationist" with humble schoolgirl origins whose engagement with critics from around the world has increased her celebrity status (Murphy, 2021: 4). Murphy argues she has "developed an environmental politics of performance *for* the natural world, rather than *in* the natural world" (ibid.). Rather than a 'DiCaprio or Bündchen' who use their celebrity status to promote environmentalism, Thunberg can be viewed as a David Attenborough type who rose to celebrity status because of her activism (ibid.). She engages with social media platforms to promote her messages but also encourages followers to sign petitions and support social justice causes (ibid.: 7). In this section, I analyse the way *Vogue* include youth climate activists Xiya Bastida, Quannah Chasinghorse, and the group of young people involved in the *Juliana v. United States* case.

7.2.1 Indigenous Women Climate Activists

In January 2022, *Vogue* featured an interview with Xiye Bastida, a 19-year-old climate activist who is a member of the indigenous Mexican Otomi-Toltec people but has lived in New York since she was 13 (Vol.212, Iss.1: 64-5, 88-91). Bastida is described as "the most committed climate activist of her generation" and she is an environmental studies student at the University of Pennsylvania (p.64). The article highlights her recent message at the Leader's Summit on Climate to "accept that the era of fossil fuels is over" and for the global North to accept that "the systems that uphold the climate crisis rely on the existence of sacrifice zones" which include the "Southern hemisphere, poorer countries and Black and brown neighbourhoods in the US, Canada, and Europe" (ibid.). At university, Bastida is learning that "the concepts her generation is currently abuzz about – Indigenous wisdom, environmental justice –

were first raised years ago in academia" and believes her role as an activist is to inform the public about this knowledge (ibid.). The article reflects on her upbringing in Mexico under climate disasters and how she was raised by environmentalist parents who met at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. She discusses how she was inspired by Greta Thunberg but felt she could not bring attention to indigenous people. Bastida critiques Thunberg and highlights issues of diversity and intersectionality in environmental politics. Greta Thunberg's popularity is sometimes considered an example of how white people are listened to over ethnic minorities; US *Vogue* does not fall into this trap by featuring Bastida as their environmentalist 'girl' over Thunberg.

The article recalls Thunberg's 'Our House is on Fire' speech which claimed it was adults who are destroying the planet and young people must rally against them. However, Bastida believes that young people must work with adults because they are the ones with the power, and therefore, she takes a more cooperative rather than critical approach. She believes intergenerational solidarity is important to ensure adults don't say "Oh, shut up. You're just yelling at us. We're not listening to you!" (ibid.). *Vogue* highlighted her Leader's Summit message that went viral in her hometown but was especially circulated among a younger generation who appreciated her critique of the Mexican president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who had discussed his plans to extract more oil. She tweeted that the Mexican president's plans 'lacked ambition' and climate activist Bill McKibben claimed it, "might be a good idea to put [her] in charge of a continent or two" (ibid.). Bastida is constructed as a powerful activist who speaks on behalf of her generation, evoking a language of intersectionality and climate emergency, but seeks to work with governments of an older generation to cut back on resource degradation. *Vogue* use Bastida to engage with youth generational issues and concerns for the environment. This allows the magazine to be seen as engaging with relevant issues.

Over the 20th century, *Vogue* idealised youth and, as shown in Chapters 4 and 5, constructed young women as *the* fashionable women to aspire to. Youth was an important aspect of modernity that emerged in the projects of consumer capitalism. *Vogue* has often viewed young women as a source of inspiration and constructed them as 'knowing better than their mothers'. However, youth climate activists create tensions as they critique consumer capitalism and are politically engaged with climate issues. Young people are still idealised as modern but are troublesome because they question the projects of consumer capitalism. The interview shows how *Vogue* grapples with these tensions of including the voices of youth climate activists to remain relevant and 'modern' but must construct them to align with the projects of consumer capitalism. To resolve this tension, the interview with Bastida emphasises her support of consumer capitalism and the fashion industry. The article states that between her degree and activism, Bastida was featured as a model in a Levi's campaign. The author writes that speaking to her reveals the different sides of her personality, the soulful activist and chatty college student. The article discusses her University life and highlights her organic cotton sheets (that she did a lot of research on) and how she places post-it reminders to recycle and turn lights off in shared rooms (p.89-90). The writer describes her roommates as "all environmentalists in a Gen Z way"; they discuss how her roommate will be making Bastida a Halloween costume around the theme of 'Hot Earth' which will be made out of denim because "Xiye recently worked with 'Reformation' and they do a great denim minidress" (p.90).

Vogue reports that Bastida "used to be wary of corporate partnerships" as she believed that "companies are so evil, they're literally destroying the planet. But it's not like in the future we just can't have companies or the economy" (ibid.). As a result, she supports the companies she feels are changing their business practices and asks for their sustainability plans. However, she claims she regrets working with Nike in the previous year as she did not consider their association with sweatshops until someone highlighted it on social media platform Instagram. After research, she found that they were closely tied to sweatshops 30 years prior, but "regretted it all the same" (ibid.).

Similar to Gisele Bündchen, Bastida's consumer habits and choices highlight a crucial aspect of her activism. Rather than challenging the fashion industry, Bastida supports companies by arguing society can't function without them and the economy. As a result, the support of capitalist growth and stylish clothing is a part of her activism. Under neoliberalism, the subject is constructed as a 'consumer citizen' which means the choices they make (and any 'inappropriate' choices) are judged as worthy and unworthy (Evans & Riley, 2015: 12-3). Therefore, the eco-celebrity and youth climate activists' consumer choices are a useful way for *Vogue* to entangle an environmentalist activist's values with consumer capitalist values.

In Welch's (2020) work, this ties to ideas of promotional sustainable consumerism that is a part of contemporary marketing. Environmental and ethical consumption movements have problematised consumption but were "instrumental in the institutionalisation of CSR" (p.73).[28] As brands are more consumer-facing, they now must critique the hedonistic consumer society that it, ironically, claims to have created (ibid.). Also, brands have become the focus for communicative struggle over corporate reputation in the public sphere and they achieve values by being perceived as authentic (ibid.). Holt (2002) argues this results in a competition for authenticity among brands, and brands struggle with activists and sceptical consumers (Welch, 2020). Here, brands "seek to position themselves as resources for consumers to draw on in their quests for authenticity" and in return, "consumers' authentic engagements with brands seeks to legitimate them" (p.74). With this in mind, the environmental activist celebrity serves as a citizen-celebrity-consumer who can promote the authenticity of a brand by engaging with it. In *Vogue*, the eco-chic subjecthood constructs women as able to partake in an *authentic* care towards the environment, but also continue their stylish consumer practices by supporting *authentic* brands. Bastida is presented as someone who works with corporations and governments, placing less emphasis on critique and supporting promotional sustainable consumerism.

---

[28] CSR = Corporate Social Responsibility

Figure 19: *Vogue* YouTube Thumbnail, ‘Billie Eilish and 8 Climate Activists Get Real About Our Climate’, 4 Jan 2023

In the January 2023 digital issue of *Vogue*, Billie Eilish, the 22-year-old singer, (see Figure 20, *Vogue* YouTube thumbnail, Eilish poses hugging Xiye Bastida and Quannah Chasinghorse leans into Bastida) features as the cover star. She invites “eight young activists” to talk “climate, community, and hope in 2023” (*Vogue*, 2023).[29] Billie Eilish, the seven-time Grammy winner, is presented to have set her sights on the greater goal of saving the planet (ibid.). However, Eilish argues that she spends a lot of her effort “trying not to be in people’s faces about it” because “people don’t respond well to that [and] it makes the causes that you believe in look bad, because you’re, like, annoying the sh*t out of everyone” (ibid.). She continues this attitude arguing that: “I’m still not shoving information down people’s throats,” she says. “I’m more like, I’m not going to tell you what to do. I’m just going to tell you why I do this.” She pauses, then offers a staccato laugh. “But you’re also a bad person if you don’t do it” (ibid.). The article describes how Eilish is disappointed with herself, she argues she shouldn’t be selling any products as it is “more sh*t to go into the landfill one day” but “no one’s going to stop wearing clothes. No one’s going to stop making stuff. So I just do it in the best way I possibly can” (ibid.). Eilish’s view that she should not be an outspoken activist but believes those who do not agree to speak out are a ‘bad person’ supports Evans and Riley’s (2015: 12-3) statement that the subject is constructed as a ‘consumer citizen’ and the choices they make and “any ‘inappropriate’ choices are deemed worthy of contempt”. Therefore, celebrity figures such as Eilish support these values and do not openly challenge capitalist structures. This allows her to sell mass-produced merchandise and collaborate with fast fashion companies such as H&M. Eilish, therefore, constructs a subjecthood, like Livia Firth, who engages with a bricolage of contradiction.

---

[29] https://www.vogue.com/article/billie-eilish-climate-activism-january-cover-2022-video

The activists Eilish invited to her digital cover are all under 30, the youngest of whom is Ryan Berbet (16 years old at the time). Each activist has a short video on the *Vogue* website. Berbet led a climate strike at her high school and has been a part of a campaign to pressure the California governor to declare a climate emergency. Quannah Chasinghorse (featured in the previous chapter) is also included, and her video appears first on the website. Xiye Bastida is present and described as the ‘Fridays for Future’ organiser and Re-Earth Initiative co-founder. *Vogue* discusses the young climate activists’ views and where they get their inspiration for dedicating time to protesting the degradation of the environment. Many argue it is from their mothers as Eilish announces that her mother is “the most determined and most passionate person. It’s thanks to her that I know anything” (ibid.). Again, *Vogue* draws on a magical feminine narrative of mothers as they instil their children with care for the environment due to their ‘passion’, much like Bündchen, McCartney and Firth. This also overturns *Vogue*’s discursive generational divides between the young who ‘know better' and the 'outdated' mothers. *Vogue* attempts to rewrite this narrative now that young women are problematic and create tensions for the projects of consumer capitalism.

The digital cover features videos of each young activist as they explain their views on the climate crisis. Chasinghorse speaks about her inability to *not* be involved in protecting her sacred indigenous homeland from fossil fuel extraction. She states she "had to be a part of that movement" and has lobbied and visited Congress. Bastida argues that there is a disparity between the people who are learning about the climate crisis in the Global North versus those experiencing it in the Global South. She claims that "activism is about questioning what is wrong in this space and how can we make it better", and their optimism comes from hope and stubbornness. Again, *Vogue* conjures their 'passion' for the environment rather than drawing on the change they are advocating for and their knowledge on the topics. For example, in 2020, Bastida gave a TED Talk and spoke at COP26 in 2021. The accomplishments are overridden by a discussion of optimism and Chasinghorse's connection to sacred lands. Again, *Vogue* emphasises their 'passion' over their skills and makes their activism hopeful rather than challenging, conjuring discourses of magical femininity, the 'good Native' and Western women's split from nature.

The emphasis on ethnic minorities or indigenous young activists in *Vogue* can be viewed as a decolonisation of the text and the consumption of 'exotic' cultures. Ritchie (2021: 62) highlights the frustration felt by young indigenous activists when most of the attention was given to Greta Thunberg at a UN conference. The research showcases how young Māori climate activists have a deep connection with environmentalism, one that is embedded in their language and belief systems but is often ignored by politicians and the media for white activists. *Vogue* is clearly sensitive to these critiques that the voices of white, Eurocentric activists are overemphasised and include Bastida and Chasinghorse to diversify and alter this. However, the interviews do not fully explore how Bastida and Chasinghorse's communities are impacted by climate change. In Ritchie's work, there is a deep analysis of indigenous thinking on the harm to their environments as it is reported that indigenous communities are less than 5% of the world's population but they protect 80% of global biodiversity (p.55). *Vogue*, on the other hand, emphasises their positive 'hope' for the future rather than the negative harm to their environments and communities. Bastida offers a peaceful connection with brands and older generations, whereas Chasinghorse's inclusion in the fashion world situates her as non-threatening. The climate activists, therefore, do not pose a threat in *Vogue* magazine, and they can be consumed safely. The magazine does not explain the causes of North-South divides in terms of climate change that is related to Northern consumption and consumer culture. As a result, *Vogue* continues to distance how global North consumerism impacts the global South's environmental degradation. Therefore, their inclusion of indigenous voices is not an attempt to decolonise and explain unequal power structures but to be *seen* to consider diverse voices.

When representing the indigenous girls, the magazine does not engage with beliefs that challenge Western anthropocentric thinking. Ritchie (2021: 56-7) highlights that post-anthropocentric thinking in Māori communities' positions humans as genealogically connected with other living creatures and humans have an obligation to support and protect the land, rivers, oceans, and those that inhabit them. Porter (2014: 30) explains that indigenous approaches "to space, place, land, and to the environment have tended to be and to remain wholly different from those of Euro-Americans". However, in *Vogue*, the young climate activists are (re)presented as complicit with capitalism and Western modes of thinking. As a result, they are safely consumed as exotic otherness that does not pose a threat to the West.

It is also a form of cultural omnivorousness (Peterson, 1992; in Warde et al., 2007), as *Vogue* readers are introduced to different ethnicities and cultures, but in a way that does not challenge dominant Western thinking. Cultural omnivorousness is "being redefined as the appreciation of all distinctive leisure activities and creative forms along with the appreciation of the classic fine arts" (Peterson & Simkus, 1992: 252). The 'cultural omnivore' has "become popular to highlight a new pattern of taste (and distinction) characterised by its openness towards different kinds of cultural expressions including highbrow and lowbrow" (p.1121). Lamont and Molnár (2002) also highlight the symbolic boundary-making that creates inclusion and exclusion that distinguish objects, people, practices, and even time and space. When applied to ethnic boundaries, Wimmer (2013: 29) notes the difference between assimilation and ethnic boundaries. Assimilation explains that integration takes place when cultural difference diminishes. However, boundary-making views integration as a process of shifting ethnic boundaries and allows the investigation of socially constructed distinctions of 'the other'. Parzer and Astleithner's (2018) study on immigrant supermarkets in Western European cities showed that the purchase, use, and appropriation of goods and services associated with 'other cultures' is sometimes referred to as 'cosmopolitan consumption' (Beck, 2006).

Therefore, rather than displaying social superiority through highbrow consumption, it is the wide array of cultural consumption that distinguishes superiority. Cultural omnivores partake in both high and popular culture but also include 'other' cultures. As a result, *Vogue*'s inclusion of 'exotic' or ethnic minority voices can be viewed as a part of cultural omnivorousness rather than decolonising the magazine's narrative. As the ethnic minorities or indigenous people interviewed are not fully given a voice to discuss their culture, but only represented in a way that supports Western hegemonic ideologies, they can be viewed as included for exotic cultural consumption purposes.

Another issue that the eco-chic celebrity and the youth climate activist raise is spectacular environmentalisms. In their work, Goodman et al. (2016), and Gunderson (2018) explain how spectacular environmentalisms frame how individuals, society, and humans "should not just think about the environment but also how we should relate to it" (Goodman et al., 2016: 680). The authors highlight that "environmental meanings are constructed and negotiated across space [and] place" that involve "assemblages of science, media, culture, environment, and politics" (p.678). The term 'spectacle' evokes Debord's theories where the spectacle reshapes physical places to promote consumerism, social control, and market expansion (Gunderson, 2018: 259). 'Green' celebrities are an important aspect of the construction of meaning of the environment. They often speak for and in the name of nature, but do they "distract, diffuse, and dissemble or do they raise interest and awareness to the point of effective change?" (Goodman et al., 2016: 680). Under Frankfurt School thinking, green celebrities would be seen as figures to entertain us into complacency and inaction while reproducing unequal power relations that define the Anthropocene (ibid.).

Goodman and Littler (2013) highlight how the celebrity is 'individuated' from nature and the pollution of the industries they come from, such as filmmaking, should be considered. For instance, during the filming of *Titanic*, the chlorination of water in Poptla, Baja California in Mexico decimated fish stocks (Goodman & Littler, 2013: 5); yet Leonardo DiCaprio (who starred in the film) is known as an environmental activist. The power celebrities possess means they can shape the understandings of ecology and they are not simply 'caring' figures devoted to the transmission of messages about the environment (ibid.: 8). In their work, the scholars argue it is difficult to generalise the work of green celebrities, as some completely destroy the causes they claimed to support with a call for charity, and others are engaged in an informed and careful way (Littler, 2009; Goodman & Littler, 2013: 10). This section has shown how these 'green' celebrities and youth climate activists are provided with a platform to speak but do so in a way that supports the fashion industry and is not negative or critical about environmental narratives. Despite their level of activism, the individuals are filtered through postfeminist discourse and their support for consumer choices and brands is prioritised. Therefore, *Vogue* engages with a spectacle of environmentalism in a way that continues postfeminism and the projects of consumer capitalism.

7.2.2 Youthfulness, Femininity and Hope

In *Vogue* in April 2019, an article titled “Youthquake” investigated the *Youth v. Gov* case, a legal fight for the future generation (Vol. 209, Iss. 4: 178-9, 198-9).[30] The case argued that under the climate crisis, the US Constitution cannot be fulfilled as the people cannot enjoy a ‘life of liberty and prosperity’ on an unhabitable planet. The *Youth* lawyers, *Vogue* reports, are aiming to implement a set of policies that will transition the United States off fossil fuels filed in 2015. The young climate activists reportedly study their own case in their university classes. Kelsey Juliana, 23, who attends the University of Oregon claims that her professors ask her to skip her classes to speak in their lectures to educate their students and discuss her hope. She states that she has “to be an emotional and spiritual compass. They don’t want to take the time to understand what’s going on. [They’re like]: ‘Just tell me how to be happy!’” (ibid.: 198). Juliana articulates the pressure of being a young climate activist who must provide hope for others without seeming too aggressive. When the article does touch on climate issues, they quote that when one of the activists was born, the level of carbon in the atmosphere was at 370 parts per million and today we are at 400, scientists argue that “we’re in the danger zone until we drop to 350” (p.179). After this, the article focuses on the youth climate activist’s emotions throughout the trial rather than the environmental issue they are challenging.

The article highlights that several of the young girl activists had to shop at (fast fashion store) Forever21 as their luggage was lost when travelling to court. From this, *Vogue* portrays the young climate activists as political and passionate about their cause but brings their consumer practices into the discussion. By shopping at a fast fashion store, the article highlights that even environmentalists continue to engage in harmful consumption. The magazine does not inform whether they made this decision because they had no other option or if the young activists tend to shop in these stores.

---

[30] The official case is *Juliana v. United States*

However, it was included to construct an environmental activist as one that still purchases fast fashion, creating a contradictory image but one that prioritises neoliberal consumer capitalist values.

Taft (2020) explores ‘the girl activist’ and how she is represented in the media as a desirable contemporary figure in the context of inequality and climate crisis. The ‘girl activist’, in Taft’s view, contains a unique combination of hopefulness, harmlessness, and heroism (p.4). Though the link between youth and futurity has a much longer history (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015), in the past twenty years the role has increasingly shifted to girls (McRobbie, 2000) as hopefulness can be considered feminine, childish, and sweet (Solnit, 2004: 16; in Taft, 2020: 8). As a result, the girl activist can “resolve public anxieties about the future but, ironically, her potential for change is contained (Taft, 2020: 4). For example, when Eric Holthaus (a meteorologist and journalist) discussed youth climate strikers, he stated that: “It seems as though fearlessness among teenagers who haven’t yet reached voting age is one symptom of the cultural and environmental anxieties their generation is steeped in” (Taft, 2020: 8). These narratives and stories from adults emphasise young people’s leadership, and girls tend to be at the centre of these movements (p.9). Women’s fashion magazine *Elle* also featured an article titled “The World is Burning: These Girls are Fighting to Save It” and placed the girls as the carriers of optimism (ibid.). Despite their optimism and hope, however, the girl activist is observed as harmless in Taft’s research. The discourses of the ‘girl as saviour’ avoid conjuring images of revolutions, uprisings, or any radical transformation (p.10). Her research also highlights that Thunberg is allowed to be angry due to her whiteness, but Black girls can often be seen as a threat if they represent similar emotions and therefore become ignored. Instead, Latin and Indigenous American girls receive more attention, showing that “girl activists’ figuration as harmless is simultaneously racialised, gendered, and aged” (p.11).

In *Vogue*, the ‘girl activist’ is not positioned as harmless but as an active citizen-consumer ‘chooser’ who attends UN meetings and takes on the US Government in legal cases. Instead, the girl activist and the eco-chic celebrity are highlighted for their support of consumer culture and the fashion industry in *Vogue*. However, these figures are not presented as passive as they attend global political meetings, and their messages are popular on social media. The discourses view the continuation of consumer capitalism as a must, but their environmental politics encourage a more 'sustainable' approach to fashion and, as a consumer-citizen, they can 'choose' which brands meet ethics. It is through choosing to work with or support brands that are 'thinking about' their impact on the planet that these eco celebrities express their environmental politics.

From these eco-chic celebrities or youth activists, *Vogue* constructs a subjecthood that engages with a care for the environment without sacrificing style. Therefore, this figure is not the eco-mother that features in Littler's (2013) research who opposes the yummy-mummy, instead, the eco-chic celebrity is a mother who incorporates eco-politics and fashion and inspires her children. The inclusion of ethnic minority girls also allows *Vogue* to offer different types of cultural environmentalism to the reader, opening up consumption for the cultural omnivore rather than attempting to decolonise the document. A useful example of this is featured in the previous chapter where Quannah Chasinghorse argues she can sometimes include her indigenous dress in photoshoots, but *Vogue* does not allow this, and she strictly wears couture Western fashion. Instead, her indigenous culture is used as a way for *Vogue* to feature furs and feathers from high-fashion designers.

Overall, these sections on the eco-chic celebrity and youth climate activists highlight how new environmental yet fashionable subjecthoods are constructed in *Vogue* that blend the individual's politics with support for consumer capitalism. Sustainable fashion alternatives that are created through technological invention are viewed as a way to continue the consumption of stylish fashion and a continuation of consumer capitalist values. The eco-chic celebrities combine postfeminist narratives that not only support neoliberal celebrity values but also position them as entrepreneurs who support the belief that the solutions to the damage of the fashion industry are within consumer capitalism. At the same time, the women are represented through a lens of 'magical femininity', where they are passionate and have worked hard to be successful but do not challenge structures of sexism or capitalist destruction to the environment. Therefore, the postfeminist entanglement between neoliberal and feminist values is bound up with environmental values in *Vogue* magazine.

Also, the youth climate activists are transformed into celebrities in *Vogue*. In Taft's research, the 'girl activist' was passive whereas they are more active in *Vogue*. However, it is a postfeminist version of activeness that foregrounds consumer choices, is positive rather than negative, does not challenge structures, and focuses on individual action and passion. The young indigenous youth activists are used to allow *Vogue* to represent themselves as a magazine that listens to diverse voices and helps the visibility of ethnic minorities. The aim is not to decolonise the document, however, as the young indigenous women support anthropocentrism and do not challenge capitalist modes of thinking. Instead, the youth activists support consumer capitalism and even model for brands that they deem are authentic and align with their environmental morals. From this, the young women are transformed into eco-chic celebrities and help to authenticate brands and support the projects of consumer capitalism. The analysis shows how environmental politics and values are entangled with postfeminist discourses that continue to promote neoliberalism, the projects of consumer capitalism, and do not challenge these structures. In turn, *Vogue* creates tensions for environmental politics as they propel a lifestyle of environmental care that does not engage with an ethics of care but an aesthetic that supports consumer capitalism and the continuation of harmful practices within the fashion industry.

7.3 Capitalism Can Save the West!

The previous sections explored the types of subjecthoods constructed in *Vogue* that contain a postfeminist entanglement with environmental politics. In the following section, I analyse the green marketing that is featured in the magazine. Here, I will investigate the reliance on 'sustainable' production and manufacturing as one of the ways the fashion industry can be 'saved' in *Vogue*. The adverts and articles highlight which companies and brands are attempting to create environmentally friendly alternatives. The brands that are featured can be seen as a part of the 'authentic' sustainable promotional consumerism that the citizen-consumer figure can choose from if they wish to support environmentally friendly brands or not. One of the ways popular fashion brands emphasised their commitment to creating 'sustainable' fashion was by changing one part of the production processes to be 'greener'. Scholars argue this is common as companies compartmentalise their 'green benefits' by showing an 'improvement' in one area of the supply chain that they can advertise to consumers (in Sailer et al., 2022: 1). Rather than saving the planet, however, environmental issues have constructed boundaries in *Vogue* and the degradation of faraway countries are seen to not impact America and should certainly not impact Western norms, values, and practices.

7.3.1 Sustainable Production

In *Vogue*, brands advertised that they improved one area of the supply chain to showcase their commitment to sustainable fashion production. In April 2013, an article titled 'Style Ethics' by Lindsay Talbot informed readers about H&M's new environmental line (Vol.203, Iss.4: 204). The article announces the introduction of H&M's 'garment recycling scheme', the first of its kind in the industry, that aims to prevent worn items from being wasted. The magazine states that due to H&M's reputation as a fast fashion chain, which goes "hand-in-hand with high wardrobe turnover", the initiative is a solution (p.204). The recycling scheme operated by giving customers H&M vouchers to spend in-store for any bag of unwanted clothing. The article states that the company have also invested millions of dollars into water-conservation strategies and has been the biggest user of organic cotton for the last two years (ibid.). The article showcases H&M's new 'Conscious Exclusive' line that creates 'sustainable' garments inspired by old Hollywood evening wear. They are made from organic materials, recycled fibres, and new silk alternatives (ibid.). The author speaks to the H&M sustainability expert, Catarina Midby, who claims they have "evolved quite a bit from the rough, tree-hugger palettes we started with in the nineties" (ibid.). H&M created a line of formal eveningwear to show that sustainable clothing could be 'fashionable'. The statement from Midby constructs environmentally conscious clothing as 'unfashionable' and not a part of the fashion woman's subjecthood. Due to this constructed opposition between fashion and environmental values, H&M bridge a gap between eco-conscious clothing and fashionable clothing. The company seek to make sustainability a goal of their production of clothing which eases the critique towards them as a fast fashion company that is harming the planet. The recycling initiative also helps bring customers into the store and gives them a financial incentive to purchase more clothes, turning the scheme into a profit opportunity.

On their website, H&M announced in January 2017 that since 2013 the recycling initiative has collected over 40,000 tonnes of clothing (H&M Group, 2017). In March 2022, McCourt wrote that H&M manufacture an estimated three billion garments each year (Eco-Stylist, 2022). However, the Changing Markets Foundation found that the Conscious Collection contained more synthetic fibres than the main collection (Edie Newsroom, 2021). Eco-Stylist (2022) also reports that H&M collaborated with Billie Eilish to create "edgy and sustainable merch" which they claimed was 100% sustainable without any evidence to support it. McCourt summarises that H&M's greenwashing and sustainable goals simply create 'solutions' to problems they have created for the environment. On top of the environmental destruction, H&M promised that nearly one million workers would be paid a living wage by 2018 but there is no evidence to support that this happened. As a result, much like the celebrity environmentalists, *Vogue* promotes a stylish woman's subjecthood that incorporates environmentalist 'care' that doesn't challenge the fashion industry. Through greenwashing, customers can continue stylish practices with the added benefit of believing they are not contributing to the global climate crisis and maintaining hope in the fashion industry. *Vogue* constructed a stylish woman's subjecthood that has the ability to continue fashionable practices while trusting companies like H&M's claims to create a sustainable fast fashion industry. H&M's (un)sustainable initiatives work to fill a 'gap' in the market for fashionable, eco-conscious, cheap clothing. In a sense, by creating recycled, Hollywood-inspired eveningwear, they democratise 'ethical' consumption for the fashionable subjecthood in *Vogue*. In the magazine, style must always come before the environment and values of consumer culture are prioritised over environmental issues. It is important to note that the promotional sustainable consumerism in *Vogue* prioritises a stylish subjecthood first and 'sustainability' second marketing. Therefore, H&M is not attempting to create sustainable clothing but to make 'ethical' consumption more accessible and available to fashionable subjects.

Vogue featured a small article that offered some fashionable products to readers seeking sustainable options. Titled 'Now and Forever' (Sept 2019, Vol.209, Iss.9: 558-9), seven different pieces of clothing are listed under the heading 'Sustainability", including shoes, a handbag, and jewellery. The feature stated: "Consuming responsibly means not only buying less but buying better. More and more brands are making that easy by creating clothing that minimizes waste without sacrificing cool" (p.562). The article does not inform the reader how the items are sustainable but simply lists the high price and where they can be bought online, no materials or production information is included. *Vogue*, therefore, emphasises fashionable pieces without evidence that informs how or why they could be considered as a sustainable alternative. The previous construction of an eco-chic subjecthood through individuals, such as Gisele Bündchen or Xiye Bastida, displayed a part of their politics as citizen-consumers as choosing to support brands that aligned with their politics and morals, gaining authenticity and boosting brand authenticity under promotional sustainable consumerism. Also, the previously mentioned youth activists who shopped at the fast fashion chain Forever 21 continue to support the stylish environmentalist's ability to buy from fast fashion companies like H&M. Therefore, *Vogue* attempts to construct a stylish woman who cares about the environment but can also put style first, continue harmful consumption habits and engage with fast fashion brands. Much like postfeminism, wider environmental politics becomes an aesthetic that can be consumed and features hopeful messages that make the political and structural realities seem easier to tackle and can be discussed with a more positive outlook.

7.3.2 A Problem for the 'Other'

In some discussions of the environment, *Vogue* highlights how production usually takes place in 'other' countries and therefore the issues of pollution from manufacturing or resource depletion are viewed as faraway issues. For instance, in 'Closet Case' in the May 2007 issue of *Vogue* (which featured a large section on sustainability) they highlight Viridis, a company that uses hemp in their clothing as an Earth-friendly option as it can flourish without pesticides and replenishes soil. Though cultivating it in the US is illegal, the company look towards China as they are investing in sustainable agriculture. Here, the company highlights using China as their site of material, a faraway location to produce 'sustainable' clothes which normalise the global aspect of fashion and labour. In the same issue, *Vogue* featured an article titled 'Can Jeans be Green' (Vol.197, Iss.5: 136, 138) which discusses the difficulty in making sustainable, eco-friendly jeans and the steps the fashion industry is taking to attempt it. In one section of the article, they argue that the aim of creating jeans is to ensure they are stylish first and then improving the destruction they cause to natural resources. For instance, Caroline Calvin, Levi's creative director claims that "The first thought is, that's a beautiful jean. *And* it's organic" (p.138). The article discusses that stonewashing jeans means extracting stone from the earth which is highly destructive and illegal in some parts of the US. It also explains that tons of water drawn in the laundries must be purified on-site and reused, or neutralised of chemicals, and not run off into the ocean to create an eco-friendlier jean. The amount of travel involved in making jeans, from Turkey to L.A., to Mexico and finally to the shop in Manhattan. The articles emphasise how globalised the fashion industry is but when it comes to manufacturing of garments, this takes place in locations far away from the US audience, such as China and Turkey. As a result, the 'other' countries take part in the production (that is illegal in the US) and suffer from the pollution from manufacturing so that stylish women in the West can wear new styles. However, it is new production methods, such as growing hemp or finding innovative ways of using bamboo-cotton blends or recycled denim to create more eco-friendly jeans, that will help reduce the impact on the 'other' countries. For these reasons, *Vogue* constructs environmental issues as far-away concerns that can be saved by fashion designer's innovation and scientific experiments.

For instance, in a September 2019 issue, *Vogue* showcased designers who are focusing on sustainability (Vol.209, Iss.9: 494-99, see Figure 21). The article stated: "As we give greater importance to sustainability in our lives, a whole new generation of designers is upcycling fashion's past for a chic and responsible future" (p.495). The 6-page spread contains models wearing different outfits, the first two pages show models on a rooftop garden picking herbs in luxury clothing. On the next two pages, the models stand in front of huge cubes of pressed recycled plastic and paper. The caption: "It *is* rather easy being green, after all" (p.496). The first outfit is a dress from Marine Derre made from cotton bedsheets and the next is a Stella McCartney patchwork coat made from organic cotton "grown without toxic pesticides or synthetic fertilizers" and sustainable viscose, priced at $650. What makes the viscose sustainable is not explained. The models both wear Everlane's "carbon-neutral leather sneakers with recycled-rubber outsoles" (ibid.). The final spread features models standing in a shallow river.

FIGURE 20: US *VOGUE*, WEAR DO WE GO FROM HERE?:ON THE UP, SEPT 2019

The caption states that the first model is dressed in a Creatures of the Wind one-piece (priced at $1,175) with Everlane flats, the outer soles were produced from eight recycled plastic bottles. The next model wears a $2,200 Alanna Josephine slip dress made with vintage linen handkerchiefs that were stitched together and dyed with the skins and pits of organic avocados. The Bode shirt was made from antique tablecloths and cost $445 (p.498). The brands are priced high and focus on the materials that are used but the entire supply chain is not discussed. The emphasis on recycled materials makes use of a throwaway culture rather than challenging fashion cycles that create the throwaway culture. However, waste is seen as a Western problem that can be easily fixed by corporations through recycling, whereas matters such as water waste or climate degradation are viewed as problems for the 'Rest' of the world. The environment and natural resources are not discussed as an interlinked ecology but as problems that have borders.

Chantecaille skincare (Jan 2018, Vol.208, Iss.1, see Figure 22) shows another way that some companies engage with environmental issues by offering a solution through further consumption. The advert provides two skincare products, the first is an 'Anti-Pollution Finishing Essence' (99% Naturals), and the second is an 'Anti-Pollution Mattifying Cream' (89% Naturals) (p.11). The advert states that "Soot. Smog. Smoke. They're in the air, but they shouldn't be in your skin", they emphasise that "pollution advances the ageing process" but their formulas use "revolutionary botanical ingredients to form an instant barrier against the damaging effects of urban pollutants" (ibid.). Here, the idea that pollution is harmful to women's skin as it ages them is the main focus, rather than an environmental concern, the advert takes a patriarchal view on women's upkeep of youth and beauty. The product is offered as a 'solution' to the pollution within cities and therefore, the pollution in a city is seen as a norm that cannot be fixed, it is normalised that the stylish woman must invest in skincare to protect herself from the 'ageing' properties of pollution within the city. The response to the climate crisis here is to simply consume products to protect from the consequences of modern life.

Figure 21: US *Vogue*, Chantecaille, Jan 2018

The brand Chantecaille is mentioned in an article in *Vogue* from May 2007 titled 'Eco-ethical Chic' (Vol.179. Iss.5: 130). The director argues the eco movement "used to be very Kumbaya" but "now we realise that we can't change everything". The statement offers a sense of deradicalization and instead, her family's company focuses on the coral destruction crisis by donating a percentage of profits made from selling a fake coral mirror to the Pew Institute for Ocean Science's Reefs of Hope project. The company therefore switched to Cause Related Marketing (CRM) and deradicalize their environmentalism.

When the environmental problems in the West are mentioned, such as polluted cities and a throwaway culture, the issues are solved by further consumption and fashion designer innovation. As a result, the environmental problem is constructed as an issue for a distant place. The Western woman is far away from these issues and can only 'fix' them through consumer capitalism or CRM. A climate emergency is not viewed as an issue that interconnects all human and non-human entities but one that affects those at a distance. The stylish Western woman is constructed as separate from nature and has scientific innovation and consumer products to protect her from the harms of climate destruction. As a result, under promotional sustainable consumerism, it is the West that is protected and the 'other' is a secondary concern or not a concern at all. Therefore, there are further complexities to how promotional sustainable consumption operates and *who* it values as authentic or worthy of promotion. The narratives in *Vogue* show that there are imperial discourses embedded in promotional sustainable consumerism as the West will be protected from climate change by technology and only suffer from issues of waste due to overconsumption. On the other hand, countries outside the US are the ones that produce and suffer the consequences of damaging environments. Therefore, to gain brand legitimacy, they donate to charities that support coral reefs and environments outside the US that need help. From this, the West is constructed as protected and the 'rest' of the world suffers the damages. Environments are bound to human borders and not viewed as an ecology that is interdependent or connected. However, the global and interdependent aspects of the fashion industry, production, and labour is easily understood and discussed in the magazine.

7.3.3. Sustainable Travel

Another way that *Vogue* construct the Western stylish woman as apart from nature and one who can continue to engage with the pleasures of consumerism while also caring for the environment is through sustainable travel opportunities. In an article titled 'Eco Chambers' in the January 2022 issue, five different luxury eco-hotels/spas are advertised and discussed. The subheading states: "From Mexico to Ibiza, a new class of destination spas is connecting the dots between self-care and sustainability" (Vol.212, Iss.1: 18, 20). This hotel is designed around a large *Higuera blanca* (white fig tree) in Mexico that pays homage to the Cora and Huichol cultures and features a Mayan sweat lodge to "stimulate detoxification, heal the body and stimulate the mind" (p.18). Other hotels featured on the following pages include the Vana spa in India, the Ritz-Carlton in the Maldives, the Edge spa in Utah, and the Six Senses in Ibiza. The spas are praised for their eco-friendly and sustainable aspects, such as using responsibly sourced materials, low energy consumption (through solar heating or rainwater recycling), using patented water-purification processes, and no single-use plastics or waste-reducing initiatives during the stay (p.20).

The luxury retreats allow the wealthy to safely experience nature in a man-made, leisure environment. The discussion constructs the idea that Westerners are disconnected from nature and can engage with luxury travel to 'reconnect'. Modern technology allows for the sustainable collection of energy to run the properties and the exaggerated use of the natural environment continues to evoke the idea of travel that is not harmful to the planet. Luxury sustainable travel indicates environmental privilege in the West and represents the discourse that capitalism and environmentalism can co-exist (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020: 354). Park and Pellow's (2011) work on the Aspen affluent holiday and ski destination in the USA shows that "green consumers can maintain their high-status lifestyle while supporting environmental causes (p.37). The ability for this logic to remain unchallenged, in their view, is due to the alienation between the wealthy Global North and the outsourced, exploited Global South. Due to globalisation's spread of production around the world, those in the West can undertake a type of denial towards climate crisis and social exploitation. As a result, the ability for sustainable luxury travel to exist is a possibility. In *Vogue*, they uphold narratives and discourses that separate the impact of the Global North's consumption on the Global South which continues to construct environments as separated and bound by national borders.

7.4 Fashion and Politics in *Vogue*

In October 2020, *Vogue* reflected on the entangling between fashion and politics with a feature titled "Can Fashion be Political?" (Vol.210, Iss.10: 86-90, 124-5). The subheading answers the question with "**Always** – but now more than ever. As the world undergoes radical **transformation**, Maya Singer looks at how the industry is reckoning with **momentous** and much-needed **change**" (p.87).[31] In the article, *Vogue* covers the impact of fashion, from fashion designers to political movements such as Black Lives Matter and contemporary feminism, sweatshop workers in the US, charity initiatives, and fast fashion. The fashion industry is a $2.5 trillion global business that employs more than "1.8 million people in the US alone before COVID-19 reached our shores" (ibid.). Fashion is claimed to span from the red carpet to sweatshops in Bangladesh and Los Angeles, and is responsible for as much as 10 per cent of annual global carbon emissions. The author claims that fashion "conjures society's dreams, challenges its norms, and reflects back what it believes about itself" and yet the question persists "*Can fashion be political?* To which the proper reply must be: Wasn't it always?" (ibid.). *Vogue* frames designers as a part of contemporary "social consciousness and environmental concerns" as they work to make their designs political, "from the fantasies spun on the runway down to the nuts and bolts of how collections are produced". As a result, it's announced that "these designers aren't just making clothes – alongside activists and organizers, they're making *change*. And that's a selling point" (ibid.). The article continues to explain that the politics of clothes can come in the form of buying one of "Off-White's *I Support Young Black Business* T-shirts – with a quarter going to the anti-gun violence organization Chicago CRED – to not buying much of anything at all out of a dedication to sustainability" (p.87).

---

[31] Bold is original.

Later, the article discusses designer Marine Serre's political focus on the climate as "she dedicates at least 50 per cent of her runway collection to upcycled clothes – creating a slick frock out of vintage Fair Isle sweaters sourced from the Netherlands" and her current collection "imagines new communities emerging, phoenix-like, from a burning world" (p.88). Next, Christian Dior's 2019 'We Should All be Feminists' T-shirts are mentioned as a way for the brand to dissociate itself from its traditional 1947 New Look of traditional post-war femininity. Maria Grazia Chirui, who took over Dior in 2016, argues that she had to declare the fashion house, and her own, need to step away from the stereotype of women by integrating feminist ideas in a way of keeping Dior's heritage relevant" (ibid.). Here, the designer uses 'modern' politics to rebrand and remain relevant without engaging with feminist politics.

Vogue talks to Romero Vasquez, a mother of four who has worked in L.A. in garments factories "since she arrived from Guatemala 19 years ago – and still makes only about $300 a week". In *Vogue*, issues of labour exploitation in fashion (specifically fast fashion) "have languished in the shadow of glitzier conversations about what we wear and why" (p.89). Livia Firth is quoted in the article claiming that many people do not know who made their clothes, where, and how, arguing that the "newest form of political fashion is to be able to tell that story" (ibid.). As a result, *Vogue* states that labour conditions are relevant to consider, for instance, pro-feminist T-shirts that may have been made by a woman in a sweatshop. In the magazine, economic justice is defined as "the right to consume – and the right for garment workers to earn a living wage" that has been set in competition with each other, as if "low-income Americans don't deserve stylish clothes" (p.125). The discourse here is supported by a democratic right to choose (Gabriel & Lang, 1995). *Vogue* states that poor Americans do not need access to cheaper clothes but more money, arguing that "where inequality is concerned, money is both the problem and the solution. The rest is noise" (ibid.). For the magazine, the solution to the inequalities in the fashion industry is higher wages so that more people can consume higher-paid clothes. The solution to the problems of fashion consumption, for *Vogue*, is by continuing the consumption of fashion trends at a higher price that does not risk exploiting people. *Vogue* promotes its own agenda of luxury fashion as the solution. The discussion of sustainable clothing is disregarded in this section as low-paid workers are seen as a separate issue, rather than entangled within the world of fast fashion waste and high fashion trends that cause it.

Next, *Vogue* explores how politics is at risk of becoming 'fashionable' and subject to "fashion's trend metabolism". Naomi Klein, author of *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies"*, states that fashion wants novelty, but movements need time. Klein argues that fashion needs unionised workers who can fight against unsafe conditions and pay, but adds "How do you force brands to uphold that right?" (ibid.). The article quickly moves onto Livia Firth's advocation for individuals to consider the 'story' of a garment and focus on brands to align their businesses with these values. *Vogue* presents examples of designers who adopt politically friendly initiatives, such as Comey is highlighted for allowing (diverse) staff paid leave to vote and pledging a proportion of their proceeds to organizations supporting Black Lives Matter, even during the pandemic where their "own bottom lines had been shattered". Following this, *Vogue* highlighted the three-day '7th on Sale' bazaar during the 1990 recession to raise money for the fight for AIDS. In the September 1990 issue, the ‘7th on Sale’ event is described by *Vogue* as a “consumer’s dream store of new (and vintage) designer clothing from every fashion category for men, women, and children” (Vol.180, Iss.9: 514). The 1990 event features a “star-studded dinner for five hundred (a $1,000 ticket also guarantees first dibs on shopping)” (ibid.). The event encourages charity through the consumption of fashion, similar to CRM (cause-related marketing), where the consumer benefits from a new product *and* a morale boost from doing a good thing which benefits the brand’s reputation and sales. The article engages with unions as a body of power to change, but quickly diverts the discussion to corporations who have engaged with fair pay and fashionable charity-raising initiatives. Here, *Vogue* presents the right to fair pay, voting, and charity through consumption as the ‘good’ side of the fashion industry. However, how this justice can be implemented globally or legally is considered a difficult task.

Dana Thomas’ (2019) book *Fashionpolis* reports that in 2018, the average American shopper bought 68 garments – more than one item of clothing per week” (p.124). For *Vogue*, this highlights whether “companies have boosted production to meet consumers’ apparently insatiable appetite has been whetted by the vast increase in goods on offer (Zara alone produces about 450 million garments each year) – but the follow-up question is the same: *What are we going to do with all this stuff?*”. The article turns to second hand fashion as one of the solutions, which is noted as popular with Gen Z. A McKinsey report informed that within a decade the resale market “could be larger than that of fast fashion – a cheering prospect if you fret about the millions of tons of apparel dumped in landfills annually” (p.124). Other solutions in the article include upcycling by retrieving fibres from fabrics to make new ones. *Vogue* continue that “for shoppers, this means fewer discounts and more saving up for beautiful clothes – a forgotten habit we might all relearn” (p.124). The writer also claims that we will see high fashion designers “continuing the process the streetwear revolution began, creatively reimagining staple items and dispensing with the idea that every new collection must erase the last” (ibid.). Again, *Vogue* avoids linking the discussions together, separating fast fashion waste, low wages, and high turnover of fashion trends. As a result, each industry appears to have a 'solution', such as recycling, but recycling fast fashion clothing does not consider the low-paid garment workers that make it. Structural discussions are engaged with but in isolated ways meaning that any 'solutions' to fashion cannot address all areas but focus on one part of the issue at hand.

7.5 Conclusion

Overall, the analysis has shown how *Vogue* has responded to tensions between the practices of the fashion industry and the harms caused by this industry. One element of this tension is the construction of eco-conscious fashion as antonymous with fashionable subjecthoods in *Vogue*. To stay modern and relevant, the magazine must engage with these concerns for the planet, but it does so in a variety of ways. Firstly, the analysis revealed the way *Vogue* constructed the eco-chic subjecthood to bridge the tensions between fashionable hedonist ideologies and environmentally conscious consumption practices that are constructed as unstylish (as seen in Littler's 2013 work on the yummy-mummy whose consumer practices are in opposition with the 'eco-mum'). Through the celebrity eco-chic environmentalist, the magazine is able to showcase an subjecthood for women to engage with the wider politics of caring for the environment but continue to prioritise style and beauty. The eco-chic celebrity is sometimes bound up with a Western wellness culture, where middle-class women adopt Eastern spirituality and combine it with a neoliberal emphasis on a disciplined body and mind. Or the eco-chic subjecthood is linked to a postfeminist, entrepreneurial opportunity of sustainability as a new market and innovation in this area of fashion. There are elements of magical femininity in these subjecthoods as they are passionate and emotional about causes that matter to them but are translated as non-threatening or people who deeply challenge structures.

In addition to the eco-chic celebrity, young climate activists are included in *Vogue* to showcase their ability to engage with a younger generation and remain relevant. The magazine struggles with the glorification of youthful women as younger generations begin to protest for the future of the environment. However, the young girl activist interviews emphasise their support for the fashion industry over their activism or their success, aiding promotional sustainable consumerism's reliance on authenticity for brands and consumers. The focus on indigenous girls can be viewed as an attempt to decolonise youth climate discussions (following the critiques of Greta Thunberg's whiteness), but *Vogue* instead offers their cultures as an opportunity for the cultural omnivore reader to consume rather than engage with ideologies that may challenge Western capitalism. *Vogue* distances the harms of the fashion industry and environmental issues are constructed as problems for 'other' people who are 'closer to nature'. The young indigenous climate activist is one of the intersections created by this tension as she is affected by the climate crisis as an 'other' but can support the values of consumer capitalism as someone who lives in America. Under promotional sustainable consumerism, brands attempt to offer authentic environmental claims for consumers to buy, which in turn creates authenticity for the buyer. In *Vogue*, this operates with the eco-chic celebrity and the youth climate activist as their support for brands (or creation of a brand) encourages their authenticity. However, the authenticity of their environmentalism is a secondary aim as style comes first for the stylish subjecthood, even the eco-conscious ones.

Vogue upholds dominant notions of the climate emergency as something humans can tackle with technology and sustainable practices as a new category for consumption, not to be taken seriously. Where this may fail, the white, middle-class Western consumer can be protected due to their split from nature and commodity innovation, such as pollution barrier skin creams, and the 'other' is left to suffer. The critiques towards the fashion industry are divided into separate discussions that have 'solutions' that do not involve a downscaling of consuming clothes but alternatives to consume more and without guilt. This is an aspect of promotional sustainable consumerism that is not explored within consumer culture studies but adds complexity to contemporary gendered marketing and consumer values. The tensions within *Vogue* are subverted or seen as an opportunity to create new practices for consumption norms rather than challenge them.

8. Conclusion

The thesis has investigated how wider political issues, feminisms, and environmentalisms, have been entangled with consumer capitalist values and projects in US *Vogue* magazine. Over time, this entanglement has shaped and reshaped what it means to be a fashionable, stylish woman in the West and women's subjecthoods. The thesis takes inspiration from McRobbie and Gill's analysis of postfeminism as an entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist values. Postfeminism can also be defined as an entanglement with neoliberalism. The thesis considered whether consumer capitalist values have been underemphasised in previous studies and interrogated whether these projects play a larger role in this entanglement. I analysed the history of the entanglement and how contemporary postfeminism, which emphasises women's empowerment through neoliberal values and consumer cultural values, can operate under environmental concerns and an ethics of care for non-humans.

The literature review highlighted the challenges in critical postfeminist cultural studies and consumer culture theory. Firstly, postfeminist cultural studies have presented ahistorical analyses that can overlook a longer history of an acceptance and repudiation of feminist values in women's consumer cultural discourse. An ahistorical understanding of contemporary feminisms risks an oversimplification of arguments and an underdeveloped analysis of the uniqueness of contemporary postfeminism. This can be exemplified in the overemphasis on neoliberalism. Secondly, theories of consumer culture and consumption have adopted a perspective of 'the consumer' that is non-gendered, and this overlooks gendered dimensions and feminist analyses of the projects and trajectories of consumer capitalism. The postfeminist subject can highlight how contemporary constructions of 'the consumer' are complexly gendered, aged, classed, and racialised within power structures.

In this chapter, I begin by discussing the findings that were analysed in relation to research questions 1 and 2 (section 8.1) that explore subjecthood and definitions of the fashionable woman in *Vogue* magazine. These questions seek to understand how values of consumer capitalism and constructions of women's freedoms entangle over time, showing a longer history of feminist acceptance and repudiation in women's consumer culture. In the following section, 8.2, I discuss the analysis related to research questions 3 and 4. These research questions focus on the tensions between wider political issues and values of consumer culture. They also focus on the impact tensions have on gendered consumption norms and values, which provides feminist insights that aid the non-gendered discussions of 'the consumer'. In section 8.3, I relate the findings to the issues of ahistoricism, postfeminist values, and how this research builds a more-than-human attentiveness. Finally, I provide an overview of the main contributions of the thesis in section 8.4, highlighting how the analysis has contributed to the understanding of postfeminism, gendered consumer capitalism, and how entanglement has offered a unique tool to think with feminisms and environmentalisms.

Research Questions:

1. What subjecthoods are constructed for women in *Vogue* during the 20th/21st centuries in relation to a) feminist politics and b) environmental/ethical concerns?
2. How do wider political and cultural issues come to inform definitions of what a fashionable woman is?
3. What tensions arise between the values of consumer capitalism and a) feminist politics, and b) environmental politics during the periods of liberation and environmental/ethical concern?
4. How do the tensions between values of consumer capitalism and wider political issues entangle and impact gendered consumption norms and values?

8.1 Subjecthood and the Fashionable Woman in US *Vogue*

Subjecthood is a central aspect of the analysis as it combines both feminist tools of understanding how ideas of femininity are constructed and tools from consumer cultural theory that engage with the construction of 'the consumer'. Subjecthood shapes how individuals view themselves as 'consumers' and women, but these are constantly in flux and are contextually specific. I discovered a variety of subjecthoods across the 20th and 21st century for middle and upper-class women from pursuing Research Question 1. Exploring the subjecthoods that were/are constructed in *Vogue* during periods of women's liberation and environmental/ethical concern also allowed for an analysis of how these wider political issues came to inform definitions of what a fashionable woman is.

In Chapter 4 on The 'Modern' Corset, the early 20th century featured the construction of a 'modern woman' subjecthood that followed a period of women's suffrage in the USA. Feminists and doctors critiqued the corset during the late 19th and early 20th century, arguing that the garment limited women's movement and led to a variety of health problems. Following the decline in corset-wearing practices, corset manufacturers emphasised the comfort and flexibility of the corset due to these critiques. The analysis revealed that *Vogue* constructed new narratives for the demise of the corset. For instance, *Vogue* suggested that it was the material shortages during the First World War that scaled back feminine ostentatious dressing of the 19th century and led to the demise of the corset. In the 1910s and 1920s, the straighter silhouette was introduced and replaced the traditional hourglass figure that required a 'new' corset. The straight figure was, at first, inspired by dress reform but became more commonly associated with the flapper subculture of the Jazz Age. This shows how the style was first inspired by feminist politics but was later associated with a new, commodified subjecthood for women.

The ‘modern’ corset in *Vogue* was worn by the newly constructed ‘modern woman’. The ‘traditional’ corset featured laces that women would tighten to shrink women’s waists, whilst the ‘modern’ corset was made with ‘modern' materials, such as elastic, to shrink the wearer’s waist and hips. There is a shift from using whalebone (animals in fashion) towards more synthetic materials. As a result, the projects of modernity that are linked to consumer capitalist production highlight a link to the case study on fur where being ‘modern’ is represented by not using animal fur and, instead, faux fur made from synthetic fibres. In addition to this, *Vogue* constructed younger women as the leaders in fashion, juxtaposing this with older women who were ‘outdated’. The ‘modern’ corset was marketed (through the developing advertisement industry) as a garment that allowed for greater comfort and flexibility than the ‘traditional’ corset. The need for flexibility, however, was not discussed as a feminist value but translated in *Vogue* as a characteristic that made women look youthful. The new practices that required movement, such as dancing, riding a bike, driving a car, or increased movement in the public sphere, were reduced to a beautification of the body in the magazine. Women were invited to engage with modernity through commodities. Here, there is evidence of an entanglement between a freedom of movement (an aspect of feminist politics during this period) with consumer capitalist values of the ‘freedom to consume’ that fit in with patriarchal demands to be slim and look youthful. Therefore, elements of an entanglement between values of feminism and anti-feminism appear in history.

The fashionable woman, during the early 20th century, was invited to partake in modernity through the consumption of commodities but was also encouraged to scrutinise her body. Due to the emerging standardisation and mass production of garments, women had to find corset ‘styles’ that fit their bodies rather than previous corsets that were made-to-measure. The new ‘styles’ were corset designs with different attributes that were marketed as ‘solutions’ for different body types. For instance, the styles of corsets for ‘slim’ women would be different from those for ‘large’ women. This categorisation of women’s bodies contributed to a commodification of the body and was combined with the idea that the body was like plastic and could be moulded by goods. The categorisations also diversified products and created new ‘needs’ for women’s bodies. For instance, the larger body ‘needed’ a corset that could shrink it and a brassiere to shrink the bust, aiding the diversification of products. The smaller body, on the other hand, had different ‘needs’ from the corset such as posture support. Overall, this shows how the changes in production shaped women’s consumer culture. The shift in production could be seen as the start of democratisation in fashion, which promoted a ‘benefit to the consumer’ but is a means of changing production and sales practices to reduce costs and increase sales. This chapter showed how *Vogue* combined feminist values with anti-feminist values, and created subjecthoods that developed the projects of consumer capitalism.

Chapter 5, The Miniskirt, showed how *Vogue*’s construction of a modern subjecthood that continued to emphasise a youthful, slim body. Also, aged categories were created that highlighted the idealisation of youth as an important feminine value. In this case study, there was an increasing sexualisation of the female body through visual means by revealing more skin and, eventually, nudity. The miniskirt was a fashionable item aimed at the new youth culture market, a market that emerged from a dissatisfaction with mid-century American lifestyles of domesticity and conformity. In the first half of the 20th century, entering adulthood imposed an expectation to get married and have children. However, new categories emerged in the mid-20th century for ‘young adults’ and ‘teenagers’, who delayed marriage and children, but also had earnings from paid work to invest in consumer commodities for their own gratification rather than for family and dependents. Second-wave feminist critiques of the housewife, such as *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), can be seen to have stimulated this thinking. From these wider cultural changes, *Vogue* created new fashionable subjecthoods for young women who were constructed as playful and carefree. She was sometimes referred to as a ‘girl’ and subverted previous feminine subjecthoods that were associated with Hollywood glamour. The youthful subjecthood came to influence what was acceptable for middle-class women and pushed boundaries to reveal the body with help from the miniskirt. The new market of men's magazines featured a similar sexualisation of women's bodies and an increase in nudity. Therefore, women's magazines followed a wider patriarchal cultural trend that featured women's nude bodies which highlights it as an anti-feminist value. For this reason, the revealing of women's bodies in *Vogue* created tensions for second-wave feminism.

Another tension that emerged from the miniskirt were narratives of age appropriateness which furthered the generational split between younger and older adult women. Younger women were encouraged to follow fashion by buying cheaper, clothing, and to reveal their bodies. This contrasted the constructed older, more sophisticated woman who was encouraged to purchase 'better' quality, more expensive items. *Vogue* entangled women's subjecthoods with the projects of consumer capitalism by diversifying and creating niche markets. In doing so, however, they contributed to women's age anxieties and developed gendered consumption norms and values. On one hand, the younger woman could engage with the increasing democratisation of fashion through cheaper items of clothing and new trends of sexualisation. On the other hand, older women (who were encouraged to reflect on the self and the body to judge where they fit on this age scale) were expected to engage with higher quality clothing and bound by constructions of feminine elegance. This split continued into the following case study on fur where the older, richer subjecthood is an anti-thesis of democratic fashion and modernity.

During a period where fur coats were protested against by animal rights groups, *Vogue* continued to support middle-class bourgeois feminine subjecthoods that promoted the use of animal fur in fashion. *Vogue* constructed a 'modern' fashionable woman who could still engage with a traditional bourgeois luxury commodity, despite the wider critiques. Animal rights activists constructed fur as an outdated and uncivilised practice. *Vogue* responded in two ways to these tensions. Firstly, the magazine attempted to uphold the bourgeois subjecthood with an 'uncaring' attitude and evoked class-based hierarchies in the photoshoots. Secondly, the magazine rebranded fur to appear more casual and informal, loosening the symbolism of the traditional woman who wears fur. At the same time, *Vogue* introduced faux fur as a playful, cheaper option to fur coats, which also helped to keep the look of fur in fashion and for *Vogue* to stay relevant for younger audiences who were not interested in (or did not have the economic capital to support) the traditional bourgeois subjecthood. Due to the increasing democratisation of fashion (one of the projects of consumer capitalism), *Vogue* was caught in a tension where the fur coat represented luxury fashion but was no longer modern and youthful. The magazine represents luxury, conspicuous consumption but must also maintain a commitment to modernity as it is a key aspect of fashion. As a result, *Vogue* wrestled with the image of the fur coat in the magazine, upholding both fur and faux fur as practices for stylish women. Therefore, the tension continued to build from the diversification of women's fashion, which emerged in the miniskirt analysis, between younger women who were concerned with fashionable, democratised fashion that is not durable, and older women who are encouraged to invest in luxury, quality items. In more contemporary issues, *Vogue* begins to reconstruct the fur coat as a fashion that is 'closer to nature', a natural, durable product that biodegrades. Through this simplification of consuming animal fur, the fur coat is reshaped into a 'sustainable' option for women and can re-enter the fashionable woman's wardrobe. This shows how the constructed subjecthoods relate to wider feminist and environmental politics.

In Chapter 7, (Un)Sustainable fashion, *Vogue* includes discussions on the environment through a focus on an individual eco-celebrity subjecthood and luxury 'sustainable' products and services. Firstly, the eco-chic celebrity subjecthood serves as a way for *Vogue* to bridge the gap between stylish femininity and eco-consciousness. Environmentally friendly garments have been constructed in *Vogue* as the opposite of fashion, and the magazine uses celebrities who support both the fashion industry and the environment (for either their celebrity reputation or as a business opportunity) to resolve this tension. The eco-chic celebrity contrasts with the unstylish eco-mum stereotypes featured in Littler's (2013) work. The celebrity figure solves the tension between the values of consumer capitalism and the environmental threat of the fashion industry. The constructed subjecthood can combine a 'care' for the environment but also uphold and prioritise values of consumer capitalism and gendered consumption norms. Gisele Bündchen, for instance, is discussed in relation to popular Western wellness culture that adopts Eastern spirituality and combines this with ideas of the neoliberal disciplined body and mind. Stella McCartney and Livia Firth, on the other hand, represent postfeminist entrepreneurialism, seeking solutions to the fashion industry's impact on the environment through business strategies, science, and innovation. The 'solutions' are embedded in practices of consumption and build upon *choosing* the right products and brands that represent 'authentic' care for the environment.

The language of the celebrity figure evokes neoliberal discourse such as individualisation, personalisation, and meritocracy (Littler, 2006: 14, 2014: 6). Previous work on the celebrity highlights that this figure intersects with charitable or 'humanitarian' work which acts as cheap publicity and the marketisation of public or 'common' expenditure (Littler, 2014: 6). The 'eco-chic' celebrity case study highlights how the postfeminist entanglement between neoliberalism and values of feminism operates under an environmental emergency. Criticisms of fashion pose a threat to postfeminist narratives of women's empowerment through consumption and individualist values. However, in *Vogue*, the 'eco-chic' celebrity navigates these tensions by entangling concerns for the environment with celebrity humanitarian projects, the celebrity as an 'authenticity' support for brands, and a site for women's entrepreneurial work.

The analysis also showed how *Vogue* emphasise a discourse of 'magical femininity' when they discussed the 'eco-chic' celebrity. Here, women's 'passion' and emotions (in this case towards animals and the environment) aids their commitment to the environment, rather than their skills or political values. The magazine, instead, evokes a sense of feminine passion and highlights the women as mothers who pass on their compassion for the environment to their children. However, there was a continued neoliberal emphasis on celebrities as individuals who do not criticise existing social structures but support the importance of consumption.

Another subjecthood constructed in *Vogue* and analysed in Chapter 7 includes the youth climate activist. These young women are different from the 'eco-chic' celebrities as they were not famous before their environmental activism but have gained fame as a result of their activism. By engaging with this younger generation, *Vogue* attempts to remain relevant to a younger audience of potential *Vogue* readers. However, the youth climate activist is positioned in a specific way in *Vogue*. The activists are presented as political but the type of activism they engage in is neoliberal and postfeminist. For example, Xiye Bastida and Quannah Chasinghorse continue to support the fashion industry through modelling and advocating for brands that they deem as authentic supporters of sustainable fashion. The interviews focus on the youth climate activist's positive hope for the planet and avoid discussions on the negative harm to their environments or communities. The interviews with the indigenous young women continue to uphold Western dominant beliefs and support for consumer capitalism and do not engage with any Indigenous systems of thinking that may challenge this. Therefore, *Vogue* transforms youth climate activists into celebrities and upholds celebrity discourses of individualism and meritocracy, avoiding structural critique of consumer capitalism. These eco-subjecthoods show how an established postfeminist entanglement creates new tensions for environmental politics and shapes gendered notions of 'ethical consumption' and 'sustainable fashion' practices.

Overall, the findings show the array of subjecthoods constructed in *Vogue* and the common themes that construct the fashionable woman. These themes include discourses of modernity, youthfulness and maintaining a slim, beautified body. In the magazine, young women are a source of newness and creativity for fashion but become a problem when they begin to attack 'outdated' fashions or practices of consumption. Tensions arise when what constitutes ‘modern’ opposes the values of consumer capitalism. However, when *Vogue* navigate these tensions, they can create new tensions for wider political issues. The constructed subjecthoods in *Vogue* that exist at an intersection between values of feminism or environmentalism and values of consumer capitalism create concerns for these political groups. For instance, the young climate activist causes tensions as she is positioned as a neoliberal, postfeminist celebrity in *Vogue* who supports harmful fashion practices of consumption. I will expand on tension in the following discussion. The analysis reveals the differences between the subjecthoods, their time specific contexts, and how they are shaped by wider politics. It also reveals the interesting continuities between women’s subjecthoods and long-standing feminine values over time.

8.2 Tensions and the Norms of Gendered Consumption

Following the discussion of research questions one and two, this section will explore research questions 3 and 4 which both focus on tensions between the values of consumer capitalism and wider politics and how these tensions impact gendered consumption norms and values. Again, this discussion is organised by chapter but cuts across case studies.

In Chapter 4, the magazine upheld a continuation of corset-wearing practices but attempted to redefine it as ‘new’ and ‘modern’. Tension emerged when women rejected the corset as it restricted them from moving (which can be seen to be embedded in feminist politics of embodied liberation) and taking part in the new activities available to them (as a result of suffrage and their new social position). From this tension, the ‘modern’ corset was created and was distinct from the ‘traditional’ corset worn by an older generation of women. The ‘modern’ corset was constructed as a part of modern innovation and science, which invited women to engage with the progression and innovation in commodities and modernity. However, the ‘new’ corset was translated in *Vogue* into the cause of fashion changes, the genius of fashion designers, and the spectacles of capitalism, rather than due to the demands of women and their new social position. This diminished the impact of wider political issues that shaped the demands and caused a change in women's dress. In the 1920s, *Vogue* discussed the previous years of 'corsetless' fashion as something that led to undisciplined bodies and poor posture in women. The requirement for women to wear a corset to meet the fashion demands of an uncorseted figure is explained with a logic of controlling the body. A disciplined female body was entangled with notions of what it means to be a modern woman.

Another tension emerged between what it means to be a young, modern woman, and 'traditional' women's fashion and practices. The 'traditional' corset was constructed as the cause of the demise of the corset, making the new, modern corset a continuation of this practice but separate from the previous feminist critiques. The 'modern' corset was the new and improved successor of the traditional corset. The 'traditional' corset could be worn by anyone as it was fitted to the body, but the new corset was standardised and made into different 'styles' that 'solved' different problems for different body types. From this change in production, the corset designer would advise 'the consumer' on what corset style she must choose from and what type of body she has. The female body came under scrutiny from outsiders and designers who no longer made clothing to fit the user, but the user must now fit the clothing and predetermined sizes. As a consequence, there were shifts in the way the modern, fashionable woman was encouraged to think about her body which was closely related to the transformation in production methods and the projects of consumer capitalism. Therefore, new norms and values emerged in gendered consumption because of wider tensions and the projects of consumer capitalism.

The analysis aids the gendered understanding of 'the consumer' figure in theories of consumer culture. In the early 20th century, 'the consumer' was sovereign and consumer choice constituted a 'vote' in the marketplace that was conceived as a democracy of good (Welch, 2020: 68). The figure linked to the tenants of democracy and was considered a rational, logical consumer who had control over their needs, wants, desires, and identities. The notion of consumer sovereignty was expressed in the corset adverts that emphasised scientific logic and innovative discourses (Welch, 2020). In *Vogue*, the 'modern' corset was constructed as a garment that solved the issues of the 'traditional' corset raised by feminists and doctors. The split between traditional and modern also impacted the way materials were discussed in *Vogue* and how synthetic materials were constructed as linked to modernity and the innovation of fashion. The critiques that the corset was harmful and oppressive for women resulted in the return of the new and improved 'modern' corset in *Vogue*. The magazine constructed the modern corset as a product innovated by fashion designers to provide women with a comfortable, 'freeing' corset. Therefore, the feminist and medical critiques of corset wearing were overwritten and transformed into an opportunity for consumer capitalist design and innovation for 'the consumer'. From this, fashion designers were constructed as those who provided women with a solution to their 'problems'.

On the other hand, a woman who went 'uncorseted' was regarded as unstylish in *Vogue*, and they warned that not being corseted lead to a misshapen, unsightly body with poor posture. From this, the masculine innovation of the corset was praised and the feminist, political act of not wearing the corset to embrace the straighter silhouette was considered wrong in *Vogue*. The consequences of not wearing a corset to meet fashion demands lead to an unsightly female body that must be disciplined and controlled using the undergarments. Women were encouraged to self-scrutinize their bodies to find what corset style they should be wearing or find the undergarment that 'solves' their individual problems. Delhaye (2006) argues that this is where individualising discourses for women emerged which invited them to be a part of the modernity that men had been involved in since the Enlightenment. However, the individualising discourse associated with the corset transformed the female body into another commodity to be shaped with innovative products. From this analysis, the woman wearing a corset was considered a 'body without organs' rather than the rational sovereign consumer. Rather than ‘choosing’ and dictating the success of markets, women were turned into commodities by the changes in production and standardised corsets. This shows how fashionable subjecthoods were invited to partake in modernity more as a commodity themselves than as a consumer, which sheds light on the developing gendered norms of consumption. The projects of consumer capitalism entangled feminist and anti-feminist values in the magazine, showing a longer history of the acceptance and repudiation of feminism in women’s consumer culture.

However, the miniskirt (in chapter 6) was embraced in *Vogue* as a new, youthful fashion garment aimed towards the younger audience at a cheaper price. The tensions from the new miniskirt were embraced in *Vogue* as a new category of consumption that increased the ability to consume. It highlights a shift towards mass production and the consumer capitalist projects of a high turnover of fashion at a cheaper price. Under Fordist production, high wages were encouraged so employees could spend more and consume more. Therefore, the case study highlights how women’s changing social position impacted the norms and values of fashion. During this time, the housewife figure was critiqued by feminisms and emerging youth subcultures that created an opportunity for a figure that consumed for herself without the responsibility of the family. The magazine adopted this value for young middle-class women, and it led to new boundaries of what was appropriate for middle-class femininity. As an example, revealing the body and nudity in the magazine was normalised which created new norms of middle-class sexuality. These changes appeared under what Welch (2020) defines as ‘emancipatory consumption’ which focuses on libidinal and creative marketing. The shift from conservative Hollywood glamour to the girlish mod is, therefore, a part of wider changes in the creative industries. This was also seen in men’s magazines that constructed the bachelor figure. The rise of more casual relationships and a space between school and marriage created tensions for heteronormativity. In men’s magazines, this was resolved through the bachelor lifestyle of consuming women to affirm their heterosexual status. Heteronormativity was used as a resolution to the tensions posed by feminism but, in turn, created further tensions for feminisms. The articles featuring feminists immediately highlight them as heterosexual, either as married or desiring men. In *Vogue*, feminists could not challenge heteronormativity. The new category of consumption that does not emphasise the family or a domestic role was embraced in *Vogue* as it created more opportunities for feminine consumer practices of youthfulness, such as miniskirts and makeup. However, it caused tensions that were resolved by an emphasis on heteronormativity.

The continuing emphasis on youthfulness as a key aspect of both modernity and gendered consumer capitalist values created generational tensions. Throughout the 20th century, 'new' practices or subjecthoods sit in contrast to the 'old' and 'outdated' which were constructed as unfashionable. The 'new' practices were sometimes connected to youthful subcultures or tied to new politics for women or gender relations. In the early 20th century, mothers and daughters were pitted against each other, where the daughter knew better than her mother. In the mid-1960s, the new 'girl' category resulted in age anxieties for women who must now judge their youth qualities and whether they can wear a miniskirt or not. In the case study on fur, animal rights campaigns attacked the 'old' body that remained stylish under fur coats through campaigns such as 'I'd rather go naked than wear fur'. Here, the beautified, young, disciplined body was used to attack the older, wealthy woman's body. However, more recently, environmental values are constructed as a younger generational concern and the once idealised youthful woman is problematic as she questions consumer practices. Here, *Vogue* attempts to reverse the idealisation with youth by constructing mothers as knowing better and passing on a non-problematic care for the environment or a fur coat. The youth climate activist is transformed into a celebrity in *Vogue* to avoid and transform the tensions she can pose for the values of consumer capitalism. New tensions emerge as she is constructed under neoliberal and postfeminist discourses that retranslate activism into for support consumer capitalism and the 'authenticity' of brands.

One of the main tensions around environmental politics in the case studies is the way a care for others (including non-humans) challenges the consumer capitalist value of conspicuous consumption. A concern for the harm to animals and the environment holds the fashion industry and *Vogue* (as a cultural intermediary of this industry) accountable. Culturally, it makes practices such as wearing a fur coat unfashionable and anti-modern. The wider political issues can be seen as processes of civilisation, making harmful fashions seem outdated and therefore not keeping up with the modernity the fashion industry claims to adhere to. Across the 20th century, *Vogue*'s definition of fashion and modernity is influenced by youth culture and younger generations, which serves as 'modern' innovation and constructs *Vogue* as 'modern'. However, under periods of environmental concern, *Vogue* struggles to invite discourses of care as they contradict the values of consumer capitalism. The magazine prioritises style, luxury, and middle-class women who can consume without limits, but when new political movements reject these values, *Vogue* must continue to engage with them to stay relevant. As a result, *Vogue* attempts to construct an 'eco-chic' subjecthood and solves the tension through new categories of consumption for women, some of which include elements of care but do not promote downscaling garment consumption. The responses represent the importance and prioritisation of offering the 'choice' to consume.

The emphasis on sun tanning practices in the Miniskirt case study represents the glorification of the white, youthful, beautified body, but it also highlights the emphasis on travelling for leisure and holidaymaking in the mid-century. This democratisation of travel emphasise how this project expanded beyond making cheaper fashion for everyone into leisure time. Travel continues as a tension into the final case study where sustainable travel becomes a new market category for the Vogue reader. Rather than simply indulging in travel, the ecochic subjecthood must be more conscious of travel without limiting travel. It shows the continuation of tensions from travel that were normalised in the mid-century and are questioned in the 21st century.

To alleviate tensions between consumer capitalism and an ethics of care for the planet or non-humans, *Vogue* upholds its ideologies with a commitment to science, logic, and innovation. In discussions about animal activists, *Vogue* constructs narratives that they are irrational and too radical to make logical sense. They counter the activist's claims with issues of science to avoid what the activists discuss about fashion or the beauty industry. Innovation also overrides the discussions with eco-conscious celebrities/figures, focusing on fashion designer's 'sustainable' materials or recycling techniques over the interviewee's activism. Much like how the change in corsets was credited to designers, environmental fashion is also transformed from activism into design and innovation. The magazine also emphasises a postfeminist, entrepreneurial feature of sustainable innovation by highlighting how women in the fashion industry have filled a gap in the market for sustainable alternatives in fashion.

The analysis revealed how new categories of gendered consumption norms and values are formed from the tensions in *Vogue* that develop the entanglement between the values of consumer capitalism and wider political issues. The tensions are resolved by forming new opportunities to *choose* products from a range of practices, ie. The ability to choose how to engage with fur fashions or eco-conscious subjecthoods and continue stylish feminine practices and engaging with luxury, harmful consumption. The practices continue to uphold consumer capitalist norms of women scrutinising their bodies to achieve slimness and youth. The changes develop the projects of consumer capitalism such as standardised mass production, an expansion of needs, diversifying markets, and the development of faster, cheaper production of clothing. *Vogue*'s commitment to modernity and consumer capitalism can cause tensions in the magazine. The wider shift towards Cause Related Marketing (CRM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) made animal rights activism more 'modern' and in keeping with wider social shifts than *Vogue*'s traditional bourgeois subjecthood which did not care for wider issues. The entanglement with modernity and fashion means political values are a part of what makes stylish subjecthoods for women and, in turn, shapes gendered norms and practices.

Another way the tensions between values of consumer capitalism and environmental issues come to impact gendered norms and values links to Welch's (2020) promotional sustainable consumerism where brands must gain authenticity for their environmental claims. By buying an 'authentic' brand, the consumer gains their own authenticity. One way to gain authenticity is to be supported by an 'authentic' person, such as someone associated with environmental care. Therefore, the eco-chic celebrity or youth climate activist interviews are used to construct a figure who is committed to the environment and considered authentic but continues to choose to support specific brands that meet their ethical concerns. The eco-figure in *Vogue* becomes a marketing strategy under promotional sustainable consumerism to resolve the tensions between wider environmental issues and values of consumer capitalism.

The research showed that feminisms are entangled with and impact gendered consumption norms and values. The subjecthoods show how definitions of fashionable, stylish women draw upon women's subcultures that innovate, such as the new flapper figure that rejects the traditional hourglass body for 'youthfulness' and the mod who challenges norms of domesticity for middle-class women. Wider feminist politics shapes what it means to be 'modern' and splits fashion and consumer capitalism from previous generational norms. However, in the late 20th century, the democratisation of fashion, which was nurtured in 20th-century youth culture and supported in *Vogue*, led to challenges but the 'undemocratic' fur coat was attacked. Youthfulness continues to be a problem as young women and teenagers engage in environmental activism. However, these tensions are reframed through neoliberal and postfeminist narratives of the celebrity, the activist consumer, and the distancing of climate issues. From the main aims of this research, the findings show how an investigation of consumer capitalism and entanglements with wider political issues can shed light on the long history of this relationship. It reframes postfeminist understandings with an emphasis on consumer capitalist projects and values rather than only focusing on neoliberal entanglements with feminism.

8.3 Postfeminism, Consumer Culture, and More-than-Human Ethics of Care

The thesis makes contributions to both postfeminist cultural analysis and theories of consumer culture and engages with the criticisms that were raised in the literature review. Firstly, I outlined the ahistoricism in postfeminist studies and secondly, the non-gendered analyses in consumer cultural theory. The analysis aided the ahistorical discussions and uncovered a deeper understanding of the entanglement between feminist, anti-feminist values and values of consumer capitalism. The historical analysis also complicated the literature on gendered consumption over time, particularly Welch's (2020) teleoaffective formations. The contemporary analysis that explored an ethics of care for animals and sustainable fashion contributed to a gendered understanding of Promotional Sustainable Consumerism and how it operates in a women's fashion magazine. The discussions highlighted how the projects of consumer capitalism, such as the democratisation of fashion, diversification of products and markets, expansion of needs are tied to wider cultural and political issues and bound up with what it means to be modern, fashionable, and 'a consumer'. These projects shape and are shaped by feminists and environmentalisms which develops a deeper understanding of postfeminism and gendered categories of consumption.

8.3.1 Ahistoricism

The historical analysis showed that an entanglement between feminisms and anti-feminisms is not new to the contemporary age. These entangled values shaped constructions of women's freedom that are confined by the values of consumer capitalism. It also showed evidence of environmental and anti-environmental values that promote the idea that the planet can be fixed with consumer capitalist solutions and science. Also, discussions of the environment were separated and bound by geographical borders and into separate, isolated issues. The magazine presents alternative narratives, and sometimes rewrites existing narratives that safeguard the rationale for a garment or practice to continue. For instance, the case study on the corset showed how the development of a new corset, which was the result of a feminist critique, was transformed into discourses of fashion innovation and upheld corset wearing practices. In contemporary issues, *Vogue* attempts to continue fur garments by framing it as 'sustainable'. The narratives in *Vogue* also provided insight into long-term consumer capitalist projects that developed throughout the 20th century. These developments are reflected in the meanings of 'the consumer' or 'what it means to be a fashionable woman'. The corset case study showed how wider political narratives were rewritten in *Vogue* into gendered norms and values of consumption. At the same time, the transformations in the corset were marketed for the comfort of 'the consumer' but reflected wider changes in production that standardised products and reduced costs. *Vogue* promoted the idea that wearing a 'traditional' corset that can be tight-laced to fit anybody as outdated. Whereas the new method of selecting from predetermined, standardised corsets was modern. It also offered the ability to 'choose' the correct corset for the body, which made it more comfortable and allowed greater movement.

The standardisation of corsets and the diversification of the product was rewritten in *Vogue* as a response to the feminist dissatisfaction with the corset and developed the projects of consumer capitalism. Here, the tension between feminist politics and the corset resulted in an entangling where the feminist value of bodily movement and comfort was accepted in *Vogue* and solved through the introduction of a new, 'modern' corset that incorporated movement and comfort as a priority. However, the tension showed a rejection of feminist values and women's bodies were commodified under the discourse of the 'modern' corset. Women's bodies were scrutinised and categorised as a result of standardising corsets but also reframed as offering more 'choice' for 'the consumer' or fashionable woman. Therefore, there is evidence of a longer entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist values that develop the values of consumer capitualsim and 'choice'.

Secondly, the historical investigation deepens the understanding of what makes postfeminism unique. Adriaens and Bauwel (2011: 3) argue that postfeminism can be rearticulated as a third wave of feminism in the 21st century that focuses on a new form of 'empowerment'. This prioritises women's "agency, freedom, sexual pleasure, consumer culture, fashion, hybridism, humour, and a renewed focus on the female body". In their work, they highlight contemporary consumer culture, neoliberal late capitalism, individualism, postmodernism and a decreased interest in politics and activism. However, values of freedom, sexual pleasure, consumer culture, fashion, and a focus on the female body are themes that *Vogue* has nurtured and developed over the 20th and into the 21st century. By exploring a longer history of these values, postfeminist priorities align not only with neoliberalism but with the ongoing projects of consumer capitalism.

Gill's (2007) work lists several features of postfeminist sensibilities. These include the notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring, and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference; a marked sexualisation of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference (p.147). Not all these values have been explored in the case studies, for instance, makeover paradigms were not analysed in the chapters. For this reason, I will only focus on the features of postfeminist sensibility I have covered, including femininity as a bodily property; self-surveillance and discipline; individualism, choice, and empowerment; sexualisation of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism.

Firstly, femininity as a bodily property is considered a striking aspect of contemporary postfeminist media culture (Gill, 2007: 149). Here, the central features of femininity shift from motherhood or nurturing towards an obsession with having a ‘sexy body’ as women’s key source of identity (ibid.). The case studies show, however, that having a slim, youthful body was central in early 20th-century constructions of feminine subjecthoods. The body is central to femininity in *Vogue*, rather than motherhood or nurturing. Gill states that women’s bodies are “evaluated, scrutinized, and dissected by women as well as men, and are always at risk of ‘failing’” (p.149). This also leads to intense self-surveillance and stress upon discipline (p.155). Scrutinising the body takes place on small levels such as examining the upper arm for muscle definition and unpleasant odours, to the level of questioning what kind of lover, friend, or daughter you are. Again, this is not only a contemporary value as it was a key aspect of early 20th-century corset discourses where women’s bodies were categorised due to standardised production. As a result, women had to scrutinise their bodies and find the best corset to mould their unruly flesh. The slim and large bodies were constructed to ‘need’ specific solutions to the problems their bodies posed. The attack on both ‘fat’ and ‘thin’ female bodies is viewed as an aspect of contemporary media aimed at celebrities, but the analysis showed that the discourses of the problematic large and slim body have a much longer history. This work showed how these values were tied to changes in production which aids the understanding of both postfeminism and gendered norms and values of consumption.

The self-surveillance of the body is embedded in corset and miniskirt marketing that encourages women to self-reflect on their age or weight. In corset articles, women must assess if they need a corset to correct their posture, reduce their hips, and help them appear youthful. The corset was constructed as a garment that supported women’s graceful movement and the added flexibility of the modern corset helped them appear more youthful. Under postfeminism and neoliberalism, this scrutinization of the body extends to the self. There are elements of this in the miniskirt case study as adverts constructed a young woman who was fun, pleasure-seeking, and always pretty. The miniskirt not only glorifies the youthful body but also fabricates young women as positive and easy-going. On the other hand, the fur-clad woman was distant, uncaring, and avoidant. The subjecthoods extended to the psyche and mood rather than simply aesthetics or garments. Therefore, an intense scrutinising and emphasis on discipline was a key aspect of early 20th-century marketing towards the fashionable woman.

The sexualisation of culture is another aspect of contemporary postfeminist sensibility that was an important part of the analysis in the 20th century. Under contemporary, postfeminist discourse, the sexualisation of culture focuses on young women producing themselves as desirable heterosexual subjects, to please men sexually, protect against pregnancy and STIs, defend their sexual reputations, and take care of men's self-esteem (Gill, 2007: 151). Gill notes the 'girlification' of adult women such as Kylie Minogue and Kate Moss that promotes female children as its most desirable sexual icons. The historical research showed that in the corset case study and the miniskirt case study, there were themes of increasing sexualisation of women, revealing skin, nudity, and a glorification of youthfulness in an ongoing sexualisation of culture across the 20th century. The flapper emphasised a straight, child-like silhouette and the mod was a youth or teenage category that expanded to young adults in *Vogue*.

Gill argues the development of a pornographic visual culture took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s (p. 151). However, the miniskirt case study revealed a proliferation of women's nudity in both men's and women's magazines in the late 1960s that eventually decreased in the 1980s. Therefore, the sexualisation of visual media has a long history in Western media where there are periods of increase and decrease. All four case studies showed an emphasis on youth as a persistent theme in *Vogue* and constructed tensions between generations which complicates the claims that a 'girlification' or sexualisation of young women and girls is a contemporary issue. Gill points out that a shift from subjectification to objectification has a longer history and can be found in some bra adverts that sell sexual power to women. In a sense, the subjectification of women was present in the 1960s youth culture that reconfigured what was appropriate for middle-class women's sexuality and contained nude images of women for an audience of women in *Vogue*. The emphasis on heterosexuality and sexualisation appeared in *Vogue*'s interviews with feminists which shows a longer history of this culture that shaped second-wave feminist interviews. Overall, the sexualisation and centrality of the female body can be traced back across the 20th century which complicates narratives of postfeminist values as contemporary but positions them as a part of a longer process that developed over time.

Individualism, choice and empowerment are also central to a postfeminist sensibility (Gill, 2007: 153). A postfeminist emphasis on these values constructs narratives where young women are 'free' to sexualise themselves, have plastic surgery, and wear lingerie for themselves and not for men. It is a modernised, neoliberal version of femininity that is (re)presented as "something done for yourself, not in order to please a man" (p.154). However, the nurturing of 'women's choice' was found across the 20th century in *Vogue*. The 'choices' were not always related to men and an external gaze. For instance, in the modern corset case study, there were instances of women not dressing for men but for their own aesthetics and criticising that men do not know what is stylish. This narrative, however, featured alongside a contradictory construction of a younger woman who told her mother that 'men do not like pretty' and therefore she did not want to appear 'too feminine'. In the 1960s, the construction of the subjecthood who was free to consume for herself combined self-pleasure and a rampant focus on heteronormativity, creating complex constructions of gendered consumer practices.

The case studies show that the entanglement with activism (such as early 20th century feminist critique of the corset or animal rights) or wider cultural change (such as the invention of youth markets or the dissatisfaction with fashion's harm on the environment) creates new opportunities for consumer capitalist *choice* in *Vogue*. The magazine responds to changes, like animal rights activism, with faux fur to continue narratives of choice. Therefore, there is a longer history of *Vogue* subverting structural discussions into values of individual choice within the market as a consumer-citizen. This shows how a contemporary postfeminist sensibility is entangled with the projects of consumer capitalism that have been developed across the 20th century and led to this proliferation of 'choice as empowerment'. This shows that consumer capitalism prioritises choice over other values, therefore whether it is wrapped up with values of feminism or environmentalism, *Vogue* always pushed choice as a key priority. The historical continuity of choice shows the importance of consumer capitalism in shaping women's subjecthoods in addition to neoliberalism.

Gill (2007) and McRobbie (2004) highlight the entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist themes as an important aspect of postfeminism and something that makes it unique from the media of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. In these periods, it is argued that rather than feminisms being external, critical voices, feminism is now a part of the cultural field (Gill, 2007: 161). Postfeminist sensibility is different from both pre-feminist constructions of gender and feminist ones because it is a response to feminism, which some argue is a backlash but could be seen as a more complex entangling of feminist and anti-feminist discourses (p. 163). I argue that postfeminism can be seen as a complex entanglement, but one that has been nurtured and has a long history in the constructions of women's subjecthoods in fashionable magazines. The *Vogue* case studies show a longer entanglement where feminist politics raises tensions, these tensions are adopted by the magazine, and rewritten as positive aspects of gendered consumption. At the same time, *Vogue* rejects wider feminist values and continues an ongoing emphasis on the young, slim body which must be disciplined and beautified. As a result, the entanglement between anti-feminist and feminist values has been developed across the twentieth century, rather than in response to second-wave feminism. There is a nurturing and normalisation of postfeminist sensibilities in *Vogue* over the 20th century, such as an increasing sexualisation, a disciplined and scrutinization of the female body, a glorification of youth, and aspects of 'women's choice'.

8.3.2 More-than-human and Gendered Attentiveness

Vogue magazine also creates tensions through the entanglement between consumer capitalist values and wider political values or activism. In the 21st century, a discussion on fur versus faux fur appears as a choice matter which subverts activism or debates on the concern for non-humans that are reduced to a fashionable commodity. The discussion on choosing fur refers to environmental or animal welfare matters as a young person's concern or a 'modern' worldview, which ultimately rewrites the history of animal rights and animal liberation that reached a peak in the 1980s (when today's young generation was not born). It does, however, engage with wider processes of civilisation and what is considered 'modern' and 'uncivilised'. From the construction of environmentalism or animal welfare as a 'young generational' issue, the magazine continues to create generational tensions. It also builds upon an idea that young people should teach an older generation about the environment that features in wider conversations about Greta Thunberg and also *Vogue*'s interview with Xiye Bastida. At the same time, *Vogue* complicates this narrative by sometimes constructing environmental values as something taught by a mother to her children.

Conversations that engaged with forms of feminisms and environmentalisms were constricted in the magazine. Firstly, the modern corset offered possibilities for women's bodily liberations. Still, these were avoided by the emphasis on controlling the flesh, reducing the size of the body (with the corset and diets), and the genius and innovative fashion designers who invited women to partake in modernity through the consumption of the (no longer traditional) corset. Secondly, the miniskirt opened up a critique of the consumer capitalist construction of the housewife. However, emerging feminist tensions were overshadowed by an intensification of the sexualised female body, skin and heteronormativity. Freedom from the home could only be adopted by young women who fit into this subjecthood. Adult women were made to feel anxious by their ability to sexualise themselves and should consider how appropriate they were for the new fashions and fun-loving lifestyle on offer for young women.

Thirdly, animal rights activists opened up thinking, not only for women's consumer culture but also, in spaces such as medical research and food consumption. *Vogue* responded to these tensions by constructing activists as illogical, irrational, and against science. Instead, faux fur harboured narratives of choice and the possibility of environmental activists removing the choice to buy a real fur coat for women is considered radical and controversial. Tensions from animal rights activists 'spoiled the fun' for women and stole their pleasure and luxury. In more recent discussions, *Vogue* attempts to construct real fur as more 'natural' and less harmful compared to faux fur. They also use indigenous model Quannah Chasinghorse to evoke images of diversity and the consumption of 'other' cultures with real fur. Therefore, from the idea that it is a younger generation that has an anti-fur stance, *Vogue* responds by incorporating 'youthful' matters such as diversity and inclusion of ethnic minorities or oppressed peoples in their attempts to make fur relevant again.

Finally, *Vogue* stifles the critiques aimed at the fashion industry for environmental harm through the eco-chic celebrity and youth climate activists. These figures, although coming to fame in different ways, evoke neoliberal values of entrepreneurial success and uphold norms of consumption by authenticating brands as 'sustainable' and being a citizen-consumer who express their commitment to the environment through market choice. In addition to this, the impact fashion production and waste have on the planet is a discussion that, in *Vogue*, is segregated and distanced. CRM (cause-related marketing) initiatives, that put a percentage of money towards profits for environmental issues, are operated in different parts of the world, such as coral reefs or rainforests. The impact of climate change is constructed as an issue for indigenous women and 'other' countries that are not the West and will not impact white Americans. The problems in the US include matters of waste that can be solved through recycling and choosing to buy garments that are produced with (or partly with) recycled materials. Problems such as pollution in American cities, which are only a problem because they can age the skin (rather than contributing to a mass extinction event and a climate emergency) can be 'solved' with skincare products for individuals. Therefore, American women do not need to care beyond buying recycled garments and pollution skincare as a response to the climate emergency. On the other hand, indigenous girls advocate for their homelands, and this is translated in *Vogue* into an opportunity for cultural omnivorousness and staying relevant in the eyes of a younger generation who demand diversity and inclusivity. The discussions are constructed around neoliberal and postfeminist discourse as the indigenous youth climate activists highlight positive hopes for the future and avoid the negative discussions of harm to their environment and community. The conversations subvert structural critique for an individualising celebification.

The insights also deepen current discussions on the projects of consumer capitalism over time and in the contemporary period by providing a gendered analysis. Welch's (2020) work on teleoaffective formations outlined different categories of consumption across the 20th and into the 21st century. Sovereign consumption began in the early 20th century and emphasised the logic of consumption and evolved into emancipatory consumption in the 1960s with a sexualisation of consumer culture. Finally, promotional sustainable consumption emerges from the reputation protection of brands to support the authenticity of the citizen-consumer. These take place between shifts from Fordism to Post-Fordism and CSR and CRM initiatives. The case studies offer moments of change in women's fashion and investigate the tensions that arise from or result in tensions with wider political issues (such as feminisms or environmentalisms). Welch's teleoaffective formations provided useful contexts for the different time periods I explored in the case studies. The three-fold typology helped explain why there were different priorities of marketing towards 'the consumer' figures across the 20th and into the 21st century. For example, promotional sustainable consumerism provided the tools to analyse *Vogue*'s emphasis on eco-figure support for specific brands as an aspect of authenticity.

However, the case analysis showed how teleoaffective formations may overlook gendered differences in consumption and patriarchal structures within consumer culture that are found in my case studies. For instance, promotional sustainable consumption is embedded within gendered and imperialist discourse where girls and women are constructed as emotional advocators of the environment and climate change is a problem for 'other' countries and peoples rather than the West. Here, the indigenous girl climate activist features at the intersections of these tensions, where they are made visible in *Vogue* but continue to uphold these discourses of emotion and the climate as a problem for the 'other'. The work also highlights the importance of the celebrity in Welch's conceptualisation of 'authenticity' under promotional sustainable consumption. The celebrity captures neoliberal values of entrepreneurial and individual success and informs norms of 'citizen-consumer' practices.

Not only does an emphasis on sovereign, emancipatory, and promotional sustainable consumerism overlook gendered configurations of 'the consumer', but it also loses focus on the ongoing developments of the ideas and projects of consumer capitalism. The case studies showed how features of consumer capitalism such as the democratisation of fashion were nurtured in *Vogue* and impacted constructions of consumer culture narratives. For instance, the democratisation of fashion arguably began with the 'modern' corset as it was made cheaper through mass production and standardisation, but developed into the idea that women's bodies should fit the styles and sizes provided rather than have garments made-to-measure and brought about gendered norms and values of categorising the body. The democratisation is developed with the miniskirt as a cheap, mass-produced garment for young women, which *Vogue* embraces despite its commitment to luxury fashions. However, there are still commitments to the durability of clothing that can be seen in adverts for tights during this time. Across the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, *Vogue* develops the democratisation of fashion by including both luxury fur coats and cheaper faux fur coats. These progressions are accompanied by developments in normalising women's choice and the diversification of markets that contribute to the democratisation of fashion. The miniskirt is the result of an emerging (diversified) youth culture market for young people, for instance, that is interwoven with the democratisation of clothing. A faux fur coat, on the other hand, contributes to the norms and values of choice that nurture this democratisation. *Vogue* continues to uphold this as they argue everyone should be able to afford expensive, well-made clothing. This is evidence of translating wider politics to push a project of luxury fashion. Therefore, Welch's three-fold typology is useful for grasping contexts of consumerism but risks losing sight of the ongoing developments of consumer capitalist projects that weave together over time.

8.4 Main Contributions of the Thesis

Overall, the thesis has shown an entanglement between wider political values and the projects of consumer capitalism that are reflected in constructions of modern, fashionable, Western women's subjecthoods. It has shown the important of consumer capitalist values in the construction of a contemporary postfeminist landscape, in addition to the recognition of neoliberalism as an important part of an entanglement with feminism that constitutes postfeminism. It has also revealed a longer history of an entanglement between feminist and anti-feminist values in women's consumer culture. Therefore, the idea that postfeminism emerged in the late 1980s or 1990s can be understood further, as postfeminist sensibilities can be found throughout the history of *Vogue* magazine. The thesis has updated the current research in postfeminist critical studies with an emphasis on consumer culture values, the 20th century nurturing and development of postfeminist values and a contemporary engagement with environmental values which investigates a gendered, eco-conscious subjecthood. It has shown that postfeminist critical scholarly concerns with a postfeminist subject that is classed, raced, and aged continues to operate in the 2020s period under environmental concern.

The thesis has also shown the insights that cultural studies and feminist analyses bring to understandings of gendered consumer culture and construction of 'the consumer'. Investigating *Vogue* shows how women's consumer culture nurtures patriarchal, classed, aged, and raced categories over time. It also shows how the fashion magazine prioritises marketing notions of 'modernity' to women. The thesis explored how the different constructions of 'the consumer' contain further nuances in gendered cultural documents. For instance, the analysis showed the ways that contemporary promotional sustainable consumerism intersects with gender, age, and ethnicity to provide 'authenticity' for brands and cultural intermediaries. Both the historical and contemporary analyses shed light on the gendered nuances of the construction of 'the consumer' These insights highlight the advantages of combining cultural analyses, practice theory, and entanglement.

The thesis has also shed light on the kinds of tensions that impact the constructions of women's subjecthoods over time. In *Vogue*, values of modernity dominate what it means to be fashionable which are informed by wider political and cultural issues. These issues cause tensions as they sometimes conflict with the values of consumer capitalism. In more recent decades, environmental concerns have reformulated what it means to be 'modern', as harm towards animals and the planet is a 'modern' and 'civilised' concern, and *Vogue*'s values are reconceptualised as 'outdated' and 'uncivilised'. *Vogue* constructed a culture of consumption that idealises youth, but struggles to embrace 'youthful' concerns if they contradict the values of consumer capitalism. As a result, the magazine translates wider political issues into lifestyle or new categories for consumption to continue the development of consumer capitalist projects.

Overall, the work has shown the value of staying with complexity. Entanglement can ensure that consumer culture practice theories do not overlook the ways that routines and actions can be classed, gendered, and informed by culturally constructed consumer subjecthoods. The attention to gendered constructions showed the multitude of subjecthoods that were constructed for women over time. The analysis showed that there was an ongoing promotion of youthfulness, slimness, and ‘modernity’ across the periods that sometimes helped develop the projects of consumer capitalism (such as the ’new’ corset) and sometimes created tensions (such as the outdated fur coat). Different subjecthoods also existed at the same time, such as the ‘outdated’ mother in the 1920s and her fashionable daughter who knew better, which contributed gendered generational categories and tensions. This continues to develop into the contemporary, 21st-century fashionable eco-chic mom who guides her children and ruptures the ongoing idealisation of youth, now that *Vogue* find this group problematic. Therefore, the attentiveness to continuities and differences between subjecthoods over time aids both the historical understanding and the contemporary understanding of gendered consumer capitalist values and postfeminism as a longer entanglement.

The thesis does not make claims about how *Vogue*’s constructed subjecthoods shape everyday practices or how the ‘authenticity’ of brands is received outside the magazine. Therefore, when thinking about what comes after the investigation of entanglement, there is further work into the ways *Vogue*’s engagement with feminisms and environmentalisms may (or may not) inform the actions and practices of its readers. The focus on the US also creates a gap in understanding how wider political issues are translated in different cultures across the 28 countries that *Vogue* now publishes in. *Vogue* also focused the study on middle-class femininities which creates space for a consideration of different magazines and audiences. However, the work has highlighted the ways that values of feminisms, women’s liberation, sexualities, the body, an ethics of care, nonhumans, sustainability and indigenous cultures have and continue to create tensions in US *Vogue*, and ultimately shape gendered norms and values, many of which are translated into upholding dominant discourses on modernity, the West, heteronormativity, anthropocentrism, postfeminism, and what it means to be a fashionable woman.

Bibliography

Adriaens, F., 2009. Postfeminism in Popular Culture: A Potential for Critical Resistance?. *Politics and Culture*, 4, pp. 1-5.

Adriaens, F. and Bauwel, S., 2011. Sex and the City: A Postfeminist Point of View? Or How Popular Culture Functions as a Channel for Feminist Discourse. *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *47*(1), pp. 174-195.

Ahmed, S., 1997. 'It's a sun-tan, isn't it?' Auto-biography as an identificatory practice, in H. S. Mirza (Eds.) *Black British Feminism*. London: Routledge.

Aikau, H.K., Erickson, K. A. and Pierce, J. L., 2007. *Feminist waves, feminist generations: Life stories from the academy*. University of Minnesota Press.

Althusser, L., 1971 [1970]. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses. In L. Althusser (Ed.), *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Andrews, M. & Talbot, M. M., 2000. *All the world and her husband: women in twentieth-century consumer culture*. London: Cassell.

Angermuller, J., Maingeuneau, D., and Wodak, R., 2014. *The Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Appadurai, A., 1988. *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*. Cambridge*:* Cambridge University Press.

Arribas-Ayllon, M., & Walkerdine, V., 2008. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, in C. Willig, & R. W. Stainton (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, pp.91-108.

Arrigo, E., 2020. Global sourcing in fast fashion retailers: Sourcing locations and sustainability considerations. *Sustainability*, *12*(2), p.508.

Arvidsson, A., 2003. *Marketing modernity: Italian advertising from fascism to postmodernity*. New York: Routledge.

Åsberg, C. and Braidotti, R., 2018. *A feminist companion to the Posthumanities*. Cham: Springer.

Aune, K. and Holyoak, R., 2018. Navigating the third wave: Contemporary UK feminist activists and 'third-wave feminism'. *Feminist Theory*, *19*(2), pp.183-203.

Banet-Weiser, S. 2012. *Authentic TM: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture*. New York: NYU Press.

Banet-Weiser, S., 2018 *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Banet-Weiser, S., Gill, R. and Rottenberg, C., 2020. Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation. *Feminist Theory, 21*(1), pp.3-24.

Barad, K., 2007. *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Barnett, C., Cloke, P., Clarke, N. and Malpass, A., 2005. Consuming ethics: Articulating the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption. *Antipode*, *37*(1), pp.23-45.

Barnett, C., Cloke, P., Clarke, N. and Malpass, A., 2010. *Globalizing responsibility: The political rationalities of ethical consumption*. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons.

Barthes, R., 1985. *The Fashion System*. London: Cape.

Bartky, S. L., 1990. *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*. New York: Routledge.

Baudrillard, J., 1998. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage.

Bauman, Z., 1988. *Freedom*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Bauwel, S. V., 2017. Invisible golden girls? Postfeminist discourses and female ageing bodies in contemporary television fiction. *Feminist Media Studies*, *18*(1), pp.21-33.

Beard, N. D., 2008. The branding of ethical fashion and the consumer: a luxury niche or mass-market. Reality?. *Fashion Theory*, *12*(4), pp.447-467.

Beck, U., 1991. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.

Beck, U., 2006. *Cosmopolitan vision*. Cambridge: Polity.

Beers, D. L., 2006. *For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Beijbom, M., Fabricius, A., & O'Doherty, K. C., 2023. Women's health magazines and postfeminist healthism: A critical discourse analysis. *Feminism & Psychology*, *33*(4), pp.604-621.

Belk, R. W., 1995. 'Studies in new consumer behaviour, in D. Miller (Eds.) *Acknowledging Consumption*, London: Routledge.

Belk, R., 2010. Sharing. *Journal of Consumer Research, 36*(5), pp.715–734.

Bell D., 1976. *The cultural contradictions of capitalism*. Basic Books.

Bell, D. and Hollows, J., 2016. *Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating taste, consumption, and identity from the 1900s to 1970s*. New York: Routledge.

de la Bellacasa, M. P., 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. University of Minnesota Press.

Berg, M., 1996. Women's consumption and the industrial classes of Eighteenth-Century England, *Journal of Social History*, 30, pp. 415-434.

Betlemidze, M., 2020. A New Materialist Framework for Activism in the Age of Mediatization: The entanglement of bodies, objects, images, and affects. In M. N. Goins, J. F. McAlister, B. K. Alexander, *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Communication*. pp.84-100. London: Routledge.

Bleikorn, S., 2002. *The Mini Mod Sixties Book*. London: Last Gasp.

Blocker, T.J. and Eckberg, D.L., 1989. Environmental issues as women's issues: General concerns and local hazards. *Social Science Quarterly*, *70*(3), pp.586.

Bordo, S. 1991. Docile bodies, rebellious bodies: Foucauldian perspectives on female psychopathology. In H. Silverman (Eds.), *Writing the politics of Difference,* pp.203-215. Albany: SUNY Press.

Bordo, S. 1994. Feminism, Foucault, and the Politics of the Body. *Reconstructing Foucault*, 10, pp.219-243.

Boschma, M. and Daalmans, S., 2021. What a girl wants, what a girl needs: Analyzing postfeminist themes in girls' magazines. *Media and Communication*, *9*(2), pp.27-38.

Boström, M., 2020. The social life of mass and excess consumption. *Environmental Sociology*, *6*(3), pp.268-278.

Bourdieu, P., 1984[1979]. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P., 1990. *The logic of practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), pp.77-101.

Brewis, J., Hampton, M. P., and Linstead, S. A., 1997. Unpacking Priscilla: Subjectivity and Identity in the Organization of Gendered Appearance. *Human Relations*, *50*(10), pp.1275-1304.

Brice, J., Thorpe, H., Wheaton, B., and Longhurst, R., 2022. Postfeminism, consumption and activewear: Examining women consumers’ relationship with the postfeminine ideal. *Journal of Consumer Culture, 23*(3), pp.2-20.

Bristow, J., 2015. *Baby Boomers and Generational Conflict*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burkhalter, N., 1996. Women's magazines and the suffrage movement: Did they help or hinder the cause? *Journal of American Culture*, *19*(2), pp.13-24.

Burr, V., 1995. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Butler, J., 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, J., 2013. For white girls only? Postfeminism and the politics of inclusion. *Feminist Formations, 25*(1), pp.35-58.

Campbell, C., 1995. ‘The Sociology of Consumption’, in D. Miller (Eds.) *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*, pp. 96-126. London: Routledge.

Campbell, C., 2005. The craft consumer: Culture, craft and consumption in a postmodern society. *Journal of consumer culture*, *5*(1), pp.23-42.

Carey, L., Shaw, D., and Shiu, E., 2008. The impact of ethical concerns on family consumer decision-making. *International Journal of Consumption Studies, 32*(5), pp.553–560.

Casey, E. and Littler, J., 2022. Mrs Hinch, the rise of the cleanfluencer and the neoliberal refashioning of housework: Scouring away the crisis?. *The Sociological Review*, *70*(3), pp.489-505.

Castells, M., 1997. *The Power of Identity, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture Vol. II*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Chapkis, W., 1986. *Beauty secrets: Women and the politics of appearance*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Chen, E., 2013. Neoliberalism and Popular Women's Culture: Rethinking choice, freedom and agency. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *16*(4), pp.440-452.

Chris, G. and Elyse, S., 2013. Is green the new black?: Exploring ethical fashion consumption. In T. Lewis and E. Potter (Eds.) *Ethical Consumption*. London: Routledge.

Clarke, E., 1874. *Century American Medicine, 1776-1876*. New York: B. Franklin.

CNN, 2015. Livia Firth: 'Fast fashion companies are like drug pushers'*, CNN News*, 20 November. Available: https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/20/world/livia-firth-fast-fashion-wages/index.html

Condé Nast, 2019. *Vogue Brands*. [online] Available: https://web.archive.org/web/20221214184808/https://www.condenast.com/brands/*vogue*

Condé Nast, 2022. *Vogue Brands*. [online] Available: https://web.archive.org/web/20221214184808/https://www.condenast.com/brands/*vogue*

Conor, L., 2004. *The Spectacular Woman: Feminine Visibilities in the 1920s*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Conroy, J. and Paulins, V.A., 2017. The Relationship between Role Theory and Feminism in *Vogue* Advertisements from 1960-1990. *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual, 74*(1).

Cross, G.S., 2000. *An all-consuming century: Why commercialism won in modern America*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Cunningham, P.A., 2003. *Reforming Women's Fashion, 1850-1920*. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

Dabrowski, V., 2021. 'Neoliberal feminism' Legitimising the gendered moral project of austerity. *The Sociological Review*, *69*(1), pp.90-106.

Darian-Smith, E., 2004. *New Capitalists: Law, Politics, and Identity Surrounding Casino Gaming on Native Land*, ed. John Young. Belmont: Wadswoth.

Davies, B. and Gannon, S., 2005. Feminism poststructuralism. In B. Somekh, C. Lewin (Eds.) *Research methods in the social sciences*, pp.318-325.London: Sage Publishers.

Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Hopkins, L., McCann, H. and Wihlborg, M., 2006. Constituting the feminist subject in poststructuralist discourse. *Feminism & Psychology*, *16*(1), pp.87-103.

Davis, K., 1997. *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. California: Sage.

Dean, M., 2014. Rethinking neoliberalism. *Journal of Sociology*, *50*(2), pp.150-163.

Debord, G., 1992 [1967]. *Society of the spectacle*. London: Rebel Press.

Deckha, M., 2008. Disturbing images: PETA and the feminist ethics of animal advocacy. *Ethics and the Environment*, pp.35-76.

Delhaye, C., 2006. The development of consumption culture and the individualization of female identity: Fashion discourse in the Netherlands 1880-1920. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *6*(1), pp.87-115.

Dines, G., 1998, ‘Dirty business and the mainstreaming of pornography’. In G. Dines, R. Jensen & A. Russo (Eds.), *Pornography: The Production and Consumption of Inequality*, London: Routledge.

Dolin, E. J., 2011. *Fur, fortune, and empire: the epic history of the fur trade in America*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Donovan, J., 1990. Animal rights and feminist theory. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *15*(2), pp.350-375.

Dosekun S., 2017. The risky business of postfeminist beauty. In A.S Elias, R. Gill, C. Scharff (Eds.), *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*, pp.167–181. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dosekun, S., 2020. *Fashioning postfeminism: Spectacular femininity and transnational culture*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Doyle, J., 2016. Celebrity vegans and the lifestyling of ethical consumption. *Environmental communication*, *10*(6), pp.777-790.

du Gay, P., 1996. *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London: SAGE Publications.

Dyhouse, C., 2010. *Glamour: Women, history, feminism*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

EarthOrg, 2023, Fast Fashion and its Environmental Impacts, *EarthOrg,* 21 May, Available at: https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/

Eco-Stylist, 2022, Is H&M Sustainable? Is H&M Fast Fashion?, *Eco-Stylist*, 2 March. Available at: https://www.eco-stylist.com/how-sustainable-is-hm/

Edie Newsroom, 2021, 60% of sustainability claims by fashion giants are greenwashing, *NewsRoom,* 30 June. Available at: https://www.edie.net/report-60-of-sustainability-claims-by-fashion-giants-are-greenwashing/

Ehrenreich, B., 1983. *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment*. Cornell: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Ekrich, A., 1963. *Man and Nature in America*. New York: Colombia University Press.

Elias, A. S. and Gill, R. 2018. ‘Beauty surveillance: The digital self-monitoring cultures of neoliberalism’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21, pp.59-77.

Elias, A., Gill, R. and Scharff, C., 2017. *Aesthetic Labour: Rethinking beauty politics in neoliberalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elias, N., 1978 [1939]. *The Civilising Process vol. 1: The History of Manners*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Elias, N., 1982 [1939]. *The Civilising Process vol. 2: State Formation and Civilization*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Emberley, J., 2004 [1997]. *The cultural politics of fur*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Entwistle, J., 2000. *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory*. Malden: Polity Press.

Entwistle, J., 2001. ‘The Dressed Body’. In J. Entwistle and E. Wilson (Eds.) *Body Dressing*, pp. 33–58. Oxford: Berg.

Erkal, M.M., 2017. The cultural history of the corset and gendered body in social and literary landscapes. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, *3*(3), pp.109-118.

EuroNews, 2023. 'We are a part of the problem': How H&M, Mango and Zara are trying to clean up their act, *EuroNews Green*, 1 Sept. Available at: https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/09/01/we-are-part-of-the-problem-how-hm-mango-and-zara-are-trying-to-clean-up-their-act

Evans, A. and Riley, S., 2015. *Technologies of sexiness: Sex, identity, and consumer culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, C. and Thornton, M., 1989. *Women and Fashion: A New Look*. London: Quartet Books.

Evans, D., Welch, D. and Swaffield, J., 2017. Constructing and mobilizing 'the consumer': Responsibility, consumption and the politics of sustainability. *Environment and Planning, 49*(6), pp.1396-1412.

Evans, D. M., 2019. What is consumption, where has it been going, and does it still matter?. *The Sociological Review*, *67*(3), pp.499-517.

Evans, D. M., 2020. After Practice? Material Semiotic Approaches to Consumption and Economy. *Cultural Sociology*, *14*(4), pp.340-356.

Ewing, E., 1981. *Fur in Dress*. London: Batsford.

Fairclough, N., 2001. *Language and Power* (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

Farris, S. and Rottenberg, C., 2017. Introduction: Righting Feminism. *New Formations*, *91*(1), pp.5-15.

Faupel, A. and Werum, R., 2011. "Making her Own Way: The Individualization of First-Wave Feminism, 1910-1930. *Mobilization: An International Journal, 16*(2), pp.181-200.

Featherstone, M., 1982. 'The body in consumer culture', *Theory Culture & Society*, *1*(2), pp.18–33.

Featherstone, M., 1983. Consumer culture: an introduction. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *1*(3), pp.4-9.

Featherstone, M., 1991. *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London: Sage Publications.

Featherstone, M., 2014. 'Luxury, consumer culture and sumptuary dynamics', *Luxury*, *1*(1), pp. 47–69.

Fields, J., 1999. "Fighting the Corsetless Evil": Shaping Corsets and Culture, 1900-1930. In P. Scranton (Eds.) *Beauty and Business*. New York: Routledge.

Felksi, R., 1995. *The Gender of Modernity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ferguson, M., 1983. *Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity*. London: Heineman.

Findlay, R., 2023. "What's Getting Us Through": Grazia UK as affective, intimate public during the coronavirus pandemic. In I. Parkins and R. Filippello (Eds.), *Fashion and Feeling: The Affective Politics of Dress*. Palgrave Studies in Fashion and the Body, pp. 305-326. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan

Finkelstein, J., 1997. Chic Outrage and Body Politics, in K. Davies (Eds.) *EmbodiedPractices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: SAGE Publications.

Fisher, B. and Tronto, J. C., 1990 "Toward a Feminist Theory of Care." In (Eds.) E. K. Abel and M.K. Nelson (Eds.) *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, State University of New York Press.

Fletcher, R., 2015. Blinded by the stars? Celebrity, fantasy, and desire in neoliberal environmental governance, *Celebrity Studies*, *6*(4), pp. 1-14.

Fowler, S., 2013. The Commodification of the Native in the 21st Century. *Global Societies Journal*, *1*(1), pp.44-53.

Fox-Genovese, E., 1991. *Feminism Without Illusions: A Critique of Individualism*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Fox, N.J. and Alldred, P., 2017. Young bodies, power and resistance: A new materialist perspective. *Journal of youth studies*, *20*(9), pp.1161-1175.

Fox, N. J., Alldred, P., 2020. Sustainability, feminist posthumanism and the unusualcapacities of (post)humans. *Environmental Sociology*, *6*(2), pp.121-131.

Fraser, N., 2012. *Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History: AnIntroduction*. Paris: La Découverte.

Frasl, B., 2018. Bright young women, sick of swimmin', ready to... consume: The construction of postfeminist femininity in Disney's The Little Mermaid. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *25*(3), pp.341-354.

Friedan, B., 2010 [1963]. *The Feminine Mystique*. London: Penguin.

Gabriel, Y. and Lang, T., 2015. *The unmanageable consumer*. London: SAGE Publications.

Genz, S., 2006. Third Way/ve: The politics of postfeminism. *Feminist Theory*, *7*(3), pp.333-353.

Genz, S., 2021. Busting the 'post'? Postfeminist genealogies in millennial culture. In P. Herman, A. Veldhuizen, (Eds.) *Post-everything*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. pp.195-214.

Gill, R. 2007. Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 10*(2), pp.147–66.

Gill, R., 2008. Culture and subjectivity in neoliberal and postfeminist times. *Subjectivity, 25*(1), pp. 432–445.

Gill, R., 2008. Empowerment/sexism: Figuring female sexual agency in contemporary advertising. *Feminism & psychology*, *18*(1), pp.35-60.

Gill, R., 2009. Mediated intimacy and postfeminism: a discourse analytic examination of sex and relationships advice in a women's magazine. *Discourse & Communication*, *3*(4), pp.345-369.

Gill, R., 2016. Post-postfeminism? New feminist visibilities in postfeminist times. *Feminist Media Studies*, *16*(4), pp.610-630.

Gill, R., 2017. The affective, cultural and psychic life of postfeminism: A postfeminist sensibility 10 years on. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *20*(6), pp.606-626.

Gill, R. and Elias, A. S., 2014. ‘Awaken your incredible’: Love your body discourses and postfeminist contradictions. *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, *10*(2), pp. 179-188.

Gill, R. and Orgad, S., 2018. The Amazing Bounce-Backable Woman: Resilience and the Psychological Turn in Neoliberalism. *Sociological Research Online*, *23*(2), pp.477-495.

Gill, R. and Scharff, C., 2011. *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gill, R. and Toms, K., 2019. Trending Now: Feminism, sexism, misogyny and

postfeminism in British journalism. In: Carter, C., Steiner, L. and Allan, S. (Eds.), *Journalism, Gender and Power*, pp. 97-112. Routledge.

Gillis, S. and Munford, R., 2004. Genealogies and generations: The politics and praxis of third wave feminism. *Women’s History Review*, *13*(2), pp.165-182.

Gillis, S. and Hollows, J. eds., 2009. *Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Giraud, E. H., 2019. *What Comes after Entanglement?*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Glennie, P.D., 1995. *Consumption in historical studies*, in: D. Miller (Ed.) *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*, pp. 164-203. London, Routledge.

Godin, L., 2022. Care and consumption. *Consumption and Society, 1*(2), pp.398-406.

Goldman, R., Heath, D., and Smith, S. L., 1991. Commodity Feminism, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *8*(3), pp.333-51.

Gonick, M., Renold, E., Ringrose, J. and Weems, L., 2009. Rethinking agency and resistance: What comes after girl power? *Girlhood Studies*, *2*(2), pp.1-9.

Goodman, M. K. and Littler, J., 2013. Celebrity Ecologies: Introduction. *Celebrity Studies, 4*(3), pp.269-275.

Goodman, M.K., Littler, J., Brockington, D. and Boykoff, M., 2016. Spectacular environmentalisms: Media, knowledge and the framing of ecological politics. *Environmental Communication*, *10*(6), pp.677-688.

Gough-Yates, A., 2003. *Understanding Women’s Magazines: Publishing, markets and readership in late-twentieth century Britain*. London: Heinemann.

Gramsci, A., 1971. *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: International Publishers,

Greer, G., 1999. *The Whole Woman*. London: Doubleday.

Gronow, J., 1997. *The Sociology of Taste*. London: Routledge.

Gronow, J., 2004. ‘Standards of Taste and Varieties of Goodness: The (Un)predictability of Modern Consumption’, in M. Harvey, A. McMeekin and A. Warde (Eds.) *Theoretical Approaches to Food Quality*, pp. 38-60. Manchester: Manchester University Press

Gross, N., 2005. The Detraditionalization of Intimacy Reconsidered. *Sociological Theory*, 23(3), pp.286-331.

Grossberg, L., Miller, T. and Packer, J., 2003. Interview with Lawrence Grossberg and Toby Miller, in J.Z. Bratich, J. Packer, and C. McCarthy (Eds.) *Foucault, Cultural Studies and Governmentality*. New York: SUNY.

Groves, J.M., 2001. Animal rights and the politics of emotion: Folk constructs of emotions in the animal rights movement. *Passionate politics: Emotions and social movements*, pp.212-229.

Guardian, 2008. Q&A Pamela Anderson. *The Guardian*, 19 January. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2008/jan/19/1

Guardian, 2019. Ethical fashion campaigner Livia Firth: 'We have turned a corner finally', *The Guardian*, 22 September. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/sep/22/ethical-fashion-we-have-turned-a-corner-livia-firth-green-carpet-awards

Guardian, 2023. 'We managed to draw quite a crowd': a brief history of protest at fashion weeks, *The Guardian*, 20 September. Available at :https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/sep/20/we-managed-to-draw-quite-a-crowd-a-brief-history-of-protest-at-fashion-weeks

Guardian, 2023**.** Festivals, fashion and feather bandits: why ostrich plumage is still worth its weight in gold, *The Guardian,* 20. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/feb/20/ostrich-feathers-farming-south-africa-fashion-luxury-a-photo-essay

Gunderson, R., 2018. Spectacular reassurance strategies: how to reduce environmental concern while accelerating environmental harm. *Environmental Politics*, 29, pp.257-277.

H&M Group, 2017, H&M Bring It Campaign, *H&M,* 25 January. Available at: https://hmgroup.com/news/hm-bring-it-campaign/

Hahn, S.Y. and Yang, S.H., 2001. Symbolic Values of Fur in Fashion Since 1990s: An Analysis under the Theories of Fetishism. *Journal of fashion business*, *5*(5), pp.49-64.

Hains, R.C., 2012. An afternoon of productive play with problematic dolls: The importance of foregrounding children's voices in research. *Girlhood Studies*, *5*(1), pp.121-140.

Hall, S., 1980. 'Encoding/decoding', in S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and P. Willis (Eds.) *Culture, Media, Language*, London: Hutchinson.

Hall, S., 1997. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Hall, S. 1998. "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular," in J. Storey (Eds.) Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader, (Eds.), 442. London: Routledge.

Hall, S. and Jefferson, T., 1993. *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Postwar Britain*. New York: Routledge.

Hancock, B.H. and Garner, R., 2015. Erving Goffman: Theorizing the self in the age of advanced consumer capitalism. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *45*(2), pp.163-187.

Hamburger, J.F., 1997. *Nuns as artists: the visual culture of a medieval convent*. University of California Press.

Hannam, J., 2013. *Feminism*. London: Pearson Educated.

Haralovich, M.B., 1989. Sitcoms and suburbs: Positioning the 1950s homemaker. *Quarterly review of film & video*, *11*(1), pp.61-83.

Harvey, D., 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Hawkins, R., 2012. Shopping to save lives: Gender and environment theories meet ethical consumption. *Geoforum*, *43*(4), pp.750-759.

Heelas, P., Lash, S., and Morris, P. M. (Eds.), 1996. *Detraditionalization: Critical reflections on authority and identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Heger, K. and Hoffmann, C.P., 2021. Feminism! What is it good for? The role of feminism and political self-efficacy in women's online political participation. *Social Science Computer Review*, *39*(2), pp.226-244.

Herbrechter, S., 2013. *Posthuman: A Critical Analysis*. London: Bloomsbury.

Hermes, J., 1995. *Reading Women's Magazines: An analysis of everyday media use*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hilton, M., 2002. The female consumer and the politics of consumption in twentieth century Britain, *The Historical Journal*, *45*(1), pp.103-128.

Hilton, M., 2003. *Consumerism in twentieth-century Britain: The search for a historical movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hilton, M., 2004. The legacy of luxury: Moralities of consumption since the 18th century, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *4*(1), pp.101-123.

Hilton, M., 2007. Consumers and the State since the Second World War, *The Annals of the American Academy*, *661*(1), pp.66-81.

Hines, S., 2020. Sex wars and (trans) gender panics: Identity and body politics in contemporary UK feminism. *The Sociological Review*, *68*(4), pp.699-717.

Hochschild, A.R., 2000. The nanny chain. *American Prospect*, *11*(4), pp.32-36.

Hochschild, A.R., 2003. *The commercialization of intimate life: Notes from home and work*. University of California Press.

Hollin, G., Forsyth, I., Giraud, E. and Potts, T., 2017. (Dis) entangling Barad: Materialisms and ethics. *Social Studies of Science*, *47*(6), pp. 918-941.

Hollows, J. and Moseley, R., 2006. *Feminism in popular culture*. Oxford: Berg.

Jackson, S., Vares, T. and Gill, R., 2013. 'The whole playboy mansion image' Girls' fashioning and fashioned selves within a postfeminist culture. *Feminism & Psychology*, *23*(2), pp.143-162.

Jay, M., 1993. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. California: University of California Press.

Jay, M., 1995. Photo-unrealism: The Contribution of the Camera to the Crisis of Ocularcentrism. In Melville, S., Readings, B. (eds) *Vision and Textuality*. Palgrave, London.

Jenks, C., 1995. *Visual culture*. Psychology Press.

Jones, E., 2019. Rethinking greenwashing: Corporate discourse, unethical practice, and the unmet potential of ethical consumerism. *Sociological Perspectives*, *62*(5), pp.728-754.

Jørgensen, M. and Phillips, L. J., 2002. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Joy, A., Sherry, J.F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J. and Chan, R., 2012. Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion theory*, *16*(3), pp.273-295.

Kanai, A. and Gill, R., 2020. Woke? Affect, neoliberalism, marginalised identities and consumer culture. *New Formations*, 102, pp.10-27.

Karlsson, M.T. and Ramasar, V., 2020. Selling women the Green Dream: The paradox of feminism and sustainability in fashion marketing. *Journal of Political Ecology*, *27*(1), pp.335-359.

Kauppinen, K., 2013. 'Full power despite stress': A discourse analytical examination of the interconnectedness of postfeminism and neoliberalism in the domain of work in an international women's magazine. *Discourse and Communication*, *7*(2), pp.133-151.

Keist, C., 2017. "Stout Women Can Now Be Stylish": Sout women's fashions, 1910-1919, *Dress*, *43*(2), pp.99-117.

Keller, S., 2011. Compact Resistance: Public powdering and flânerie in the modern city, *Women's Studies,* 40, pp.299-335.

King, A., 2004. The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body. *Journal of International Women's Studies, 5*(2): 29-39.

Kinney, T., 2017. Cinch for instacurves: The discursive assemblage of waist trainers in new media. *Fat Studies*, *6*(2), pp.152-169.

König, A., 2006. Glossy words: An analysis of fashion writing in British *Vogue*. *Fashion theory*, *10*(1-2), pp.205-224.

Koopytoff, I., 1986. 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization asprocess'. In A. Appadurai (Eds.) *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kowaleski-Wallace, E., 1997. *Consuming subjects: women, shopping, and business in the eighteenth century*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Kress, G., 2010. *Multimodality: A Social semiotic Approach to ContemporaryCommunication*. London: Routledge.

Lamont, M. and Molnár, V., 2002. The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual review of sociology*, *28*(1), pp.167-195.

Landers, J., 2010. *The Improbable First Century of Cosmopolitan Magazine*. Missouri: University of Missouri Press.

Lasch, C., 1991. *The Culture of Narcissism*. New York: Norton.

Latour, B., 1991. *We have never been modern*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Laughlin, K. A., Gallagher, J., Cobble, D. S., Boris, E., Nadasen, P., Gilmore, S., and Zarnow, L., 2010. Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor. *Feminist Formations*, *22*(1), pp.76–135.

Lebovic, A., 2019a. Refashioning feminism: American *Vogue*, the second wave, and the transition to postfeminism. *Journal of Women's History*, *31*(1), pp.109-132.

Lebovic, A., 2019b. 'How to be in fashion and stay an individual': American *Vogue*, the origins of second wave feminism and mass culture criticism in 1950s America. *Gender & History*, *31*(1), pp.178-194.

Leach, W.R., 1984. Transformations in a culture of consumption: women and department stores, 1890-1925, *Journal of American History*, 71, pp. 319-342.

Lears, T. J. J., 1983. 'From salvation to self-realization: Advertising and the therapeutic roots of the consumer culture, 1880-1930', in R.W. Fox and T.J.Lears (Eds.) *The Culture of Consumption: Critical History of Advertising in America*, New York: Basic Books.

Legates, M., 2001. *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society*. London: Routledge.

Leopold, E., 1992. The manufacture of the fashion system., in J. Ash and E. Wilson (Eds.) *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Lewis, T. and Potter, E., 2013. *Ethical consumption: A critical introduction*. London: Routledge.

Li, J. and Lu, Z., 2014. Snow leopard poaching and trade in China 2000-2013. *Biological conservation*, 176, pp.207-211

Litosseliti, L., Gill, R., and Favaro, L. G., 2019. Postfeminism as a critical tool for gender and language study. *Gender and Language, 13*(1), pp.1-22.

Littler, J. and Rottenberg, C., 2020. Feminist solidarities: Theoretical and practical complexities. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28, pp. 864-877.

Littler, J., 2006. Celebrity CEOs and the cultural economy of tabloid intimacy, in Holmes, S. & Redmond, S. (Eds.) *Stardom and Celebrity*: *A Reader*. London: Sage.

Littler, J., 2007. "I feel your pain": Cosmpolitan charity and the public fashioning of the celebrity soul, *Social Semiotics, 18*(2), pp.237-251.

Littler, J., 2008. *Radical Consumption: Shopping for change in contemporary culture*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Littler, J., 2011. What's wrong with ethical consumption. Ethical consumption: A critical introduction, 47, pp.27-39.

Littler, J., 2013. The rise of the "yummy mummy": Popular conservatism and the neoliberal maternal in contemporary British culture. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *6*(2), pp.227-243.

Littler, J., 2014. Celebrity. In: *The Routledge Companion to Global Popular Culture*. Routledge Companions. Abingdon: Routledge.

Littler, J., 2015. The new Victorians? Celebrity charity and the demise of the welfare state. *Celebrity Studies*, *6*(4), pp. 471-485.

Littler, J., 2016. 'Consumer culture and cultural studies'. In D. Shaw, M. Carrington, & A. Chatzidakis, (Eds.), Ethics and Morality in Consumption: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. New York: Routledge. pp. 233-247.

Littler, J., 2017. Desperate Success: Managing the mumpreneur. In: Littler, J. (Eds.), *Against Meritocracy: Culture, power and myths of mobility*. Routledge. pp. 179-211.

Lipovetsky G., 1994. *The empire of fashion: dressing modern democracy*. Princeton University Press.

Luna Mora, J., Berry, J. and Salen, P., 2018. The Yoga Industry: A conscious luxury experience in the transformation economy. *Luxury, 5*(22), pp. 173-96.

Luna Mora, J. and Berry, J., 2021. The invisible corset: discipline, control and surveillance in contemporary yogawear. *Film, Fashion & Consumption, 10*(2), pp. 401–423.

Lury, C., 2011 [2001 ,1996]. *Consumer culture*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Maclaran, P., 2012. Marketing and feminism in historic perspective. *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*, *4*(3), pp.462-469.

Maddox, J., 2021. “Be a badass with a good ass”: Race, freakery, and postfeminism in the #StrongIsTheNewSkinny beauty myth. *Feminist Media Studies, 21*(2), pp.211-232.

Maguire, J.S. and Matthews, J. eds., 2014. *The cultural intermediaries reader*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Majláth, M., 2017. The Effect of Greenwashing Information on Ad Evaluation. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, *6*(3), pp. 92.

Mann, P.S., 1994. *Micro-politics: Agency in a postfeminist era*. University of Minnesota Press.

Mansfield, N., Fensham, R., Threadgold, T. and Tulloch, J., 2000. *Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*. New South Wales: Allen & Unwin.

Marks, P., 1990. *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers: The New Woman in the Popular Press*, University Press of Kentucky: Lexington.

Martens, L., & Casey, E. Eds., 2007. *Gender and Consumption: Domestic Cultures and the Commercialisation of Everyday Life* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.

Martens, L., 2009. Feminism and the Critique of Consumer Culture: 1950-1970, in S. Gillis & J. Hollows (Eds.) *Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, pp. 33-48.

Martínez-Jiménez, L., 2022. Postfeminist neoliberalization of self-care: a critical discourse analysis of its representation in *Vogue*, Cosmopolitan and Elle. *Feminist Media Studies*, *23*(6), pp.2814-2830.

Mauch, C., Stoltzfus, N. and Weiner, D.R., 2006. *Shades of Green: Environment Activism Around the Globe*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Mayr, A. and Machin, D., 2012. *How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

McClintock, A., 1995. Imperial Leather: Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial conquest. London: Routledge.

McCoy, L., Wang, Y. T., and Chi, T., 2021. Why is Collaborative Apparel Consumption Gaining Popularity? An Empirical Study of US Gen Z Consumers. *Sustainability, 13*(15), pp.8360

McKendrick, N., Brewer, J. and Plumb, J.H., 1982. *The Birth of Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England.* London: Hutchinson.

McRobbie, A. and Garber, J., 1976. Girls and subcultures. In S. Hall and T. Jefferson (Eds.), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain.* London: Harper Collins Academic.

McRobbie, A. and Garber, J., 1991. Girls and subcultures. In A. McRobbie (Eds.), *Feminism and youth culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

McRobbie, A., 1994. *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.

McRobbie, A., 1997. Bridging the Gap: Feminism, Fashion and Consumption. *Feminist Review*, *55*(1), pp.73-89.

McRobbie, A., 1997. *Back to reality*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

McRobbie, A., 2004. Postfeminism and popular culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, *4*(3), pp.255-264.

McRobbie, A., 2007. TOP GIRLS?. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(4-5), pp.718-737.

McRobbie, A., 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage Publications.

McRobbie, A., 2011. Beyond post-feminism, *Public Policy Research*, *18*(3), pp.173-184.

McRobbie, A., 2015. Notes on the perfect: Competitive femininity in neoliberal times. *Australian feminist studies*, *30*(83), pp.3-20.

Mendes, K., 2011. 'The lady is a closet feminist!': Discourses of backlash and postfeminism in British and American newspapers. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *14*(6), pp.549-565.

Mendes, K., 2012. 'Feminism rules! Now, where's my swimsuit?': Re-evaluating feminist discourse in print media 1968–2008. *Media, Culture & Society*, *34*(5), pp.554-570.

Micheletti, M., 2003. *Political Virtue and Shopping*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mickey, E. L., 2019. "'Eat, Pray, Love' Bullshit": Women's Empowerment through Wellness at an Elite Professional Conference. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 41*(1), pp.103-127.

Miller, D., 1987. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miller, D., 1995. *Acknowledging Consumption: A Review of New Studies*. London: Routledge.

Miller, D., 1997. *Material culture and mass consumerism*. John Wiley & Sons.

Miller, D., 2005. *Acknowledging consumption*. London: Routledge.

Milestone, K. and Meyer, A., 2011. *Gender and Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Polity.

Miralles, N. S., 2021. *Glossy: The inside story of Vogue*. London: Hachette.

Mirzaei S, Shokouhyar S., 2023. Applying a thematic analysis in identifying the role of circular economy in sustainable supply chain practices. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, *25*(5) pp.4691-722.

Moore, L. J., 2018. *Catch and Release: The Enduring Yet Vulnerable Horseshoe Crab*. New York: NYU Press.

Mukherjee, R. and Banet-Weiser, S. eds., 2012. *Commodity activism: Cultural resistance in neoliberal times*. New York: NYU Press.

Murphy, P. D., 2021. Speaking for the youth, speaking for the planet: Greta Thunberg and the representational politics of eco-celebrity. *Popular Communication*, *19*(3), pp.193-206.

Nava, M., 1992. *Changing cultures: feminism, youth and consumerism*. London: Sage Publications.

Nava, M., 1997. 'Women, the city and the department store', in P. Falk and C. Campbell (eds) *The Shopping Experience*, London: Sage.

Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T. and Gwilt, A., 2020. The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, *1*(4), pp.189-200.

Nixon, S. 1996., *Hard Looks: Masculinities, spectatorship and contemporary consumption*. London: UCL Press.

Norgaard, K. M., 2011. *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life*. The MIT Press.

Offen, K., 1988. Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach. *Signs*, *14*(1), pp.119–157.

Ortner, S. B., 1984. Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *26*(1), pp.126–166.

Osgerby, B., 2005. The bachelor pad as cultural icon: masculinity, consumption and interior design in American men's magazines, 1930–65. *Journal of Design History*, *18*(1), pp.99-113.

Palomo-Lovinski, N. and Hahn, K., 2020. American Consumer Perceptions of Sustainable Fashion. *The International Journal of Sustainability in Economic, Social and Cultural Context*, *16*(1), p.15.

Park, L. S. H. and Pellow, D. N., 2011. The case of the missing mountain: Migration and the power of place. *Communities, neighbourhoods, and health: Expanding the boundaries of place*, 1, pp.111-126.

Parkins, I., 2008. Building a feminist theory of fashion. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 23(58), pp. 501–15.

Parzer, M. and Astleithner, F., 2018. More than just shopping: Ethnic majority consumers and cosmopolitanism in immigrant grocery shops. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, *44*(7), pp.1117-1135.

Payne, K., 2001. *Different but Equal: Communication Between the Sexes*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.

Peiss, K., 1998. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Peterson, R.A. and Simkus, A., 1992. 'How Musical Tastes Mark Occupational Status Groups'. In M. Lamont and M. Fournier (Eds.) *Cultivating Differences*, pp. 152–86. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Petersson McIntyre, M., 2021. Commodifying feminism: Economic choice and agency in the context of lifestyle influencers and gender consultants. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *28*(3), pp.1059-1078.

Phillips, N. and Hardy, C., 2002. *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of Social construction*. Sage Publications.

Pickering, M. ed., 2008. *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Porter, J., 2014. *Native American Environmentalism: Land, Spirit, and the Idea of Wilderness*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.

Rabinovitch-Fox, E., 2016. Baby, You Can Drive My Car: Advertising Women's Freedom in 1920s America. *American Journalism*, *33*(4), pp.372-400.

Radner, H., 1995. Speaking the body: Jane Fonda's workout book. In H. Radner (Ed.), *Shopping around: Feminine culture and the pursuit of pleasure*. New York: Routledge.

Rapp, R., 1988. Is the legacy of second wave feminism post-feminism? *Socialist Review*, 98, pp.31-7.

Rappaport, E. D., 1996. "'The Halls of Temptation': Gender, Politics, and the Construction of the Department Store in Late Victorian London," *Journal of British Studies*. Cambridge University Press, *35*(1), pp. 58–83.

Repo, J., 2020. Feminist commodity activism: The new political economy of feminist protest. *International Political Sociology*, *14*(2), pp.215-232.

Ritchie, J., 2021. Movement from the margins to global recognition, climate change activism by young people and in particular indigenous youth. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 30, pp.53-72.

Rose, G., 2001. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage.

Rose, G., 2014. On the relation between 'visual research methods' and contemporary visual culture. *The Sociological Review*, *62*(1), pp.24-46.

Rose, G., 2016. *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. Fourth edition. London: Sage.

Rose, N., 1996. *Inventing Our Selves*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rottenberg, C., 2014. Happiness and the liberal imagination: How superwoman became balanced. *Feminist Studies*, *40*(1), pp.144-168.

Rottenberg, C., 2018. *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism*. Oxford University Press.

Sailer, A., Wilfing, H. and Straus, E., 2022. Greenwashing and bluewashing in black Friday-related sustainable fashion marketing on Instagram. *Sustainability*, *14*(3), p.1494.

Sassatelli, R., 2007. *Consumer Culture: History, Theory, Politics*. London: SAGE Publications.

Sayer, A., 2003. '(De)commodification, Consumer Culture, and Moral Economy', *Environment and Planning, Society and Space*, *21*(3), pp. 341–357.

Scharff, C., 2012. *Repudiating Feminism*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Schudson, M., 2007. Citizens, consumers, and the good society. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, *611*(1), pp.236-249.

Scott, L. M., 2006. *Fresh lipstick: Redressing fashion and feminism*. New York: Macmillan.

Schneider, J., 1994. In and out of polyester: Desire, disdain and global fibre competitions. *Anthropology Today*, *10*(4), pp.2-10.

Seaton, W., 2017 “Doing Her Best with What She’s Got’: Authorship, Irony, and Mediating Feminist Identities in Lena Dunham’s Girls,” in Reading Lena Dunham’s Girls, (Eds.) E. Nash and I. Whelehan, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp.149- 162.

Seaton, W., 2018. “The Labour of Postfeminist Performance: Postfeminism, Authenticity and Celebrity in Representations of Girlhood on Screen” (PhD diss., Keele University).

Sedgwick, C., 2020. *Feminist Media: From the Second Wave to the Digital Age*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Shankman, P., 2018. The Public Anthropology of Margaret Mead: *Redbook*, Women’s Issues, and the 1960s. *Current Anthropology*, *59*(1), pp. 55-73.

Sharot, S., 2010. The ‘New Woman’, star personas, and cross-class romance films in 1920s America. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *19*(1), pp.73-86.

Shaw, D., McMaster, R., Longo, C., and Özçaglar-Toulouse, N., 2017. Ethical qualities in consumption: towards a theory of care. *Marketing Theory*, *17*(4), pp.415-433.

Silla, C., 2018. *The Rise of Consumer Capitalsim in America, 1880-1930*. London: Routeledge.

Skov, L., 2005. The return of the fur coat: A commodity chain perspective. *Current Sociology*, *53*(1), pp.9-32.

Slater, D., 1997. *Consumer Culture and Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.

Soley, L. C. and Reid, L. N., 1988. Taking it off: Are models in magazine ads wearing less?. *Journalism quarterly*, *65*(4), pp.960-966.

Spectator, 2020, The Rise and Fall of Mink, *The Spectator*, 14 November. Available at: https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-rise-and-fall-of-mink/

Strengers, Y. and Kennedy, J., 2020 "MEET THE SMART WIFE," in *The Smart Wife: Why Siri, Alexa, and Other Smart Home Devices Need a Feminist Reboot* , MIT Press.

Steele, V., 2001. *The Corset: A Cultural History*. Yale University Press.

Stevenson, A., 2014. 'Symbols of our slavery': Fashion and the rhetoric of dress reform in Nineteenth-century American print culture. *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*, 20, pp.5-20.

Strege, G., 2014. Fur as fashion in America. *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*, *1*(3), pp.413-432.

Sukarieh, M. and Tannock. S., 2015. *Youth Rising?: The Politics of Youth in the Global Economy*. New York: Routledge.

Taft, J. K., 2020. Hopeful, harmless, and heroic: Figuring the girl activist as global savior. *Girlhood Studies, 13*(2), pp.1–17.

Tasker, Y. and Negra, D., 2008, *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Tasker, Y. and Negra, D., 2014. *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity*. Duke University Press.

Taylor, A., 2020. The Most Revolting Ideas I've Read in a Woman's Magazine': The Female Eunuch, Affective (dis) investments, and McCall's Reader-writers. *Australian Feminist Studies*, *35*(103), pp.20-36.

Temmerman, M., Van De Voorde, M. and Coesemans, R., 2018. Looking for Prince Charming: A Diachronic Discourse Analysis of Love and Relationships in Flemish Women's Magazines. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, *10*(1), pp.98-114.

Teo, H. M., 1999. Constructions of gender and racial identities in inter-war British women's travel writing. *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*, 5, pp.124-137.

Thorpe, H., Toffoletti, K. and Bruce, T., 2017. Sportswomen and social media: Bringing third-wave feminism, postfeminism, and neoliberal feminism into conversation. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *41*(5), pp.359-383.

Tinkler, P. and Warsh, C. K., 2008. Feminine modernity in interwar Britain and North America: Corsets, cars, and cigarettes. *Journal of Women's History*, *20*(3), pp.113-143.

Tinkler, P., 2021. Going places or out of place? Representations of mobile girls and young women in late-1950s and 1960s *Britain*. *Twentieth Century British History*, *32*(2), pp.212-237.

Todd, Z., 2016. An indigenous feminist's take on the ontological turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for colonialism. *Journal of historical sociology*, 29(1), pp.4-22.

Trentmann, F., 2006. *The making of the consumer: Knowledge, power and identity in the modern world*. Berg Publishers.

Trentmann, F., 2007. Citizenship and consumption. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *7*(2), pp.147-158.

Trentmann, F., 2009. Materiality in the future of history: Things, practices, and politics. *Journal of British studies*, *48*(2), pp.283-307.

Trentmann, F., 2016. *Empire of things: How we became a world of consumers, from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first*. London: Penguin.

Tronto, J. C., 1998. An Ethic of Care. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, *22*(3), 15–20.

Tyler, I., 2007. The Selfish Feminist: Public images of women's liberation. *Australian feminist studies*, *22*(53), pp.173-190.

V&A Muesum, 2019. Dumb Animals: Lynx's Campaign Against the Fur Industry (V&A Blog), 7 January. Available at: https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/projects/dumb-animals-lynxs-campaign-against-the-fur-industry

Vanity Fair, 2011, 'The Cult of Diana', *Vanity Fair*, 14 July. Available at: https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1993/11/diana-vreeland-199311

Varman, R. and Vikas, R. M., 2007. Freedom and Consumption: Toward Conceptualizing Systemic Constraints for Subaltern Consumers in a Capitalist Society. *Consumption, Markets and Culture, 10*(2), pp. 117-131.

Veblen, T., 2006. *Conspicuous Consumption*, New York: Penguin Books.

Vogue, 2023, Our Future: Billie Eilish on Climate Activism and Radical Hope. *Vogue Online*, 4 January. Available at: https://www.*vogue*.com/article/billie-eilish-climate-activism-january-cover-2022-video

Wandel, M. and Bugge, A., 1997. Environmental concern in consumer evaluation of food quality. *Food quality and preference*, *8*(1), pp.19-26.

Warde, A., 1997. *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Warde, A., 2005. Consumption and theories of practice. *Journal of consumer culture*, *5*(2), pp.131-153.

Warde, A., 2014. After taste: Culture, consumption, and theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *14*(3) p.279-303.

Warde, A., 2016. *Consumption: A sociological analysis*. London: Springer.

Warde, A., 2022. Society and Consumption. *Consumption and Society*, *1*(1), pp.11-30.

Warde, A., Welch, D. and Paddock, J., 2017. Studying consumption through. Routledge handbook on consumption. In M. Keller, B. Halkier, T. Wilska, M. Truninger, (Eds.) *Routledge Handbook on Consumption*. London: Routledge.

Warde, A., Wright, D. and Gayo-Cal, M., 2007. 'Understanding Cultural Omnivorousness Or, the Myth of the Cultural Omnivore', *Cultural Sociology*, *1*(2), pp.143–164.

Weedon, C., 1987. *Feminist Practice and Post-Structuralist Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Welch, D., 2020. Consumption and teleoaffective formations: Consumer culture and commercial communications. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *20*(1), pp.61-82.

Welch, D., Sahakian, M. and Wahlen, S., 2022. Consumption and society in the 21st century. *Consumption and Society*, *1*(1), pp.244-254.

Whelehan, I., 1995. *Modern Feminist Thought. From the Second Wave to 'Post Feminism'*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Whelehan, I., 2010. Remaking feminism: Or why is postfeminism so boring?. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, *9*(3), pp.155-172.

Wilde, M.D. and Parry, S., 2022. Feminised concern or feminist care? Reclaiming gender normativities in zero waste living. *The Sociological Review*, *70*(3), pp.526-546.

Willett, C., and Cunnington, P., 1992. *The History of Underclothes*. London: Dover Publications.

Wilson, E, and Ash, J., 1992. *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader*. London: Pandora.

Wilson, E., 2003 [1983]. *Adorned in dreams: Fashion and modernity*. Rutgers University Press.

Wilson, E., 2003 [1985]. *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*. London: Virago.

Wimmer, A., 2013. Ethnic boundary making: Institutions, power, networks. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winch, A., Littler, J. and Keller, J., 2016. Why "intergenerational feminist media studies"?. *Feminist Media Studies*, *16*(4), pp.557-572.

Winship, J., 1987. *Inside women's magazines*. London: Pandora.

Wolf, N., 1991. *The beauty myth: How images of beauty are used against women*. New York: William Morrow.

Wood, R., 2021. ‘What I’m not gonna buy’: Algorithmic culture jamming and anti-consumer politics on YouTube. *New Media & Society*, *23*(9), pp. 2754–2772.

Wouters, C., 1986. Formalization and Informalization: Changing Tension Balances in Civilizing Processes. Theory, *Culture & Society*, *3*(2), pp.1-18.

Wouters, C., 2004. *Sex and Manners: Female Emancipation in the West 1890-2000*. London: SAGE Publications.

Wouters, C., 2007. *Informalization: Manners and Emotions since 1890*. London: SAGE Publications.

Wrenn, C. L., 2013. Resonance of moral shocks in abolitionist animal rights

advocacy: Overcoming contextual constraints. *Society & Animals*, *21*(4), pp.379-394.

Young, I.M., 2003. The logic of masculinist protection: Reflections on the current security state. *Signs: journal of women in culture and society*, *29*(1), pp.1-25.

Ytre-Arne, B., 2011. Women’s magazines and the public sphere. *European Journal of Communication*, *26*(3), pp.247-261

Zeisler, A., 2016. *We Were Feminists Once*. New York: Public Affairs.

Zhang, B., Zhang, Y. and Zhou, P., 2021. Consumer attitude towards sustainability of fast fashion products in the UK. *Sustainability*, *13*(4), pp.1646-69.

Appendix

US *Vogue* Magazine - Table of Full Read Issues:

- 27 September 1900
- 11 May 1905
- 14 January 1909
- 1 September 1910
- 15 May 1914
- 1 May 1915
- 1 October 1917
- 15 January 1920
- 15 May 1920
- 1 January 1921
- 1 December 1922
- 15 September 1923
- 1 January 1925
- 1 May 1925
- 1 September 1926
- 19 January 1929
- 1 May 1929
- 28 November 1929
- 18 January 1930
- 1 August 1958
- 1 September 1958
- 1 May 1959
- 1 January 1960
- 1 May 1960
- 1 January 1962
- 1 May 1962
- 1 May 1964
- 1 May 1965
- 1 September 1965
- 1 May 1966
- 1 August 1966
- 1 April 1967
- 1 January 1969
- 1 May 1969
- 1 September 1969
- 1 January 1970
- 1 September 1971
- 1 September 1972
- 1 October 1977
- 1 May 1975
- 1 September 1972
- 1 October 1977
- 1 January 1980
- 1 May 1980
- 1 September 1982
- 1 December 1982
- 1 May 1985
- 1 September 1985
- 1 November 1987
- 1 September 1988
- 1 January 1989
- 1 September 1989
- 1 September 1990
- 1 December 1991
- 1 May 1995
- 1 November 1999
- 1 May 2007
- 1 May 2010
- 1 September 2010
- 1 January 2012
- 1 May 2013
- 1 January 2015
- 1 September 2015
- 1 May 2017
- 1 September 2017
- 1 January 2018
- 1 October 2018
- 1 January 2019
- 1 September 2019
- 1 November 2019
- 1 May 2020
- 1 October 2020
- 1 May 2021
- 1 October 2021
- 1 January 2022