

This is a pre-publication version of a book chapter to be published in Geczy, Adam and Karaminas, Vicki (eds) (2018/Forthcoming) *The End of Fashion: Clothing and Dress in the Age of Globalization*. London: Bloomsbury.

Mediatization and Digital Retail

Agnès Rocamora

Introduction

The word “mediatization,” although not a new one,¹ was refashioned—“awakened” as Gianpetro Mazzoleni puts it²—in the late twentieth century, but especially in the early 2000s by social sciences and humanities scholars to reconceptualize the relation between media and society. Whereas media had often been studied as conveyors of meaning, they started being conceived as agents active in the making and transformation of social and cultural practices. In the growing literature on mediatization,³ the contrast between the two approaches is sometimes signalled by the use of the term “mediation” to refer to the representational role of the media and “mediatization” to refer to their agentic power.⁴ Studying mediatization does not mean studying the media *per se*, but rather studying the sites and practices they saturate and shape, and the forms this shaping takes. As Rothenbuhler puts it, mediatization is “the process by which activities of various social spheres come to be conducted under the influence of the media, with the media, through the media, or by the logic of the media”.⁵ Mediatization interrogates the transformative power of the media, and their role in the “moulding” of society is the focus of theoretical and empirical discussions, and a guiding research agenda.⁶

The bulk of mediatization studies has concentrated on politics. However, the concept is useful for investigating a broad range of practices and fields, including fashion, as I have argued in an article in the journal *Fashion Theory*.⁷ In that article I discussed examples of fashion shows, bricks and mortar retail, and makeup, in the light of digital culture and argued for the importance of mediatization as articulated in digital media, as opposed to traditional, mass media. Indeed, much of the literature on mediatization has attended to this process as taking place through the latter, but more attention needs to be paid to the specificity of digital mediatization.⁸ As Kunilius *et al.* observe “the dominant mediatization narrative still extrapolates from the epoch and

conditions of mass mediatization. This begs the question, how is this theorizing valid in the current, networked media environment and infrastructure.”⁹

In this chapter I pursue my engagement with the idea of digital mediatization, and in particular as taking place in the field of fashion, by focusing on e-commerce. It is also an opportunity for me to return to a concept that is useful for making sense of digital fashion media: remediation.¹⁰ In bringing mediatization and remediation together in an analysis of fashion e-commerce, the chapter also turns to the notion of commercialisation to account for the ways it intersects with both remediation and mediatization. It shows that current online fashion retail practices allow us to explore the congruence of processes of mediatization, remediation and commercialisation. This chapter first looks at the rise of e-commerce, and more specifically at the concept of shoppable magazines, to comment on the idea of the history of the mediatization of fashion commerce, and on the logic of entertainment that underpins retail and the media. It then turns to the notion of remediation as a way of conceptualising shoppable magazines, and to examine mediatization in relation to digital culture. Finally, it addresses the theme of commercialisation, discussing the idea of brands as publishers—and the related notions of branded content, content marketing and native journalism—in the light of the idea of the commodification of everyday life through online fashion.

In exploring the nexus mediatization/remediation/commercialisation in the field of fashion, this chapter aims to contribute not only to current debates on mediatization, but also to understandings of recent developments in the field of fashion. What is discussed is not the end of fashion, contra many pessimistic views of the current state of both fashion and the media, but fashion’s reconfiguration. This chapter thus shows the relevance of all three concepts for grasping this reconfiguration.

D) e-commerce and shoppable magazines: context

While the nineteenth century was the century of the department store, the twentieth century that of the shopping mall, the twenty-first century could be seen as that of online commerce. Facilitated by the use of credit cards, non-store retailing grew in the 1990s¹¹, and, today, online commerce is “the fastest growing retail channel.”¹² Also known as e-commerce, online retail began in 1995. At first relatively shy—in March 1996, for instance, nine months after it had gone online Argos had sold only

twenty two items¹³—it quickly accelerated. In 2015 in Great Britain alone, business-to-consumer e-commerce reached 157 billion Euros,¹⁴ with 77% of UK Internet users having purchased something online.¹⁵ And in the UK, as in many countries, the most popular type of online purchase is clothing (Ecommerce news 2017), which, together with textile and footwear, accounted for 14.1% of all online retailing in April 2017.¹⁶ The emergence of e-commerce followed an older tradition of home shopping by phone and mail through print catalogues and television. However, with the rise of mobile technologies such as smart phones and tablets, non-store shopping soon detached itself from the fixity of place to become mobile, in the form currently known as m-commerce. Thus, in the words of Kenneth Laudon and Carol Traver, “in 2015, 2.25 billion people worldwide use a mobile device to access the Internet, and over 45% of total Internet traffic comes from mobile devices.”¹⁷ E-commerce is also s-commerce, which stands for “social commerce,” a form of commerce where social networks and online sociability enables.¹⁸ This includes platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat. Social e-commerce is still in its early days. However, as Laudon and Traver observe, “in 2014, the top 500 retailers in Internet Retailer’s Social Media 500 earned about \$3.3 billion from social commerce, a 25% increase over 2013.”¹⁹

Where window-shopping once referred to looking through the panes of glass of shop frontages, it now also involves engaging with a digital screen.²⁰ Where it once involved an urban *flânerie* only, it now involves digital *flânerie* as well.²¹ As Anne Friedberg puts it “to glide electronically through shops” has become “the digital equivalent of an escalator ride.”²² The words of New York’s Saks Fifth Avenue fashion director Roopal Patel somewhat capture the importance that digital window shopping has taken up in consumers’ lives. In discussing the store’s recent see-now-buy-now operation during the New York and Paris collections, Patel states: “The Fifth Avenue windows were set to go live at 9 p.m. after the [Ralph Lauren] show and a digital e-mail was sent to customers immediately after the show went live.”²³ Here, an expression, “go live”, normally used in reference to the launch of online events and websites, is applied to a bricks and mortar space. This semantic transfer is also indicative of the merging of off- and online retail practices: omni-channel retailing - the selling of products through various channels and the integration of bricks and mortar stores with websites and mobile platforms²⁴ - is currently on the agenda of many retailers and brands.

The history of e-commerce is also the history of the development of ever-new and enticing ways of capturing the attention of online users. The year 2000 saw the creation of *Net-a-Porter.com*, the first luxury fashion e-commerce site, and in October 2016 it was said to have 5.2 millions visits per month.²⁴ In 2013 *Net-a-Porter* launched the weekly *The Edit*. With an editor's letter, a contents list, fashion features and fashion spreads this online magazine/e-commerce space looks, on the screen, like a traditional print glossy, only, it is immediately shoppable—hence the name “shoppable magazine”—for by clicking on a link the user can head towards check out. There, goods are worn by models and laid out as on the pages of a glossy, captioned by attention-grabbing headlines. By clicking on the arrows on the left or right outer margins of the digital magazine layout, the user can browse through the issue, turning the pages of *The Edit* as if those of a print magazine. Advertisements are included, once again, as in “glossies”. The front pages are reminiscent of the covers of *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and other high fashion magazine titles. The 10 May 2017 issue, for instance, features social media fashion celebrity Olivia Palermo sitting on the stairs of a grand mansion, while the cover lines read “Secrets of Chic,” “Wave Hello” and “Need Right Now,” the latter indeed capturing the immediacy shoppable magazines afford, with expressions such as “right now,” “the latest,” or “just in” having become common tropes of online fashion.²⁵

In *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern*, Anne Friedberg refers to the “mobilized gaze” for the way of looking at goods that emerged with their *mise-en-scène* in the nineteenth century.²⁶ An elaborate staging of commodities started serving as a facilitator for the gaze of the passersby, encouraging consumption. The gaze became transformed into a commodity and “sold to a consumer-spectator.”²⁷ In the late twentieth century and early 2000s, and in the context of what some have described as a “poverty of attention”²⁸ enticing shoppers to click through to check out means finding new ways of mobilising and catching the contemporary mobilized gaze; the fickle gaze of the digital *flâneur*.²⁹ A lavish layout such as that of shoppable magazines is instrumental in this mobilisation.

The Edit is not the only shoppable magazine, and *Net-a-Porter* not the only e-commerce platform that is also a purveyor of editorial content. A newcomer, for instance, is *Semaine.com*, launched in 2015. *Vogue* describes it as an “online magazine-meets-concept store.”³⁰ Each week is devoted to a new personality, interviewed about their life, their work, their taste, their favourite outfits, all instantly

shoppable in a “shop profile” section. Capturing the ideal of time-space compression that underpins many online platforms, Georgina Harding, the creator of the site, states that “everything is within reach.”³¹ On accessing the home page, the user can head straight to the “shop” section, or she or he can choose to access past profiles in a “stories” section that features, amongst others, Leaf Greener, Caroline de Maigret, Pixie Geldof, Nick Jones, Jean-Charles de Castelbajac. From there the user will always be able to browse and purchase goods.

A shoppable magazine is an online platform but it can also be a print one. Where *The Edit* is a shoppable e-magazine, *Net-a-Porter* is also behind the shoppable print magazine, *Porter*. Launched in 2014, and with six issues a year, *Porter* resembles the likes of *Vogue*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Elle* and other traditional fashion magazines. An app enables the reader to scan the goods featured on its pages to then acquire them online. As with *The Edit* the commercial and the editorial blend with each other. Such blending also informed publishing group *Condé Nast*’s decision to make *Vogue* and *GQ* shoppable via *Style.com/Vogue* and *Style.com/GQ*. Formerly reserved for editorial content, *Style.com* was revamped in 2015 to become a commercial platform. In April 2017 it started featuring lavish shoppable “The Vogue edit” and “The GQ edit” fashion spreads. Online viewers were invited to “shop the shoot”. They could buy “As seen in” *Vogue/GQ* items by clicking through related hyperlinks. In June 2017 *Style.com* was discontinued and, following a partnership between *Vogue.com* and e-commerce website *Farfetch.com*, users started being redirected to *Farfetch*. An official statement reads: “The partnership will offer readers the unique ability to browse and shop *Condé Nast*’s inspirational editorial content on a global scale, further commercialising the editorial platform”.³² Similarly the digital platforms of magazines such as *Harper’s* or *Grazia* allow readers to instantly buy some of the products featured by clicking on a hyperlink that takes them to an e-commerce site selling the linked product. In the field of fashion the distinction between commercial and editorial content is becoming increasingly tenuous, an idea I will return to later.

Shaped by the format of fashion magazines, and sometimes indistinguishable from them, e-commerce platforms instantiate the process of mediatization that is informing online fashion retail. It is characterized here by the transformation of online retailers into media content providers akin to traditional fashion media. The notion of “media logic” is useful for understanding this idea. Developed by David Altheide and

Robert Snow “media logic” has underpinned much discussion of mediatisation, where the latter is defined, then, as referring to the process whereby, in their ways of doing, institutions conform to media logic.³³ It functions, Altheide and Snow argue, “as a form through which events and ideas are interpreted and acted upon.”³⁴ It is a “way of ‘seeing’” and “consists of form of communication; the process through which media present and transmit information.”³⁵ By adopting the format of glossies—including a glamorous cover image with cover lines, a content list, an editorial, features, fashion stories, beauty and travel sections—the way sites such as *Net-a-Porter* commercialise their goods is an instance of mediatization. No longer are they simply commercial platforms, they are editorial ones too, a transformation indicative of the mediatization of e-commerce.

Furthermore, Altheide and Snow identify entertainment as a key dimension of media logic.³⁶ The logic of entertainment, they write, has become “a ‘normal form’ of communication.”³⁷ Similarly, entertainment has long been a key component of shopping.³⁸ Indeed, with the advent of department stores, the nineteenth century sealed the relation between consumption and spectacle, also making of shopping “an acceptable leisure activity.”³⁹ Thus, “the history of modern consumer culture,” Grunenberg writes, is “in essence also a history of the continuous evolution and ever increasing sophistication of commercial display and presentation methods.”⁴⁰ Grunenberg does not discuss e-commerce, but the novel use of content-rich formats such as shoppable magazines is another step towards the increasing sophistication that he writes about. Thus the use of the print media format in e-commerce can be seen in the light of a logic of entertainment that is at the heart of both the media and retail. Mediatization allows for the consolidation of e-shopping as a source of entertainment, much like browsing through a fashion magazine and its fashion stories. It is a logic that serves the interest of capitalism and brands’ aim to increase their profit by selling ever more commodities, an issue dealt with in the final section of this chapter.

Mediatization is frequently defined as a recent phenomenon and a feature of late modernity.⁴¹ However, some scholars have insisted on the importance of historicising mediatization, contending that as a process it has a long past,⁴² and can even serve as a concept for historical research.⁴³ Thus a comprehensive investigation of the mediatization of fashion would have to trace and analyse this process as occurring since the birth of the first fashion media—print titles such as *Le Mercure Galant*, or even the use of fashion dolls before the circulation of print media.⁴⁴ A

historical analysis of the mediatization of fashion could also take into account the particularity of the media genre discussed in order to consider the heterogeneous nature of mediatization.⁴⁵ This would attend to what Ekstrom *et al.* argue is missing in existing approaches to mediatization: the comparison of media forms and communicative contexts.⁴⁶ One could, for instance, look at the rise of colour photography and its role in the mediatization of fashion, or that of the moving image and television. A historical analysis would allow one to revisit the interplay between fashion and the media. This would highlight the role of media texts as not only representational (as in much work in fashion studies), but also as transformative of practices (of production, distribution, consumption and representation).

This kind of historical analysis is outside the scope of this chapter. However, in the instance of the relation between fashion commerce and print magazines, we can turn to the past for examples of the mediatization of fashion retail that predate shoppable magazines. For instance, department stores, in order to promote and sell their wares have long used catalogues with a layout often reminiscent of fashion magazines. In the US, one of the precursors was Sears Roebuck (1886). Pages from the 1920s issues, for example, are reminiscent of fashion plates.⁴⁷ *Bloomingtondale's Illustrated 1886 Catalog* (1988) also features fashion illustrations evocative of fashion plates and magazine illustrations. In 1976, the American department store commissioned fashion photographer Guy Bourdin to illustrate its lingerie catalogue *Sighs and Whispers*.⁴⁸ Now a collectors' item, its pages are more akin to those of a glossy fashion magazine than a commercial catalogue. Similarly in 1978 the founders of Banana Republic, the Zieglers, created a catalogue full of what Robin Cherry calls "wit and whimsy, with Mel, a former journalist, writing quirky copy and Patricia, an artist, drawing the sketches".⁴⁹ This blurred the distinction between the editorial and the commercial, pointing to the mediatization of retail.

By adapting the conventions of fashion media to e-commerce and through the transformation of their e-commerce platform into an editorial space akin to fashion, magazines sites such as *Net-a-Porter.com* illustrate the process of mediatization of online retail, a mediatization characterized by the union of newer (websites) and older (glossies) forms of media, and by the transformation of e-commerce brands into purveyors of editorial content. The notion of remediation is helpful for making sense of this coming together and of the type of mediatization that is articulated on sites such as *Net-a-Porter*.

II) Remediation

Ulrike Klinger and Kurt Svensson argue that mass media logic and digital media logic can inform each other and overlap.⁵⁰ Similarly, Morton Michelson and Mads Krog ask, “what happens when an ‘old’ medium like radio is influenced by Internet-based media and must adapt its practices to web 2.0 and individualized listening? Are radio and the Internet two distinct processes or just the media?”⁵¹ They wonder if one can talk about “double mediatization,” enquiring “if cultures had been through one mediatizing process related to a specific medium, how did this culture function in relation to later processes (from printed to recorded music, mass-circulated print media in relation to electronic media)?”⁵² Indeed, websites are media, and so by virtue of appearing as websites, e-tailers are forms of fashion media. This online presence can be seen as an instance of the mediatization of retail, that is, of the transformation of retail from an activity located in three-dimensional spaces—physical shops—to one tailored to, enacted through, and indeed turned into, a media interface. E-tail is therefore mediatized retail. However, when e-commerce sites adopt the conventions of older media, such as glossies, a second process of mediatization takes place whereby an e-tailer turns into a provider of editorial content and becomes akin to more traditional fashion media. It is on this second process of mediatization that this chapter has focused in discussion of sites such as *Net-a-Porter*. Both this second process, and the intertwining Klinger and Svensson identify, can be addressed through the notion of remediation.

Theorized by David Bolter and Richard Grusin in 1999, the term “remediation” points to the importance of attending to the ways digital media refashion other, including older, media.⁵³ It is “the representation of one medium in another” and “a defining characteristic of the new digital media.”⁵⁴ The newness of digital media “lies in their particular strategies for remediating television, film, photography, and painting” but also, the book, radio, the magazine or DVD Multimedia.⁵⁵ The Web repurposes and recontextualizes traditional media.⁵⁶ *Net-a-Porter’s The Edit* is an instance of such a process. Other examples of remediation include the ways fashion blogs remediate some of the conventions of print magazine, in the bloggers’ poses, for instance, which are reminiscent of those of models in glossies, as I have argued elsewhere.⁵⁷ But one could also look at the use of fashion illustration in blogs, such as

Garance Doré's (now Atelier Doré), or the remediation of fashion photography by fashion films, or indeed that of fashion plates by fashion photography.

In terms of e-commerce, fashion e-tailers do not just remediate print, they also remediate moving images. When browsing through the 16 March 2017 issue of *The Edit*, for instance, the flow of still images is interrupted by a short video-ad for luxury watchmakers Audemars Piguet. E-tailers also remediate blogs. Asos's "Fashion and Beauty Feed," for instance, opens onto a range of sections the user can access, such as, on 12 April 2017, "Brand Buzz: Meet cult beauty brand the Ordinary." By clicking through the post, the site displays images and written texts formatted like a beauty blog. *Asos.com* also have their own blog, updated on a regular basis in an a-chronological temporal order characteristic of a blogging format. Thus, as Knut Lundby also observes, mediatization "may incorporate the concept and processes of remediation" because the media are constantly in dialogue with, and influenced by, other media.⁵⁸ Remediation is the process by which new media refashion other media, but it is also the process by which older media transform themselves in response to the challenges set out by newer media. This argument can be considered in the light of print media, such as *Vogue* and *Grazia*, which have responded to the challenges of e-commerce by developing online shoppable platforms.

Although they do not use the expression, Altheide and Snow also point at the process of remediation that underpins the development of much media: "As legitimizing agents," they write, "the dominant media in a society also serve as agents of legitimation on other media." Further: "This occurs in several ways: one medium may adopt the format of another medium; the format of one medium also may affect the content of another; and, overall, a standardization of media formats may occur."⁵⁹ In this respect remediation may be seen as another dimension of media logic, while also being a process that allows e-commerce to respond to the logic of entertainment that underpins both commerce and the media, and is formative of today's "experience economy."⁶⁰

The notion of remediation suggests that new media are never completely new. Yet some features are particular to digital media technology and the binary makeup of its data.⁶¹ In the case of e-commerce remediating print magazines, one of those features is the possibility of immediate purchase. Where with print the act of browsing through a magazine and the act of purchasing a commodity are temporally and spatially divided, with shoppable magazines these acts are collapsed into a single

operation. Hence when studying mediatization as articulated in digital media, one should bear in mind their specific media logic. Scholars should move away from the idea of media logic in the singular to that of media logics, in the plural,⁶² which entails attending to the specific logic of digital media.⁶³ Mass and digital media may share certain logics, such as entertainment, but others are tightly linked to digital media affordances such as connectivity and immediacy. José Van Dijk and Thomas Poell, for instance, discuss “social media logic,”⁶⁴ while Klinger and Svenson refer to the idea of “network media logic,” a logic characterised by personalisation, reflexivity, connectivity and virality.⁶⁵ Mazzoleni also identifies abundance, interactivity, mobility, dis-intermediation, speed and immediacy as central to “network media logic.”⁶⁶ The collapsing, in e-commerce, of browsing and purchasing into a single immediate act captures the logic of immediacy that underpins digital media, and digital fashion media in particular: a logic of speed, “real time,” “the instant” being at their heart.⁶⁷ One could even go further by talking about digital fashion media logic. Indeed, accounting for media logic as a heterogeneous process also means attending for the specificity of the field within which it is enacted. In that respect, Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of the field can prove useful.⁶⁸ For in the same way that one could tease out the logic of digital media, one could tease out the logic of digital fashion media. Further research, beyond the scope of this chapter, could explore this logic and the relevance of Bourdieu’s field theory for understanding processes of mediatisation.

In this context of the mediatization of e-tail, a mediatization also characterised by remediation, it is no wonder then that former fashion journalists have taken up editorial positions in e-commerce.

Lucy Yeomans, for instance, left the editorship of *Harper’s Bazaar* to become *Net-a-Porter’s* ‘Editor-in-Chief’, the merging between the commercial and the editorial being captured by the use, within a retail context, of a title -‘Editor-in-Chief’- normally reserved for magazines. Similarly, in 2014 Marks and Spencer hired fashion writer Nicola Copping, formerly of the *Financial Times* and *Times* to create “magazine-style content” for their website.⁶⁹

In reference to mediatisation, Jesper Strömbäck and Frank Esser note: “As most media are run as commercial businesses, media logic both follows from, and is adapted to, commercial logic.”⁷⁰ However, one could also add that, as most commercial businesses are run as media too, commercial logic both follows from and

is adapted to media logic, a process characteristic of mediatization. Various mediatization scholars have drawn attention to the intersection of mediatization and commercialisation, a process articulated in the mediatization of consumption, as exemplified by shoppable magazines and the wider phenomenon of branded content.

71

III) Mediatization and Commercialisation: The blurring of the editorial and the commercial

Mediatization, it has been argued, is not an isolated meta-process and must be studied in relation to other meta-processes such as globalization, individualization and commercialization.⁷² Some authors have drawn attention to the importance of accounting for the capitalist framework within which mediatization is inscribed, and for the ways it interacts with commercialisation.⁷³ This is an approach, Graham Murdock notes, that has too often been neglected and, given the rise of the marketization model characteristic of neoliberalism, is “like a ghost haunting recent commentaries by leading writers on mediatisation.”⁷⁴ Private corporations have developed a strong hold over communication networks and the production and circulation of information, taking over systems that used to be regulated by public institutions and formerly not subject to commercial logic.⁷⁵

Such marketization is blatant when considered in the context of digital culture. Indeed, various scholars have documented the commodification of digital and social media spaces once outside of the forces of commerce.⁷⁶ With the rise and proliferation of social media and the concurrent appropriation of such spaces by fashion brands and retailers, the link between mediatization and commercialization is consolidated. The intertwining of marketization with mediatisation which shoppable magazines instantiate must be looked at in the light of brands’ involvement in the creation and distribution of editorial content, a practice known as content marketing.

As with mediatization, “content” is not a new term, but like mediatisation, it was redefined in the early 2000s to refer to the reconfiguration of marketing and promotional practices in the context of digital culture. Content marketing became a key business strategy. Also known as branded content and native advertising, it refers to the production of texts which, although promotional do not appear as such, and are often destined for circulation over the Internet.⁷⁷ As De Pelsmacker puts it:

The assumption behind content marketing is that advertising is most effective when the consumer does not recognize it is advertising. Moreover, the commercial message itself cannot be skipped by the viewer, the reader, or the surfer on the Internet without losing program content, and native advertising cannot be effectively recognized by ad-blocking software. As a result, the lines between advertising and entertainment and content have become increasingly blurred.⁷⁸

Although the hybrid editorial/commercial is not new to digital culture—in print culture it can be found in advertorials for instance⁷⁹—with the advent of the web and social media, it has extended to cover a broad range of platforms and texts.

“Content” encompasses a variety of (often digital and social) media products, such as, in the field of fashion, fashion films, blog posts, Youtube videos, or Instagram images. With branded content, as Daniel Bô and Matthieu Guével note, brands turn into media, making the distinction between the editorial and the commercial murky.⁸⁰ As Teresa Craner puts it in her business book *Inside Content Marketing*:

You may not know content marketing when you see it. In fact, if the content creators are doing their jobs right, you often won't notice you're being marketed to until it's too late, and you're already poking around the brand's site—or are even in a store—to purchase the product the marketers were hoping you would buy all along. To complicate matters further, content marketing often doesn't even reveal what it's selling.⁸¹

In turning brands and retailers into purveyors of media content seemingly distinct from commercial content, and even publishers in their own right through channels and platforms such as YouTube and blogs, branded content can be conceived as a mode of mediatization of fashion.

Content marketing aims at increasing a brand's symbolic capital, which, as Bourdieu shows, can be turned into further economic capital.⁸² It is an aesthetic project that serves the interest of commerce and is part and parcel of the logic of aestheticization that informs contemporary capitalism and “the stylization of consumption.”⁸³ This logic is tightly linked to mediatization, for, as André Jansson

observes, “most kinds of consumer goods have become increasingly image-loaded, taking on meanings in relation to media texts, other commodity-signs, entire lifestyles, and so on.”⁸⁴ This is why, he suggests, it is not longer possible to make a distinction between consumer culture and media culture: “they collapsed into one another.”⁸⁵ In that respect, following Jansson, mediatization also entails a process of commercialization, and vice versa. Branded content is an example of the blending of mediatization and commercialization into one another.

For example in 2017 Chanel launched, in partnership with Caroline de Maigret, the blog-like site CdMdiary.com. A print and catwalk model in the 1990s, after having somewhat disappeared from the traditional fashion media, Maigret in recent years rose again to visibility through her Tumblrs and Instagram accounts. Chanel capitalized on the model’s online fame (which soon translated into print visibility too) to make her an ambassador of the brand and to promote Chanel on a site reminiscent of personal fashion blogs. Short films feature as if shot from a smart phone. They are interspersed with images of Maigret dressed in Chanel, with posts on her favourite music tracks, her dining and going out places and other snippets of information on her likes and dislikes. Although not directly shoppable, the site is branded throughout; a space made by and for Chanel. The “about” section describes it in the following terms: “CdMdiary by Caroline de Maigret was created for the purpose of sharing a lifestyle that incorporates various facets of our times narrated by Caroline de Maigret, spokesperson and ambassadress for the House.”⁸⁶ Indeed narration, or storytelling as it is known in the business literature, is key to branded content, and is a technique many fashion brands use. Their websites become the repository of visual and written stories that further consolidate the aura of the brand and transubstantiate it,⁸⁷ a process also supported by convergent media platforms⁸⁸ and their hyperlinked network of Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat channels, as well as Instagram and its visually enticing images. In this respect one can also see the logic of entertainment which informs both the media and retail as key to commercialisation in that entertainment is enacted as a way of selling more, an idea the marketing notion “retailtainment” captures. One must provide spectacle and entertainment to sell, a strategy the marketing literature on branded content also makes clear.⁸⁹

The overlap between commercial and editorial practices branded content promotes is also articulated in the concurrent practice known in the business literature as “native journalism.” Journalists are hired by companies to produce the content that

will promote their services and commodities. Their role is to tell the stories—the practice known as storytelling – that will infuse brands with ever more symbolic capital accumulated through the viral sharing and liking logic of digital networks. Commenting on Marks and Spencer’s hiring of fashion writer Nicola Copping to produce content for their website, the retailer’s e-commerce director Laura Wade-Gery observes that editorial content can boost the site’s sales by 24%.⁹⁰ She observes: “That’s why we have put publishing and browsing at the heart of the site.”⁹¹ In this context of the mediatization of brands and retailers by way of content marketing, the role and responsibilities of journalists changes, a change in turn indicative of the mediatization of fashion journalism and the transformation to which it is currently subject.⁹²

Branded content and native journalism raise the issue of the integrity of brand and media practices,⁹³ and hence of the “moral and ethical consequences of mediatization.”⁹⁴ Indeed as Lundby notes: “While ‘mediatization’ is a non-normative concept there may be a range of normative issues involved with mediatization processes.”⁹⁵ As Jonathan Hardy puts it: “It used to be that advertising and editorial were kept separate. Today, brands are burrowing into media content, eroding their own credibility and readers’ trust.”⁹⁶ A deception of consumers might take place compounded in the UK and the US by a current lack of regulation of the demarcation between editorial and commercial content.⁹⁷ This is an issue fashion blogs are facing, as I discuss elsewhere.⁹⁸ Many fashion blogs and their hyperlinked Instagram accounts have become monetized platforms, with some of the most financially successful bloggers professionals who generate a large income. Brands have capitalized on bloggers’ popularity to use their platforms for operations of branded content. The commercial links are not often made clear and transparency has become an object of debate.⁹⁹

Personal fashion blogs and fashion and beauty Instagram posts can also be seen as instances of mediatization in that the media technologies bloggers and Instagramers use inform practices of the self, a mediatized self.¹⁰⁰ Makeup, dress and digital technologies are appropriated to fashion and define oneself for a connected other.¹⁰¹ Brands have even responded to this trend by developing digital screen—friendly makeup products, yet another instance of the mediatization of the field of fashion.¹⁰²

On an Instagram feed, pro-bloggers' shots may be interspersed with images from, and of, friends, who may sometimes, like a blogger, post a picture of their outfit of the day, sharing the same visual conventions whilst also using the popular instagram tag #ootd (for "outfit of the day"). Not only are the images not necessarily clearly presented as commercialized, but in being mixed with non-commercial posts in a wider hypertextual flow of private and public postings, the distinction between the commercial and the non-commercial becomes ever more difficult to ascertain. Hypertextuality may well erase hierarchies between online spaces, but in doing so it also melds the commercial and the non-commercial into one another.¹⁰³ One's everyday visual landscape becomes a de-differentiated space of commodified and non-commodified images.

The blurring of the editorial and the commercial that branded content nurtures, the monetization of seemingly non commercial spaces, and the spread of such practices across a broad range of texts and platforms that individuals engage with—all draw attention to the idea of the commodification of everyday life. This commodification is intensified by the spread of online fashion platforms and texts and the concomitant convergence of mediatization and commercialization. Commercialization weaves itself through everyday life through ordinary practices of mediatization of the self which, together with the digital mediatization of commercial practices, collapse into a de-differentiated plane of the commercial and the seemingly non-commercial.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued for the usefulness of "mediatisation" to understand online fashion commerce and the digital culture it is part of. Central to mediatization theory is an analysis of the ways the media, including digital media, have transformed ways of doing and ways of seeing. In the context of fashion's rapid appropriation of digital media and related digital interfaces, it is important to unpack the changes of practices with which they are associated. This has implications for the skills needed to establish oneself as a fashion journalist, as the practice of native journalism suggests. It also has moral and ethical implications such as the rampant monetization of everyday life, to which current digital media practices in the field of fashion point. Contrary to arguments of technological determinism, new technologies are not outside of the

social; they are made by and for social beings and must be subject to the same critical and analytical unpacking that informs many social sciences studies of society and culture, including fashion.

¹ Andreas Hepp, “The Communicative Figurations of Mediatized Worlds,” *Communicative Figurations* 1 (2013): 3.

² Gianpietro Mazzoleni, “Changes in Contemporary Communication Ecosystems Ask for a ‘New Look’ at the Concept of Mediatization,” *Javnost – The Public* 2 (2017) p 1.

³ The literature on mediatization has rapidly grown over the last seven or so years and cannot all be listed here. However, for some comprehensive discussions of the term, see, for instance, Deacon, David and James Stanyer. “Mediatization: key concept or conceptual bandwagon?” *Media, Culture & Society* (2014): 1–13; David Deacon and James Stanyer. “‘Mediatization and’ or ‘Mediatization of’? A response to Hepp et al.,” *Media, Culture & Society* 37(4) (2015): 655–657; Knut Lundby, “Mediatization of Communication,” in *Mediatization of Communication*, ed. Knut Lundby, 3-35 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); Knut Lundby, ed., *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences* (NY: Peter Lang, 2009); Friedrich Krotz, “Explaining the Mediatization Approach,” *Javnost – The Public* 2, vol. 24 (2017); Stig Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013); Nick Couldry, “Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling,” *New Media & Society* 10, vol. 3 (2008): 373- 391; Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* (Cambridge: Polity., 2013b [2011]); Gianpietro Mazzoleni, “Changes in Contemporary Communication Ecosystems Ask for a ‘New Look’ at the Concept of Mediatization,” *Javnost – The Public* 2 (2017): 136-145.

⁴ See, for instance, Mikkel Eskjaer, “The Mediatization of Ethical Consumption,” *MedieKultur* 54 (2013): 26-46.

⁵ Eric W. Rothenbuhler, “Continuities: Communicative Form and Institutionalization,” in *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences*, ed. Knut Lundby (NY: Peter Lang, 2009), 279.

⁶ Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013b [2011]); Knut Lundby, “Mediatization of Communication,” in *Mediatization of Communication* ed. Knut Lundby, 3-35 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 8.

⁷ Agnès Rocamora, “Mediatization and Digitization in the Field of Fashion,” *Fashion Theory*, (2016), online first, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1362704X.2016.1173349>.

⁸ Risto Kunielius and Esa Reunanen, “Changing Power of Journalism: The Two Phases of Mediatization,” *Communication Theory* 26 (2016): 369-388; Agnès Rocamora, ‘The Labour of Fashion Blogging’, in *Fashioning Professionals* ed. Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell (Bloomsbury, 2018 [forthcoming]); Mazzoleni, “Changes”.

-
- ⁹ Kunelius and Reunanen “Changing Power,” 372.
- ¹⁰ David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (MIT Press, 1999). See Agnès Rocamora, “Personal Fashion Blogs: Screens and Mirrors in Digital Self-portraits,” *Fashion Theory* 4, vol. 15 (2011): 407-424.
- ¹¹ Neil Wrigley and Michelle Lowe, *Reading Retail: A geographical perspective on retailing and consumption spaces* (London: Arnold, 2002), 238, citing Christopherson.
- ¹² Kenneth C. Laudon and Carol Guercio Traver. *E-commerce 2016: Business. Technology. Society* (Boston: Pearson, 2017), 731.
- ¹³ Wrigley and Lower, *Reading Retail*, 239, citing Reynolds.
- ¹⁴ “Ecommerce in The United Kingdom,” Ecommerce News, last modified February 2017, accessed May 10, 2017, <https://ecommercenews.eu/ecommerce-per-country/ecommerce-the-united-kingdom/>.
- ¹⁵ “E-commerce in the United Kingdom: Facts & Figures 2016,” Twenga, 2016, accessed 4 August 2016. <https://www.twenga-solutions.com/en/insights/ecommerce-united-kingdom-facts-figures-2016/>.
- ¹⁶ “Retail sales in Great Britain, Apr 2017,” Office for National Statistics, 2017, accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/bulletins/retailsales/apr2017>.
- ¹⁷ Laudon and Traver, *E-commerce 2016*, 93.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.
- ²⁰ See also Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) Kindle Edition.
- ²¹ See Agnès Rocamora, “New Fashion Times: Fashion and Digital Media,” in *Fashion Studies Handbook*, ed. Sandy Black et al. (London: Berg, 2013).
- ²² Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, 64.
- ²³ Patel, cited in Lockwood, Lisa and Sharo Edelson, “Instant Fashion: Salvation of Gimmick,” *WWD, Instant Fashion Special Report*, (2016), np.
- ²⁴ Laudon and Traver, *E-commerce 2016*, 734
- ²⁴ Vikram A. Kansara, “Is the New Style.com Working?” BOF, 2016, accessed January 4, 2017. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/digital-scorecard/is-conde-nast-style-com-working>.
- ²⁵ Rocamora, “New Fashion Times.”
- ²⁶ Friedberg, *Window Shopping*.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁸ Simon, cited in Frank Rose, “The Attention Economy 3.0,” *The Milken Institute Review: A Journal of Economic Policy*. Milken Institute, 2015, accessed July 9, 2016 <http://www.milkenreview.org/articles/the-attention-economy-3-0>; see also Elizabeth, A. Wissinger, *This Year’s Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 17.

²⁹ See also Rocamora, “New Fashion Times”, 70.

³⁰ Alessandra Codinha, “Meet the New Site That Wants to Take the Legwork out of Instagram-Stalking for You,” 2015, accessed May 12, 2016, <http://www.vogue.com/article/semaine-online-magazine-concept-store-launches>.

³¹ Harding, cited in Codinha, “Meet the New Site.”

³² ‘Style.com Discontinues, Redirects to Farfetch.com’, accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.vogue.co.uk/article/stylecom-discontinued-conde-nast-partnership-consolidates-farfetch>.

³³ David Altheide and Robert P. Snow, *Media Logic* (London: Sage, 1979).

³⁴ Altheide and Snow, *Media Logic*, 240.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

³⁶ See also David, L. Altheide, “Media Logic and Political Communication,” *Political Communication* 3, vol. 21 (2004): 293–296; Mazzoleni, “Changes.”

³⁷ Altheide, “Media Logic,” 4.

³⁸ See Mark Moss. *Shopping as an Entertainment Experience* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007).

³⁹ Christoph Grunenberg, “Wonderland: Spectacles of Display from the Bon Marché to Prada,” in *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*, eds. Christoph Grunenberg and Max Hollein (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002), 18.

⁴⁰ Grunenberg, “Wonderland,” 20.

⁴¹ See, for example, Lundby, *Mediatization*; Hjarvard, *Mediatization*.

⁴² See, for example, Deacon and Stanyer, *Mediatization*; Hepp, *Cultures*; Krotz, “Explaining”; Mats Ekström et al., “Three Tasks for Mediatization Research: Contribution to an Open Agenda,” *Media, Culture & Society* (2016): 1-19; Graham Murdock, “Mediatization and the transformation of Capitalism: The Elephant in the Room,” *Javnost-The Public*, 2017, DOI:10.1080/13183222.2017.1290745.

⁴³ Jukka Kortti, “Media History and the Mediatization of Everyday Life,” *Media History* 1, vol. 23 (2017): 115-129.

⁴⁴ Agnès Rocamora, *Fashioning the City* (London: IB Tauris, 2009), 27; on fashion dolls see Juliette Peers, *The Fashion Doll: From Bébè Jumeau to Barbie* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

⁴⁵ Ekstrom *et al.*, “Three Tasks.”

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁷ For early instances of the fashion pages of Sears, see Robin Cherry, *Catalog: The Illustrated History of Mail-Order Shopping* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008); for histories of fashion plates and of early fashion journals see John L. Nevinson, 'Origin and Early History of the Fashion Plate' (1967); Valerie Steele, *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Berg, 1998).

⁴⁸ See Rosetta Brooks, "Sighs and Whispers in Bloomingdales: A Review of a Bloomingdale Mail-Order Catalogue for their Lingerie Department," in *Zoot Suits and Second-Hand Dresses: An Anthology of Fashion and Music*, ed. Angela McRobbie (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989 [1982]).

⁴⁹ Robin Cherry, *Catalog: The Illustrated History of Mail-Order Shopping* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 29.

⁵⁰ Ulrike Klinger and Jakob Svensson, "The emergence of network media logic in political communication: A theoretical approach," *New Media & Society* 17, vol. 8 (2015): 1241-1257.

⁵¹ Morten Michelson and Mads Krog, "Music, radio and mediatization," *Media Culture & Society*, 4, vol. 39 (2016): 5, drawing on Deacon and Stanyer.

⁵² Michelson and Krog, "Music, radio," 5-6.

⁵³ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 50, 200.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 200.

⁵⁷ Agnès Rocamora, "Hypertextuality and Remediation in the Fashion Media: the Case of fashion blogs," *Journalism Practice* (2012): 92- 106.

⁵⁸ Knut Lundby, "Introduction: 'Mediatization' as key". In *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences*. Ed. Knut Lundby (NY: Peter Lang, 2009) 13, (drawing on Bolter and Grusin).

⁵⁹ Altheide and Snow, *Media Logic*, 242.

⁶⁰ B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2011).

⁶¹ See also Finnemann, "Mediatization," 76.

⁶² See also Couldry, "Mediatization;" Hepp, "Differentiation;" Klinger and Svensson "Emergence;" Lundby, "Mediatization."

⁶³ Mazzoleni, "Changes;" Klinger and Svenson, "Emergence."

⁶⁴ José Van Dijk and Thomas Poell, "Understanding Social Media Logic", *Media and Communication* 1, vol. 1, 2013: 2-14.

⁶⁵ Klinger and Svenson, "Emergence".

⁶⁶ Mazzoleni, “Changes,” drawing on Klinger and Svenson.

⁶⁷ Rocamora, “New Fashion Times.”

⁶⁸ Couldry, “Mediatization.” See also, Andreas Hepp, “Differentiation: Mediatization and Cultural Change,” in *Mediatization of Communication*, ed. Knut Lundby, 139-157. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009); Stig Hjarvard, “The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change,” *Nordicom Review* 29, 2, (2008): 105-134; Andre Jansson, “Using Bourdieu in Critical Mediatization Research,” *MedieKultur* 58 (2015): 13-29.

⁶⁹ See Sara Butler, “Marks & Spencer takes control of its online store from Amazon,” *The Guardian*, 2014, accessed 19 February 2014,

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/feb/18/marks-spencer-control-online-shopping-website-amazon>.

⁷⁰ Jesper Strömbäck and Frank Esser, “Shaping Politics: Mediatization and Media Interventionism” in *Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences*, ed. Knut Lundby (NY: Peter Lang, 2009), 213; but see also Nino Landerer, “Rethinking the Logics: A Conceptual Framework for the Mediatization of Politics,” *Communication Theory*, 23 (2013): 239-258.

⁷¹ See, for instance, Mikkel Eskjaer, “The Mediatization of Ethical Consumption,” *MedieKultur*, 54, (2013): 29; Andre Jansson, “The Mediatization of Consumption: Towards an analytical framework of image culture,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 2, vol. 5 (2002): 5-31; Anne Kaun and Karin Fast, *Mediatization of Culture and Everyday Life*. Mediestudier vid Södertörns högskola:1 (Karlstad University Studies, 2014).

⁷² See also Ekstrom et al., “Three Tasks,” 10; Lundby, “Mediatization”, 8; Kortti, “Media History,” 115.

⁷³ Krotz, “Explaining;” Murdock, “Mediatiation.”

⁷⁴ Murdock, “Mediatiation,” 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁶ Christian Fuchs, *Foundations of Critical Media and Information Studies* (London: Routledge, 2011); James Curran, Natalie Fenton and Des Freedman, *Misunderstanding the Internet* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁷⁷ See, for instance, Theresa Cramer, *Inside Content Marketing* (Chicago: Information Today, 2016); Patrick De Pelsmacker, “Introduction,” in *Advertising in New Formats and Media*, ed. Patrick De Pelsmacker (Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2016).

⁷⁸ De Pelsmacker, ‘Introduction’.

⁷⁹ See also Jonathan Hardy, “Sponsored content is compromising media integrity,” April 12, 2017, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/jonathan-hardy/sponsored-content-is-blurring-line-between-advertising-and-editorial>.

-
- ⁸⁰ Daniel Bô and Matthieu Guével, *Brand Content: Comment les Marques de Transformation on Médias*. (Paris: Dunod, 2009).
- ⁸¹ Cramer, *Inside Content*, 6.
- ⁸² Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993).
- ⁸³ Celia Lury, *Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996).
- ⁸⁴ Jansson, "Mediatization," 6.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁸⁶ <http://www.cdmdiary.com/en/about-cdm/>. Accessed 17 July, 2017.
- ⁸⁷ On transsubstantiation, see Pierre Bourdieu and Yvette Delsaut, 'Le Couturier et sa Griffe. Contribution à une Théorie de la Magie', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 1, (1975): 7-36.
- ⁸⁸ See Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* (New York University Press, 2006).
- ⁸⁹ See, for instance, Bô and Guével, *Brand Content*, 138.
- ⁹⁰ Butler, "Marks & Spencer takes control of its online store from Amazon."
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁹² See Aske Kammer, "The Mediatization of Journalism," *MedieKultur* 54 (2013): 141-148.
- ⁹³ See also De Pelsmacker, "Introduction."
- ⁹⁴ Lundby, "Mediatization," 32.
- ⁹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁶ Hardy, "Sponsored content is compromising media integrity."
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁹⁸ See Agnès Rocamora, "The Labour of Fashion Blogging," in *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries*, eds. Leah Armstrong and Felice McDowell (Bloomsbury, 2018 [forthcoming]).
- ⁹⁹ Rocamora, "Labour."
- ¹⁰⁰ Rocamora, "Personal Fashion Blogs"; Rocamora, "Mediatization and Digitization".
- ¹⁰¹ Rocamora, "Personal Fashion Blogs"; Rocamora, "Mediatization and Digitization."
- ¹⁰² See Rocamora, "Mediatization and Digitization."
- ¹⁰³ See George P. Landow, *Hypertext 2.0* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), Rocamora, "Personal Fashion Blogs."