Model Tote Bags: Advice on How to Perform the Fashionable Self in Post-war Fashion Modelling Literature

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Introduction

In their examination of "Models as Brands," Joanne Entwistle and Don Slater point to how fashion models "are complex objects whose meanings are actively constituted in multiple locations" (2012, 17-18). Employing "brand" as a conceptual framework, they argue that when considering the multiple locations in which the model appears, "distinctions between real/representation, material/immaterial break down and we can begin to think about models and their 'influence' in more complex and comprehensive ways" (18; see also Lury 2004 and Moor 2007).

In this article I turn to popular literature for an examination of one such location in which models and their influence are produced, consumed, and performed. I focus on forms of "advice literature" published in the mid- to late-post-war period, and in particular, three Anglo-American texts authored by model agents published at the turn of the late 1960s: Eileen Ford's *Book of Model Beauty* (1968), *Secrets of the Model's World* (1970), and Lucie Clayton's *The World of Modelling: and How to Get the London Model-girl Look* (1968).

In her introduction to *The World of Modelling*, Clayton states: "Hundreds of girls come to me wanting to be turned into models, but even more come who want to acquire only a model's appearance and dress sense" (Clayton 1968, 17). Ford claims in her publication *Secrets of the Model's World* that according to "friends who do research, modeling is the fifteen-to-one favourite career choice of teenage America" (Ford 1970, 18). Whilst all may not qualify as a fashion model, Ford's other publication, *Book of Model Beauty*, is "for any woman who cares about her appearance or any girl who aspires to a career in fashion" (Ford 1968, n.p.). The ways in which the term *model* is invoked in these books point to changes that have occurred not only in the etymology of the word but also to the cultural and social meanings and values of which it is a product and in which it is productive.

As Caroline Evans has pointed out, the term model is historically specific and can mean a variety of things when referring to the work of women in the fashion industry (Evans 2013, 15-20). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "model" often referred to the model dresses that were worn by mannequins, these were design models of which copies were bought, handmade or manufactured (15-17). A similar logic is applicable to the later twentieth-century manifestation of the term model and its more familiar link to the "fashion model" (see Brown 2012). The model can also mean "an original that is basis for a 'reproduction'" and models are also presented as individuals to be followed—"role models" (Krause-Wahl 2009, 9). Arguably the term model increases in its complexity in the context of fashion modelling advice literature, which invites, suggests, and directs its readers to not simply copy a model, but incorporate the ways of a model into their own everyday being. They may "make" their own model, so that they can become they own model selves.

Following an introduction to theoretical implications and an overview of the emergence of fashion modelling advice literature in relation to its professionalisation during the twentieth century, this article then looks at two aspects of modelling advice given by Ford and Clayton that concern: firstly, notions of transformation and transfiguration; and secondly, that of preparation. The latter analysis draws upon the particular representation of model tote bags, a form that facilitates an ongoing cultivation of the fashionable self; for even when one has achieved the ideals of model beauty, this transformation is not finite and there is a need for perpetual maintenance. In doing so this article questions the ways in which narratives of modelling also inform a discourse of future, imagined, and yet-to-be, yet-to-take place everyday life—and are therefore suggestive of another aspect to the model myth, one of perpetual preparation and perpetual becoming.

Advice, Etiquette, and a Model Self

In order to understand the impact of advice literature on and for the fashion model, it is worth broadly examining how theorists have used this literature to explore social behaviour, aspects and approaches to power, the roles of public and private self-presentation, and the development of taste. Notable is the work of Norbert Elias ([1939] 2000) on the development of social manners and graces throughout medieval Europe and beyond; Erving Goffman ([1959] 1971) and his study of self-presentation in twentieth century Anglo-American culture and society; as well as the work of Pierre Bourdieu ([1984] 2010) on the social formation and hierarchies of *taste* or *distinction*. As Grace Lees-Maffei has argued in her own study of design history and domesticity in the twentieth century, advice literature is also an important resource of mediation, "operating as it does between the realms of production and consumption" (2003, 3).

In his study of etiquette books published for a North American female readership in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jorge Arditi looks to the work of Michel Foucault: Arditi conceives a theoretical framework that positions this body of literature as not "just referential or representational systems" but as discourses which are "part of the infrastructure ordering practices in a society" (1999, 26). For Arditi, Foucault's notion of discourse, alongside other parts of his early work on the power/knowledge axis, provides a way to understand "the emergence of boundaries and the constitution of cognitive and practical 'spaces of power'" (418). This approach enables Arditi to consider how the feminisation of etiquette literature within this sociohistorical context offers a more complex and therefore richer understanding of tensions between "empowerment and disempowerment" and how social change may be "produced *within* an existing, dominant discourse" (430-431).

In addition, Foucault's later works on practices of the self, found in *The History of Sexuality* Volume 2 (1984a) and Volume 3 (1984b), and in his posthumously published "Technologies of the Self" (1988) are relevant. These works draw specifically upon documents that are either what Foucault calls prescriptive texts, which "suggest rules of conduct," or practical texts that concern practice and provide frameworks for everyday conduct—or both (1984a, 12-13). The analysis of this type of writing and documentation enables Foucault to move beyond the "technology of domination and power" and look more closely at "the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination" (1988, 19). If one considers these ideas in the context of history, they become a "history of how an individual acts upon himself." in order to know oneself, in order to turn oneself into a subject (ibid.). As Foucault outlines, these acts cover a wide and interrelated network of everyday practice, from self-care, (such as hygiene and other bodily maintenance), self-reflection (which may take place in mediation, reflection, and writing), and bodily operations (such as diet and exercise, to name but a few). The notion of such practices as technologies of the self within an everyday context is a key element to understanding fashion modelling literature, and in particular its discourse of advice.

I propose that the act of reading, as such literature requires one to do, can also be understood as a technology of the self, in a way that escapes collapsing analysis into a "text/image" account that overlooks the notion of "everyday practice" (Entwistle and Slater 2012, 21). Michel de Certeau conceptualises reading as a form of consumption *and* production, whereby the reader:

> insinuates into another person's text the ruses of pleasure and appropriation, [s]he poaches it, is transported into it, pluralizes him[her]self in it like the internal rumblings of one's body. Ruse, metaphor, arrangement, this production is also an "invention" of the memory [...]. A different world (the reader's) slips into the author's place. (de Certeau [1984] 1988, xxi)

In this way, the text, according to de Certeau, is habitable; and an analysis of reading as an everyday practice cannot maintain "the division separating the readable text (a book, image, etc.) from the act of reading" (170). The act of reading can also be understood as a type of enactment in itself, one that invites a performance of self-stylisation, according to how a particular reader consumes a particular text. Reflecting upon what can be understood as a subjective experience of reading, Roland Barthes ruminates that whilst pleasure may be experienced in the reading of the text, any such bliss is also of a "historical subject" which is the conclusion of a "complex process of biographical, historical, sociological, neurotic elements" from which the interplay of "(cultural) pleasure" and "(non-cultural) bliss" converge (1976, 62). The reading of fashion modelling literature may be pleasurable, however pleasure in this understanding is complex and can have painful aspects to it as well.[1]

Drawing upon Barthes, de Certeau argues that reading is a process of consumption and assimilation; however, assimilating here does not necessarily mean "'becoming similar to' what one absorbs" but rather "'making something similar' to what one is, making it one's own, appropriating or reappropriating it" (de Certeau [1984] 1988, 166). When it comes to thinking about fashion modelling advice literature and the processes and practices of reading it—and whether this is examined in terms of pleasure, poaching, insinuation, inhabitation, assimilation, or performance—the point is that image/text are not simply separated from or added to a subject's everyday practice; rather, to various degrees, the literature is acted upon or displaced, incorporated and acknowledged into one's understanding and knowledge of everyday life.

Models, Agents and Fashion Modelling Advice

Alongside the general abundance of media representation given to the fashion model, what can be understood as fashion model literature—including advice literature and how-to books, autobiographies, memoirs, biographies, histories, and fictions—emerges from a history of the modern fashion modelling industry and its professionalisation throughout the twentieth century. Evans (2013) traces fashion modelling, as a type of paid profession and performance, to the first mannequins who performed as part of the staging of fashion shows in retail spaces, including those of the couturier salon and department store. However, it is in the first decades of the twentieth century that the profession of the fashion model and the beginnings of an organised fashion modelling industry emerge (Brown 2012).

In Elspeth H. Brown's study (2012), which focuses upon the industry development in the United States, commercial photographer Lejaren A. Hiller is credited for creating

1 It is important to recognise that the notion of *pleasure* in this context is an English substitution for the French words *jouissance* and *jouir*, which is more complex than mere enjoyment or sexual gratification (Howard 1975).

a market for the photographic model in terms of both his photographic work in fiction and advertising, and the creation of his own proto-agency with assistance from model scout Jenkins Dolive in 1918 (50-51). An encounter between Hiller's agency and an unemployed acting couple, Robert Powers and Alice Hathaway Burton, set the path for the Powers to start their own agency dedicated to the professional model (ibid. 52-53; see also Wissinger 2015, 117). In 1923, the Powers founded the first professional modelling agency in New York; however, it was not until 1930 that Robert shifted the focus of the agency to the management of commercial, advertising, and fashion models whom he trademarked "as his 'long stemmed American beauties'" in the agency's yearly annual, the Directory (Powers in Brown 2012, 53).

The vital statistics that a model's body was required to achieve and maintain in her height, weight, bust, waist, and hip measurements, in addition to attractive photogenic facial features and the ability to perform and project in front of the camera, all contributed to produce the Power's brand of "Power Girls" (Brown 2012, 54; McDowell 2017). In her own study of fashion modelling, Elizabeth Wissinger draws on the history of the Powers' model agency and points out how such standardisation of the model's body is similar to "Henry Ford's Taylorization of automobile production," and scientific principles of rationalisation and control that emerged throughout the early twentieth century (Wissinger 2015, 124). These requirements were not just applied to the burgeoning fashion model industry but were discussed "in the media, [and] were reflected in modelling 'how-to' books" (ibid., 125).

Amongst historical research on the subject of fashion modelling and its professionalisation, the Powers' 1941 publication T*he Power Girls: The Story of Models and Modeling and the Natural Steps by Which Attractive Girls Are Created* is a go-to text. As its title suggests, this book offers an autobiographical account of the history of the Powers' model agency and discusses the ways in which Powers' "long stemmed American beauties" were made. Robert Powers would, later, also publish a modelling guide, *The Secrets of Charm* (1954). Other significant post-war agencies who published texts include the Sydney-based agency owned by ex-model June Dally-Watkins, the Ford Model Agency founded in New York in 1946 and run by the agent Eileen Ford, and the Lucie Clayton model agency and modelling school founded in London in 1928 by former model Sylvia Golledge. This last agency and its school were sold to Leslie and Evelyn Kark (also known as Lucie Clayton), an author of the aforementioned fashion modelling advice book on how to achieve the "London model-girl look" (Chaseling 1969, Castle 1977, Clayton 1968, and Ford 1970).

Publications by model agents such as Ford and Clayton participate in what is recognised as the cultural production of fashion, the continued professionalisation of fashion modelling, and developing tastes within Western beauty and body

practices of the mid-twentieth century. Employing Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, Wissinger argues that fashion models are types of "cultural intermediaries," social agents positioned "between production and consumption" (Wissinger 2012, 158); they perform activities "involving presentation and representation" (Bourdieu [1984] 2010, 201). As Entwistle (2009) explains, the model agents themselves can also be described as cultural intermediaries or "taste-makers" in fashion (15).[2]

In the case of Ford and Clayton's model advice literature, their identities as successful, leading professionals within the field of fashion modelling played a significant part in the mediation of their model advice and therefore informed the reader-author dynamic (Castle 1977). It is therefore pertinent to consider the question of *who* is giving the advice and *how* they are advising. Ford and Clayton's texts straddled both fact and fiction. They were the named authors and took on the persona of narrator. As they wrote themselves into stories and histories of fashion modelling they became their own characters. Their agencies' fashion models also featured in the multi-vocal narrative of these texts, as models were interviewed and asked to reflect upon their professional experiences (see McDowell 2017). They performed as both identifiable real-life figures and as fictionalised characters within the narratives. In this sense these examples of advice literature are both fact and fiction, and are arguably forms of life writing or life narrative (Smith and Watson 2010, 4). Here, "life" is largely concerned with the narration of a professional life, however this element far from constructs a logical and linear narrative. Rather, it contributes to the continually unstable relations between "self and world, literature and history, fact and fiction" (Marcus 1995, 14). In this way Ford and Clayton were in different but overlapping ways narrating a *professional* life, whether their own or those of the models they worked with, and therefore made claims "to professional authority" (Parkins 2012, 50).

Another aspect of the reader-author dynamic is that of sharing secrets, and in particular fashion and beauty secrets. Whilst the notion of a secret may suggest a silence, Ilya Parkins points out that, paradoxically, secrets are only known to exist as secrets when they are shared. In the context of gaining more symbolic power, credibility, and authority, shared secrets form "not only social relations, then, but sites of *opening* to professional power, rather than a closing off or restriction of access" (Parkins 2012, 60). Furthermore, fashion and beauty secrets are largely gendered as feminine and therefore a type of women's knowledge. In this literary culture, a notion of mobility and its implications for a far-reaching and overarching

2 However, as Entwistle also argues, the duality of production/consumption is a flaw in Bourdieu's conception of cultural intermediaries. Entwistle proposes an analysis that examines the work and practice of mediation in addition to Bourdieu's focus on "the identities of the mediators themselves" (Entwistle 2009, 17-18).

life narrative (in conjunction with minute details of everyday practices and ways of being) emerges between its reader and the professional authority, as well as feminine advocacy of its author.

Professional, Physical, and Spiritual Transformations

In the context of post-war Anglo-American consumer culture of the late 1950s and 1960s, advice books on fashion careers were both a product of and productive of a discursive narrative of transformation: that of the new "Cinderella," wherein a "fairytale fantasy life of glamour and adoration" is achieved in the becoming of a fashion model (Entwistle and Wissinger 2012, 2). Patricia Soley-Beltran contends that from this overarching fairytale two myths emerge: "the traditional myth of the model who marries into money or society, and the newer myth of the model as an autonomous self-possessed woman" (2012, 108). In particular, this latter myth is a fiction reiterated by the fashion and modelling industries and is found within diverse forms of media, including that of popular literature across time (ibid., 109).

As Clayton's 1968 publication on the "London model-girl" notes, the photographic model "sells not only the product she is advertising, but also the profession of modelling itself. Girls want to buy the clothes she wears, but they also want the clothes that they are wearing to contain a girl like her" (17). Here Clayton's book offers a "double-purpose": it firstly provides an overview of the fashion modelling industry; and secondly serves "to give professional guidance to any girl or woman reader who wants to get the London model-girl look" (ibid.).[3] As Wissinger has identified, this shift from an exclusive to an inclusive way of thinking about modelling is evident in the intentional advice given throughout the writing of these, and other, publications.

A key aspect to fashion modelling advice literature is the focus on how to achieve the "ideal" fashioned body. In her examination of modelling manuals from the 1920s to the 1960s, and then those published after the 1970s, Wissinger argues that "the popular language of model management draws back the curtain on how we envisage the 'ideal' worker as a culture" (2012, 23). Employing the concept of *glamour labour,* one that draws upon theories of affect and "involves all aspects of one's image, from physical presentation, to personal connections, to friendships and fun," Wissinger argues that within these textual sources one can see a "shift from seeing modelling as a rarefied domain to seeing fashionable beauty as something to which everyone should aspire" (2015, 3 and 146). In this sense such texts invite "everyone" and *anyone* to perform as a model in ways that embody and embed forms of model "work" in the everyday.

3 Other such narratives include British fashion model Jean Shrimpton's advice-cum-autobiographical text *The Truth About Modelling* (1964), published in both the UK and US, Janey Ironside's *Fashion as a Career* (1962), and Alison Settle's *Fashion as a Career* (1963).

As may be expected, the rhetoric of transformation comes across clearly in both of Ford and Clayton's books. Ford's *Book of Model Beauty* is structured around the Ford agency's own Beauty Program and their claim that they have "played Pygmalion with girls you'd never believe could make it [as models]" (Ford 1968, 2). For the reader who may or may not exactly fit the requirements to become a Ford model, the program still has the potential to "change your life" (ibid.). Further:

> [The woman] who would never dream of such a career can apply exactly the same principles to herself and then watch her go! Her new confidence and assurance, the startling effect her changed appearance and poise have on others, can turn a drab life into an exciting one. I've have seen it happen. (Ford 1968, 2)

The later *Secrets of the Model World* claims that even former Ford models, although older, are "as lovely today as they were at the height of their careers." Ford continues: "Our lessons are well learned and become the habits of healthy, beautiful living that last a lifetime" (Ford 1970, 179).

Here, transformation not only marks a change in one's nature, form, and appearance, it also suggests a process of transfiguration; that is to say, this a transformation into something more beautiful. Yet, beauty is not simply a surface effect but rather this surface is achieved from some sort of inner transformation, reaching the surface of one's being, radiating out and reflecting back within. For Ford:

> Not everyone can be a model, but there is not one woman who could not enhance her life by becoming just as attractive as possible. Such beauty, and the self-assurance that goes with it, affect you, your family, friends, fellow workers, even the people casually encountered. (Ford 1970, 4)

All women "can learn to reach their own kind of perfection" (ibid.). This transfiguration is akin to a spiritual transformation; one's developed sense of confidence and self-assurance concerns belief, a certain kind of belief that is practised through the arts of beauty and performed on and by the fashionable self in everyday life.

In his discussion of performance and the "It-Effect"—held and beheld by figures of glamour from members of royalty to actresses of stage and screen—Joseph Roach also invokes the Pygmalion myth. He argues that "Pygmalionism not only presents an ancient myth of metamorphosis, it also enacts a modern social scenario, situating Galatea's drama not in her being, but in her becoming" (Roach 2007, 182). Myths are both "protean and expansionist" and for Roach "Pygmalionism annexes to Galatea's scenario that of Cinderella" (ibid.). The ways in which fashion advice literature writes of the professional model and her successful transformation and then incites its readers, suggests how the Pygmalion/Cinderella narrative aims to be culturally inclusive, something to which all women could or should aspire, and

that it can be learned, becoming part of one's ongoing and successful social and spiritual development. But, importantly, the drama of becoming is an ongoing performance in which beauty and one's own individual "perfection," or perfected being, is never a fully completed transformation. Rather it is an infinite process, practised, rehearsed, and performed; continually being perfected. However, like any theatrical act, this performance requires preparation and the right kind of equipment. In the next section I consider one such piece of equipment: the model tote bag, a historical object and cultural form which facilitates both process and transformation for not only the model but also for the everyday fashionable self.

The Model Tote Bag

In her book *The Truth About Modelling* (1964) Jean Shrimpton employs a day-in-life-of narrative in order to describe the typical work day of a successful Model Girl (see McDowell 2017). An important part of Shrimpton's preparation for the day ahead of her is to check her "model bag" the night before and to make sure that all her "'basics' are in order" (Shrimpton 1964, 83). As she advises, it is important to "have placed in it the accessories your agent has suggested you might need for the day" (ibid.). Shrimpton continues with a suggested checklist.

> Basics include scarves, stockings, gloves, jewellery and two or three pairs of black, brown and evening shoes. It depends on how keen you are what you include under the heading basics. I have an American friend whose "basics" read as follows: Seven pairs of stocking, three textured or coloured; fifteen pairs of ear rings, twenty necklaces, sundry bracelets, big rings and gimmick brooches; a strapless bra, a flattening bra, a built up bra; three slips, one dark, one light and one half slip; Petti pants;[4] five pairs of shoes; eight pairs of gloves, two short white, two long evening, four others; hair ribbons; cigarette holder; small fan; bobby pins, spray, net, pony tail, small hair piece, rubber bands, and large box of make-up. I promise that I have not exaggerated. (Shrimpton 1964, 83)

The model bag appears throughout fashion modelling literature of the 1950s to early 1970s. During this period the model bag, usually a large tote, was vital to the career and status of the professional model. Indeed, the word *tote* not only denotes the noun form—that is, a large bag for carrying a number of items—but in its verb form can be traced back to late seventeenth-century English when it connoted the act of carrying or wielding something heavy or substantial. In the post-war fashion modelling industry, models were expected to produce their accessories, do their own makeup and hairstyling on jobs, unless it was a high-end enterprise and the client had paid for additional stylists, hairdressers, and makeup artists. Therefore,

4 Petti pants were a type of undergarment similar to a pair of long shorts, worn in a similar fashion to that of a slip under clothing such as skirts, dresses, and culottes.

in order to be and continue to be successful, considerable resources were required.[5] Arguably, the tote in this context not only carried the weight of these many items, but also that of aspiration, ambition, and potential success.

The model tote bag and its contents were viewed as an investment. As Clayton states in her advice to potential photographic models: "To be good you need equipment, and to have equipment you need money" (1968, 69). Looking through the contents of one of her model's bag (that of Sara Ruffer), Clayton revealed the following items:

> false hair pieces, brush, comb, hairspray, grips, and hairpins; three pairs of shoes with high, medium, low heels; one pair of evening shoes; spare stockings, plain and textured, and stocking feet for wearing under trousers; one set of black underwear; one set of white underwear; a full-length slip, waist slip, pantigirdle, two strapless bras, one long, one short; mirror and magnifying mirror; powder puff, tissues, and mascara, loose and cake powder; eye-shadow, liner, brush-on rouge, eyebrow pencil, blue eye-drops, two deodorants, anti-perspirant, and foot deodorant; cleansing cream, skin tonic, and eye-wash; chiffon scarf to protect clothes from make-up; various coloured scarves for accessories, three pairs of gloves; jewellery; perfume; needle and cotton. (Clayton 1968, 69-70)

According to Clayton, an essential further item also carried in this tote is the model's accounts book. For Clayton the successful model was also one who knew exactly how much she was earning and was able to manage her personal and professional finances accordingly.

Ford wrote that "[i]n addition to enough money to live on, the model-in-training should have in her wardrobe these twenty items" (Ford 1970, 43). In addition to the items in Shrimpton's and Ruffer's bags, these items included:

> A straight dark skirt; A straight medium-tone skirt; [...] At least one good pair of sports shoes; A good-looking skirt and sweater or two for walking around to see people. Slacks are acceptable, but they hide your legs; A large scrapbook that will hold eleven-by-fourteen-inch photographs; A tote bag to hold the basic necessities for the working day (hat boxes are passé); A cosmetic bag to hold makeup. (Ford 1970, 43)

For Ford, what she calls "The Well-Appointed Tote Bag" (number 19 on the above essential wardrobe list), will probably contain the following additional items:

> Facial tissues; Emery boards—a ragged nail can play havoc with a chiffon dress and when a model is going to wear new shoes to walk on a slippery runway, it's convenient to scratch the soles of the shoes with the emery board; [...] Clothes brush; [...] Scotch tape. If during a showing a hem should come loose—and in the rush of changing this often happens—the fastest

5 In her own study of the contemporary fashion modelling industry, Wissinger addresses the various social and economic expenditure and pressures that models experience (see Wissinger 2012).

> repair is to tape up the hem; [...] Appointment book; Numerous little items that each individual model finds a dire necessity. (Ford 1970, 43-44)

In her tote bag, the model must carry "her vanity or closet from job to job" (Ford 1970, 43). This bag "may weigh as much as twenty to twenty-five pounds" and the "male of the species is forever aghast that a slim, fragile girl can carry these bags" (43-44). If one were to inspect the palm of a model's hand it will "disclose the mark of her profession—calluses from the long hours of carrying portfolio or tote bag or both" (44).

Within these texts much excessive detail is given to the listing, if not ordering, of the model tote bag, which begs the question: how does the model tote bag itself perform at a literary, cultural, and historical nexus between author, narrator, character, and reader? Another introductory chapter in Ford's *Secret's of the Model's World*, titled "How Does a Model Spend Her Day," outlines to the reader, much like Shrimpton's book, the fictitious day of a successful photographic model living and working in New York. The model is described as being in perpetual motion, hurrying between appointments and bookings, "hugging her scrapbook and a tote bag laden with accessories and makeup, she takes a taxi to 59th Street and Eighth Avenue to keep a date for a fitting at *Good Housekeeping*" (Ford 1970, 32).

This image of the post-war fashion model constantly on the move, her life and work bundled into her large tote, her own dresser and accountant as she moves within the hub of a global capitalist metropolitan urban space, is a representation that emerges from across different sources and texts.[6] In my own reading of Ford and Clayton's advice to the potential fashion model, the tote bag emerges as an image, a representation, a historical object, and it also presents a way of conceptualising the notion of perpetual preparation for becoming. But this is advice being read by a range of historical readers—both past and present, and whether they harbour serious intentions to embark upon a career in modelling or not. Thus, the model's tote bag both represents and communicates as a site which facilitates the performance of a fashionable feminine self.

Tote Space and Perpetual Preparation to Become

The model tote bag, alongside the contents of a woman's working wardrobe, is the epitome of the basic, minimum, "good" wardrobe, a discourse locatable across the Anglo-American fashion media of the post-war era as well as in other forms of advice literature, such as Genevieve Antoine Dariaux's *A Guide to Elegance: For Every Woman Who Wants to Be Well and Properly Dressed on All Occasions* ([1964] 2003). Whilst being

6 Other scholars who have addressed the representation of the moving "modern" woman as both a model and a type of role model for mass media audiences within various cultural and historical contexts, include Rebecca Arnold (2009), Hilary Radner (2000), and Agnes Rocamora (2009).

well-dressed for all occasions arguably lost much of its currency within the field of fashion by the late 1960s, with the growth of a mass ready-to-wear market aimed at teenage consumers, an underlying way of thinking and conceiving of fashion as providing the right equipment for ways of presenting and being one's self, remains.

As a perpetual symbol of preparedness, the model tote bag is, in both a material and conceptual sense, a representation of the drama of becoming; whether this concerns imagining or believing oneself as a professional model-girl or preparing oneself for the various temporary identities and personas that are a part of the model-girl's everyday being. This, I argue, is not just the work of the post-war professional fashion model. These are preparatory practices taken on by a range of women throughout a myriad of historical and cultural contexts. One may think of the nineteenth-century trousseau of the bride-to-be, preparing for her future self in the role of wife, and also contemporary discussions regarding the organised wardrobe, work-wear, the capsule holiday wardrobe, and the heavy tote bags that women carry on their way to or from work, which may contain a change of clothes, gym wear, make-up, hair straighteners, breakfast, lunch, even a smoothie.

The model tote bag can therefore also be understood as a type of "identity kit" which Goffman, in his examination of self presentation in public situations, identifies as "one set of the individual's possessions" which enables said individual "to exert some control over the guise in which he appears before others" (Goffman [1961] 1995, 119). According to Goffman, the individual needs:

> cosmetic and clothing supplies, tools for applying, arranging, and repairing them, and an accessible, secure place to store these supplies and tools—in short, the individual will need an identity kit: for the management of his personal front. (Goffman [1961] 1995, 119)

For sociologist Saulo B. Cwerner, identity kits are part of what form and fill particular private domestic spaces, such as wardrobes, as "people need a safely stored pool of identity tokens to choose from in their weekly, daily, and even hourly changes of self-presentation," and clothes, cosmetics and other body adornments "are at the centre of this pool" (Cwerner 2001, 80). The model tote bag is arguably an extension of this space which pervades alternate spatiotemporal dimensions outside of the relative private space of an individual's wardrobe. Yet it also draws attention back to this terrain and our engagement with clothing as-yet-to-be-worn and its possibilities for imagined yet-to-become selves.[7]

In this way, the model tote bag is a type of transitional and temporal wardrobe. It operates as a kind of mobile closet and has implications for the ways in which we may look at and understand how women more generally employ bags, a tote, or

7 For further introduction and discussion of the field of "wardrobe studies" see Woodward (2007) and Turney (2012).

otherwise, as a vehicle of transportation for their myriad imagined, practiced, and performed selves. In the context and narrative of fashion modelling advice literature the tote "symbolizes the processual nature of the effort: to create or present a self is a laborious and ambivalent process" (Cwerner 2001, 89). It suggests another process as well, one that is about the movement of self from one space to another, and importantly, the planning and preparation that goes into its filling up and emptying out, the ordering and reorganisation of one's work and life. The model's tote bag supports the preparation to perform; this form of ordering regularly takes place with one's wardrobe space, and the tote bag is yet another everyday place that is a part of one's daily beauty and fashion rituals as it helps facilitate the ongoing performance of the fashionable self.

Conclusion

Bags, and in this case the model tote bag, form a significant part of the model's becoming. They also form a significant part in the narrative of historical fashion advice literature discussed in this paper. The tote bag houses the process and practice of perpetual preparation, as model and reader attempt to become their perfected and fashionable selves. In the narratives of historical fashion modelling advice literature, the tote bag contains the key elements and materials for the making of the factual/fictional fashion model, they reveal the work that takes place, and offer the possibility of the replication of this work amongst readers. In this sense the tote represents a life narrative that materialises for the reader in identification with its advocated processes and practices of perpetual preparation.

In our everyday consumption of words and images, sentences and narratives, our imagined selves emerge, are evoked, invited, and enticed into being. These words of advice merge the past, present, and the promise of a better, more successful, and more beautiful future. Model advice literature can become part of a life narrative, but one which we must perpetually prepare for, since without continually preparing to perform, and to carry with us the tools, in our tote bags, through which that performance might be realised, the performance of our fashionable selves will never be realised or successfully maintained.

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