HOW FASHION TRAVELS: THE FASHIONABLE IDEAL IN THE AGE OF INSTAGRAM

Abstract

Despite the many transformations in aesthetics and technologies that fashion photography has undergone since its spread as an influential cultural form in the early 20th century, one constant has always held fast: that the imagery depicts a fashionable ideal. The look of the fashionable ideal is, of course, ever subject to change, however there are qualities that are always present: the body is subject to the authority of fashion, limitations to the autonomy of the body such as gravity or ageing are absent, and the figure is imbued with possibility and mutability, even as it freezes a momentary state of perfection.

These qualities become particularly marked in the present era, in which digital influencers simultaneously assume the roles of cultural producer, model and consumer whilst implicitly embodying the fashionable ideal. At the moment of their publication, the labour of producing these images seems to evaporate, as bodies with no material limitation are presented with immediacy, and figure, commodity and surrounds collapse into one.

This article interrogates how we can conceive of the labour of appearance and being in the fashion image, and considers how this style of fashion imagery draws on visual rhetoric of prior eras of fashion photography and is structured by the existing power relations of capitalism and the human and non-human actors of media technologies. In so doing, the concept of the fashionable ideal is explored in one of its contemporary iterations as fluid, aspirational, global, simultaneously embodied and disembodied.

Keywords

Instagram; influencers; fashionable ideal; fashion photography; social media

Introduction

In the current era of accelerated globalisation and new communication technologies, constellations of alternative ideals proliferate and acquire meaning in the multiple visual regimes of networked social media and blogs, as well as in the traditional platforms of print media and the catwalk. In this new media environment, fashion shows, brand campaigns, and fashion editorials that package images of a particular body type—"tall, thin, mostly white but sometimes exotically 'other'" (Entwistle and Wissinger 2012, 5)— share screens and the printed page with representations that "originate in private settings and are produced by individuals and local groups" (Orgad 2012, 40).

Although the consequences of the affordances of convergence culture for consumer involvement have been widely debated in academic literature (Benkler 2006; Berry 2010; Khamis and Munt 2010; Pham 2011; Langlois 2014), how "democratic" the contributions of influencers are bears further interrogation. Digital technologies allow individuals to produce fashion discourse and a means of participating in the fashion industry to generate economic and cultural capital, as has been widely argued in relation to fashion blogging (see Duffy and Hund 2015; Pedroni 2015; Titton, 2015; Findlay 2017; and Rocamora 2018). At the same time, a connotation of the concept of participatory culture being "democratic" is that it is conceived of as a liberation

from a system of rule that dictates the ways in which consumers engage with fashion media and product. In this latter sense, we could question how democratic influencing is, when the same capitalist logic that organizes the fashion industry is replicated in direct proportion to an influencer's following. While digital fashion cultures have certainly provided a platform for alternative modes of fashion discourse, any niche that could be identified as a target market tends to be swiftly approached by the industry and transformed into an engaged consumer base as, for example, when key players are invited to partner with brands and monetize their audience (see Connell 2013; Lewis 2015; Luvaas 2016; Findlay 2017). This explains the visual homogeneity of influencer fashion imagery that often remediates the rhetoric and ideology of mainstream fashion photography rather than revolutionizing it.

As it is wont to do, fashion absorbs everything—in fashion imagery, what is not-fashion becomes backdrop, prop or novelty in service of fashion (see Barthes 1983; De Perthuis 2005); and on social media, the activity of influencers' lives become grist for the mill of consumer culture. How different is the fashion imagery produced by influencers from that produced by mainstream glossy fashion magazines? Superficially novel, their content frequently mimics the conventions of fashion photography, citing familiar looks that are rarely cutting edge or singularly creative, but which will sell. A familiar figure wears these familiar clothes: the fashionable ideal, repackaged here for a millennial and post-millennial audience, personifying a paradox. Here is the everyday and the not-everyday at once: a person who, before transforming herself into an influencer, did not work professionally in the fashion industry.

She is like us! At the same time, she embodies the qualities recognised within the industry as ideal: young, slender, conventionally beautiful, able bodied, and, most often, a cisgender woman. She mediates these qualities by discursively inviting her followers to vicariously participate in her everyday, and yet at the same time, reinforces the aspirational quality of her Insta-life by posting content that bears little relation to the actuality of quotidian human experience.

What can we make of this figure who exists, it seems, solely in the image, the fashionable ideal apparently come to life among us? In what ways does her idealised lifestyle preclude the very limits that make her existence possible? For example, we see the cavalcade of places she poses in, but none of the journey taken to travel there. The endless feed of filtered photographs regularly repopulates with new posts, but the labour that produces it is invisible. Her body therefore is rendered non-human, an idealised fashionable persona excised from the constraints of gravity and jet lag, and also from the marks and wear commonly perceptible on human bodies.

In this article, we will tease apart the union of the fashionable ideal and Instagram by examining the rhetorical self-construction of two influencers: Leonie Hanne (@leoniehanne) and Asiyami Gold (@asiyami_gold). These two women were chosen for this study because their work exemplifies the dominant aesthetic under examination here, while also representing some of the diversity apparent in mainstream fashion and lifestyle influencing. Leonie

Hanne is German and, with 1.8 million Instagram followers, is a celebrity influencer (see Figure 1). "A former strategy consultant and passionate shopper" (*Ohh Couture* n.d.), Hanne started *Ohh Couture*, a fashion and lifestyle blog in 2014, leading her to work with brands such as Cartier, Tommy Hilfiger, Chloé, Net-a-Porter and ASOS. She has maintained an Instagram account linked to her blog since July 2014.

Born in Nigeria and based in the United States of America, Asiyami "Gold" Wekulom is a full-time Instagrammer with her own fashion line, A.Au, and 215,000 followers, rendering her a macro influencer (see Figure 2). Gold describes her personal brand as one which "considers the emotive and cultural qualities of life through an authentic, relational perspective where the art of image making is imbued with a warm, honest, and deeply personal beauty" (Gold 2018a). She has been on Instagram since January 2012, started her blog *Asiyami Gold* in 2013, and has worked with brands including GAP, J.Crew, Vogue, and Pantene (see Gold 2018a).

Despite the distinctiveness of their respective feeds, both Hanne and Gold post content comprising mostly of photographs of themselves in far-flung locations, while wearing a range of feminine fashion looks that largely cohere with wider trends. Both influencers have a separate style blog with the same name as their Instagram handle, which features longer posts that elaborate the micro-stories posted to Instagram. Here, tales of their travels, news about their branded partnerships and so on are illustrated with high resolution

imagery of photogenic meals and well-appointed rooms featuring the influencer herself in every other picture.

By focusing on these two women, we are by no means suggesting that they are entirely representative of the work of all influencers on Instagram: influencing is a field comprised of many players with a range of investments and whose work resonates with a spectrum of followers, from millions to a niche few thousand. Likewise, in focusing on influencers that embody the mainstream fashionable ideal, we are not suggesting that alternative ideals, which may be both fashionable and stylish, are not represented on Instagram, nor to minimise the importance of the contribution of these influencers, whose content often addresses followers from a range of minorities that are historically underrepresented in fashion media. There are many influencers whose contribution challenge the hegemonic fashionable ideal, such as Gabi Gregg (@gabifresh), an African-American plus size woman whose Instagram bio identifies her as the 'OG fat girl', and Hana Tajima (@hntaj), a Muslim British-Japanese influencer who recently launched her fifth modestwear collection designed in collaboration with Uniqlo. There are also stylish Instagrammers who are not associated with brands (a defining characteristic of an influencer), such as Alok Vaid-Menon (@alokvmenon), who identifies as a gender non-conforming performance artist who regularly appears in self-designed, homemade outfits. We might consider the contribution of these individuals, and others, as presenting alternative fashionable ideals that operate in opposition to the dominant fashionable ideal, which, by virtue of being hegemonic, will here be simply called the fashionable ideal.

What is perhaps striking—and that we wish to address here—is that elements of this fashionable ideal are still powerfully present in the aesthetics of Instagram influencers. If the platform of Instagram, and the attendant digital technologies that make such a self-aestheticization possible, offer opportunities for a more representative depiction of stylish lives, why is it that the hegemonic fashionable ideal still dominates? Is it simply due to the replication of the logics of the fashion industry due to their patronage of digital media producers, as suggested by Findlay (2017) in her previous work on style bloggers? Or are additional factors at work that make one influencer more followed, more influential, than another? In what follows, we read the idealised body of Instagram in light of theories on fashion media and representation. To this end, we begin by situating the Instagram app and the phenomenon of the influencer into fashion's digital cultures, specifically, that of bloggers and blogging. We then consider how digital technologies order how we see and understand content by exploring some of the ways that Instagram reproduces existing hierarchies of the fashionable ideal, both at the level of what is visible—the image and written content of the Instagram post created by human actors—and what is not visible—the automated and semi-automated structuring of content by the non-human actors of Instagram's algorithmic brand culture (Carah and Angus 2018). Throughout, we follow how fashion travels from print to digital, perceiving the cumulative work of influencers as another kind of body, proliferating into a corpus that takes shape one post at a time.

Instagram

Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger launched Instagram, a photo-sharing app optimized for mobile devices, in 2010, selling it to Facebook in 2012. It was designed to unite the instantaneity of camera-phone technology with the connectivity of a social network, qualities evident in the app's initial tagline that described it as a "fast, beautiful and fun way to share your life with friends through a series of pictures" (Salisbury and Pooley 2017, 12). Users would upload photographs taken on their phones, edit them and apply one of a series of in-app filters, and post it for their followers to "like" or comment upon. The immediacy of the app's design and the initial way users interacted with it lent the images posted to Instagram a quality of spontaneity and a somewhat tangible connection to a user's offline life, as their posts mediated their experiences in real time. If an image had been taken earlier, it was customarily flagged with the hashtag "#latergram" to indicate its asynchronous relation to the rest of a user's feed. Aspects such as these—the assumed relationality between a user's everyday life and the images they posted to Instagram, the qualities of spontaneity and immediacy suggested by the app's design and promotional copy—invoked a quality of "authenticity", in which a user's online presentation presumably cohered with their offline self.

As of September 2017, Instagram had 800 million active monthly users (Berezhna 2018). Given the app's capacities for posting high-quality imagery and its hashtagging function, which allows users to find related content through hyperlinked keywords, brands have been adept at exploiting its

possibilities as an interface that affords communication with potential consumers. One of the industries that has most gravitated towards Instagram as a site for lower-cost marketing is the fashion industry: *The Business of Fashion* reported that by March 2018, 98% of fashion brands had an Instagram profile (see Berezhna 2018). Indeed, in an article analyzing the increasing tendency of fashion labels to develop and release Instagram-only campaigns, the editorial staff of *The Business of Fashion* (in partnership with Instagram) claimed that the app has "established itself as a critical marketing channel for fashion and luxury brands" (*BOF* Team 2017). It has also facilitated the growth of direct-to-consumer niche fashion brands, such as Spell & the Gypsy Collective and Triangl, who primarily market their product through Instagram and only sell through their brand websites (see Bogle 2018). As a corollary, the importance of the fashion industry's business to Instagram is apparent in the appointment of former editor-in-chief of *Lucky* magazine Eva Chen as the company's first Head of Fashion Partnerships in 2015. As such, the content posted on Instagram now accommodates not just personal imagery posted for the regard of a user's friends, but also professional photography and branded content (both photographic and video), the somewhat bashful '#latergram' being replaced by the overt '#ad', ostensibly a claim to a different kind of transparency.

Influencers

Key in the development of Instagram as a fashion-marketing tool has been the rise of "influencers", a group who have not been widely theorized despite

their ubiquity in contemporary fashion communication. Influencers are public personalities with a significant social media following who use their profiles to aestheticize and monetize their lifestyle in various ways—through posting sponsored content, advertisements and affiliate links, and engaging in brand partnerships—thereby promoting awareness and consumption of partnered brands to their followers. As Instagram has become a site that consumers use to engage with fashion, so have influencers become intermediaries between fashion producers and their target market, modelling fashion and beauty consumption in content that marries the capacity of Instagram to "creatively document a life lived well" (Salisbury and Pooley 2017, 12) with the commercialized glamour of an editorial spread. More than the rest of us, for the influencer the ever-present web-enabled camera phone is normalised as "part of the 'texture' of everyday life" (Rocamora 2017, 517), even as her "everyday life" appears to be entirely constituted of "made-for-Instagram moments" (Amed in Rocamora 2017,510).

In their report "The State of Influencer Marketing in Fashion, Luxury and Cosmetics", Launchmetrics (a company that provides software and data analytics for fashion brand marketing) identified four "tiers" of influencers, who are categorized according to their total number of followers: celebrity influencers have 1.5 million or more followers; mega influencers have between 501k-1.5m; macro influencers between 101-500k followers; and micro influencers, of incipient interest to fashion brands, have between 10-100k followers (see Launchmetrics 2018). [1] While the term "influencer" is something of a promotional buzzword, by definition influence is causal. Yet

thus far, the impact of influencers has been primarily evaluated by professionals in public relations, mostly in relation to the influence exerted over a desired segment of the market. Being mentioned by an influencer will ideally evoke a high rate of "click-throughs" (followers clicking affiliate links) and page impressions for a brand's website, an increased rate of product sales, or at the very least, lots of "views" or "likes" on a sponsored post. Any further influence that could be attributed to these individuals seems to vary from influencer to influencer—the images of some may end up on a brand's mood board as inspiration for a future collection; the information posted by others may boost awareness within the industry of up-and-coming designers (as has been the case with Susie Bubble). Within the fashion industry, then, what influencers leverage is the engagement of their followers with certain brands, their posts functioning as an invitation for their followers to identify with them, to aspire to their lifestyle and to emulate them through targeted consumption.

Uniquely positioned to capitalize on social media's supposed qualities of authenticity and immediacy to like-minded individuals over whom they have a kind of distanced effect, influencers form part of a direct-to-consumer style of marketing. The position they occupy in the field of fashion is therefore ambiguous in that their work fulfils qualities of both the professional and the amateur: they produce professional-grade content that emulates the look, feel and discourse of the professional fashion media but for the most part do so without currently or previously having worked within the field. While influencers are increasingly charging fees for their work (see Pike 2016),

historically many were "gifted" free product or incentivized to support a brand through other promotional strategies, such as being invited to exclusive influencer or industry events, rather than being paid.

This blur between professional and amateur has been fruitfully theorized by Leadbeater and Miller, who developed the term "Pro-Am" to distinguish an individual who is a hybrid of the two: "innovative, committed and networked amateurs working to professional standards" (2004, 9). It is important to clarify the distinction between professional and amateur in fashion influencing because part of the rhetorical power—and indeed, the influence—of these individuals relates to their being situated between these two poles. As Brooke Erin Duffy argues of fashion bloggers,

> the ideal of blogger authenticity serves as a *productive myth*.
> That is, the themes of authenticity and autonomy that bloggers
> draw on conceal the fact that they are often embedded in the
> same commercial milieu as those institutional sites from which
> they distance themselves. (2013a, 106)

Influencers must carefully weave promotional strategies into their content so that the veneer of their performed glamorous life is never interrupted. They embroider sponsored content with self-deprecating or apparently revelatory captions that construct a discursive proximity of the viewer to the pictured scene, and reinforce this connection by positioning themselves either directly in the image—becoming as much the focus of our attention as the hotel hosting her—or as the assumed photographer. What influencers see

becomes what we see, collapsing the distance between viewer and viewed, marketer and consumer, aspirational and the everyday.

This sheen of everyday relatability is crucial for influencers to maintain because, as Salisbury and Pooley have observed, authenticity is "always relative to something else, and therefore susceptible to the charge of phoniness - especially if strategy and calculation can be identified" (2017, 2). Duffy and Hund also explore this in their work on fashion blogging, writing that bloggers employ a range of "interrelated tropes—predestined passionate work, staging the glam life, and carefully curated social sharing—to depict an updated version of the post-feminist ideal of 'having it all'" (2015, 2). Implicit in "having it all" is a quality of effortlessness: a glam life isn't glam if it appears laborious to produce and maintain. What upholds the productive myth of authenticity for influencers, then, is not only that their leisurely life conceals their participation in the professional fashion industry, or that they are (even if in name only) not formally embedded in it, but also that they perform this idealized everyday apparently effortlessly. In coming "naturally" to them, influencers implicitly claim that this is just what everyday life looks like for them: as Findlay argues of second wave fashion bloggers, they appear "clad in a world of fashion that is apparently their oyster" (2017, 49).

Making this apparently tautological performance possible are prior digital practices of fashion blogging in which a user's private life and experiences were imaged as part of an ongoing, colloquial narrative of self. Indeed, not

only do web texts remediate print, as Rocamora has argued (2012), web texts also remediate each other in an ever-proliferating catalogue of visual references. We can situate Instagram influencers in this fashion media genealogy: for example, Rocamora traces the trope of the "the disappearing woman" (Evans and Thornton in Rocamora 2012: 101), who walks away from the photographer, from fashion magazines to blogs, a manner of posing we see taken up, in turn, on Instagram. On @leoniehanne, for instance, we encounter Hanne in a sponsored post for luxury watchmaker Longines, appearing to lead the photographer (standing in for the viewer) by the hand across a bridge in New York City (see Figure 3). The pose calls attention to the watch on her extended wrist, and metaphorically emphasises the "journey" Hanne is inviting us to witness: a three-day shoot with Longines, the highlights of which were posted in her Instagram Stories.

The similarities between these media are manifold: Instagram influencers, like style bloggers, reiterate the conventions of fashion photography whilst promoting many of the brands they feature on their sites; they both invoke a tone of familiar intimacy in their written content and elide any elements revealing the effort behind their performance (see Findlay 2017). Moreover, the distinction is further blurred in that Instagram has been referred to as a microblogging site, along with other social media platforms such as Twitter, in that it facilitates the publication of short posts that read as a combination of instant message and blog post (see Zappavigna 2014). In fact, despite describing Instagram as a "shop window" (Marriott 2016), as one Instagrammer told The Guardian's Hannah Marriott, the majority of an

influencer's income is driven by commissions on sales from their blog due to the function on blogs to hyperlink a product directly to its point of sale. Thus situated between the fashion media and PR industries and their followers, fashion influencers play a remarkably similar role to other professional cultural intermediaries and, indeed, mainstream media. In collaborating with brands whose values and aesthetics align with and reinforce their own brand image, influencers trade capital, they promote, and they imbue commercial product with symbolic meaning, much of which is predicated on the value of their distinct personal brands, their position as sole traders and their incorporation of discourses of the everyday and relatability into their digital personae. In so doing, influencers' content constructs an idealization of everyday life that bears little resemblance to its lived or material realities. The seamless performance of an aspirational lifestyle elides the labour it takes to produce these images, as has been argued elsewhere in literature on fashion blogging (see Duffy and Hund 2015; Findlay 2017), and constitutes a kind of "aspirational production" (Marwick 2013) in which social media users create the impression of being higher status than they actually are.

The Fashionable Ideal: From Print to Digital

While Marwick draws parallels between aspirational producers and celebrity culture, specifically the style of pictures taken by paparazzi, the style of photography that influencers' images most resemble is fashion photography as encountered in mainstream fashion magazines, such as American *Vogue*, *Elle*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. Like the models featured in these publications, the

influencers under examination here embody the contemporary fashionable ideal that evolved in the print media of the twentieth century: they are slender, able-bodied, beautiful, and young; each post, like a page of a fashion magazine, demonstrating how contemporary bodies are supposed to look and act in clothes.

As the image of beauty presented by fashion, the fashionable ideal is subject to the same forces of novelty and change that compel fashion's constant reinventions. There is no absolute fashionable ideal; rather, it takes the form of a shifting silhouette of body and clothes, often represented historically as an "evolutionary" sequence from farthingales and corsets, through empire lines to crinolines, bustles, S-curves and minimalism, with innumerable accidental and intentional details along the way. Since the twentieth century, it has mostly been understood through the image of models, those "genetic anomalies" (in Entwistle and Wissinger 2012, 182) found in fashion photography and on the catwalk; beings possessed of height exaggerated by thinness, striking beauty and youth. At fashion's cutting edge, these characteristics are carried further by an impulse directed away from the commercial and towards the synthetic ideal—a utopian form of something that could, but does not yet, exist (De Perthuis 2005). But the fashionable ideal can also be embodied by "actual human beings" (Cartner-Morley 2015)—in historical portraiture, on the red carpet, in snapshots, on the street, on personal style blogs and, of course, on social media platforms such as Instagram.

Like the fashion model of traditional media, the role of the influencer-as-fashionable-ideal is to "show the buttons and the bows" (Carmel Snow in Harrison 1991, 16) of what she is wearing in an aspirational, highly aestheticized way that avoids the tedium of catalogue clarity. There is not much distance, for example, between an editorial spread shot on location in Tunisia by Louise Dahl-Wolfe for the June 1950 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* and the Instagram posts of influencers such as Leonie Hanne, posing tanned and smiling over a silver Moroccan kettle in "#Marrakesh" (see Dahl-Wolfe 1950; Hanne 2018, see Figure 4). One of the first female fashion photographers, Dahl-Wolfe shot her model, all angular limbs and expressive form, in an ivory-and tangerine-coloured *mise-en-scène* of Moorish archways and intricately-carved screens that frame the details of summer fashions. A similar theme is produced by Gold and Hanne in their own on-location images: as with Dahl-Wolfe's editorial, their successive posts form a unified aesthetic whole, as complementary filters are applied to a series of photographs in which they pose beneath a seemingly endless supply of decorative archways, mosaic columns and candy-coloured streetscapes (see Figures 4 and 5) . In contrast, however, to the careful formal qualities that typify professional fashion photography and advertise the artifice of the genre, these posts often have the quality of holiday snapshots—carefree, happy, and smiling down the lens in a way that the fashion image typically withholds—with the distinction that influencers are always dressed in designer clothes and impeccably made-up; their "everyday" an endless roster of dawdling in town squares, smiling over feasts of local produce, and posing by swimming pools in Tulum.

Scrolling through fashion imagery on Instagram, then, can be a monotonous task. Unlike traditional fashion photography, which in the hands of talented individuals has always been an alchemical blend of artistic creation, function and commodity form, it is rare to find content that is radical, inspired, offbeat or niche. There is none of what Margaret Maynard identifies in high-end fashion photography as "something beyond" the commercial rationale (2008, 60); certainly, influencer fashion imagery doesn't turn against itself to question its own rhetoric as has periodically been the case with fashion photography. Mostly, individual posts are formulaic and conventional, with recurring tropes and themes that, while ostensibly depicting the everyday, still manage to replicate the commercial intent of mainstream fashion photography and its comfortably familiar world of luxury, artifice and desire. The locations too are familiar—beach, city, hotel, countryside, street—each feed telling countless small stories about essentially the same thing, using three basic signifiers: clothing, body and *mise-en-scène*. At the centre is the influencer, the object of our gaze, composed as a figure in space, cropped or full-frame; posing or "caught off–guard"; smiling, laughing, pouting; made-up or "*au naturel*"; walking towards the camera—or away from it; balancing on a cliff or wading through the shallows. Even when motionless, the body of the digital influencer, like the new, young ideal of fashion photography in the 1960s, is "always on the move" (Radner 2000), busily documenting a conservative performance of a global life that is always fashioned.

The Instagrammed Body

In influencer content, the tropes of mainstream fashion photography—
including the fashionable ideal—collapse with the feel of the everyday. Their
labour appears as effortless as the models gliding weightless across the
surface of Paris in Melvin Sokolsky's "Bubble Series" for *Harper's Bazaar*
(1963). Sokolsky's models, too, were in the world and yet not of it, belonging
completely to the fashionable atmosphere in which they appeared. Likewise,
influencers seem to drift through the world, materializing the fantasy of
fashion, breathing its rarefied air and inhabiting its frictionless space. As an
astronaut's space suit demarcates their body as being not of their
environment, protecting and enclosing them, so too does fashion function on
the body of the influencer. It marks their body as both separate to a scene and
belonging to it; yet instead of lunar scapes, influencers appear against walls
chosen to make their outfit "pop" or perched against the glass of viewing
galleries in vertiginous buildings, gazing down at the distant city like a map of
lights across the surface of the earth.

In her work on the feminine ideal, Marianne Thesander writes "in every
culture, a female physical ideal is created by various means of artifice and
given precisely the form and the meanings with which the culture wishes
women to be identified" (1997, 11). Arguably, influencers serve as a model for
the neoliberal values of our time, in which the prestige and flexibility of an
entrepreneurial career is wedded with a contemporary iteration of the "useless
and expensive way of life" formerly the preserve of the upper classes (36).
And just as the "right" bodies were produced by participating in a rationalized

20

workforce and embodying the values of self-control and discipline after the Industrial Revolution (see Thesander 1997), so too are these idealized figures the product of their labour. Influencers seem to have no physical needs: they frequently pose with food but are rarely photographed eating; they sit on hotel beds but are rarely photographed sleeping; there is a sense that they move through the world maintaining the autonomy of their personal industry. Their bodies are thus immaterialized, utterly imaged even as they are presented to their followers over and over in a range of poses. The effect of this constant self-presentation is a collapse of the extrinsic with their imaged selves: what is not-their-bodies becomes absorbed by their performed identity, so that the locations they appear in, the food they pose with, the objects they scatter in a picturesque flat-lay, form a metonymic relationship with their persona. Their body within a single post is transformed into "the fashion body" (Thesander 1997, 67), and yet the cumulative effect of their posts in their feed forms another body, a corpus of work that literally stands in for them in digital space.

Consider Leonie Hanne's feed: each image seems to have been edited to similitude with an external program such as Adobe Lightroom, so that visual components such as temperature, tint, tone and contrast are consistent throughout. The overall effect is a seamless wash of pastel tones of peach, rose pink, and pale blue—colors that Hanne herself also frequently wears—punctuated by her long tanned limbs and blonde hair. Hanne's posts place her in a range of locations that switch every few images, Dubai to Lisbon to Hamburg to London, but because she is doing similar things in each context, it is almost as if these diverse cities are changing behind her, as if being

flicked through a viewfinder. The effect is to convey an impression of Hanne's

complete control over her appearance and lifestyle. As Duffy and Hund have

argued of fashion bloggers, such a staged idealized life "obscures the labour,

discipline and capital necessary" (2015, 2) to create and sustain it. Indeed,

creating the impression of having transcended the limitations of the body

requires a kind of discipline and self-control that Thesander argues was linked

to the body of the worker in the post-Industrial period as a result of needing to

respond to work that was "more intensive […] and time-oriented" (1997, 42).

Here, too, can we see the bodies of influencers as a product of their work,

albeit what we see is only the end product, the feminized fashionable ideal

that wholly embodies the pleasure of fashion having been apparently freed

from the needs and constraints of a living, mortal body.

The Instagram feed compounds this impression in its endless scroll; the

reinforcing quality of the same kinds of images populating again and again,

naturalizing the sustained idealized performance. The humanizing rhetorical

touches that influencers sometimes incorporate to suggest relatability are

often couched in their image captions, rather than the images themselves,

and so do not ever threaten to disrupt or overturn the overall aspirational

effect. Asiyami Gold, for example, recently wrote a caption in which she drily

shared that she has become "hella lazy" and that she has chosen to cultivate

an attitude of acceptance and body positivity: "I'm accepting all the curves and

stretch marks that comes [*sic*] with this new territory, and the heartbreaking

fact that my [peach emoji] and boobs are gradually forging [an] allegiance with

gravity" (Gold 2018b). In the accompanying image, she stands *contrapposto*

and in profile, smiling slightly in a white bikini and shrunken straw hat. Her body appears toned and fit, her bottom as rounded and firm as the emoji she used to reference it, with nary a trace of the stretch marks mentioned. The image seems more representative than her caption: we can see with our own eyes what Gold's figure looks like, and so her words have the effect of normalizing her in the vein of women's media discourse which encourages readers to cultivate a critical attitude towards their own bodies. [2] Tagged in the post are hat label Preston Olivia and swimwear brand La Hana Swim, and Gold invokes the latter in her caption, crediting them for making her feel "hella sexy". The brand is thus folded into Gold's narrative of self, their product "accentuating [her] curves" and transforming the look of her body—at least according to this post. Here, Gold simultaneously embodies the positions of fashionable ideal and relatable girlfriend, performing what Campbell calls a "labour of devotion" (in Duffy 2013b) in which she, as a female consumer, promotes La Hana Swim to her followers. In this way, the content that influencers produce also replicates the ethos of a mainstream fashion magazine to make consumers of an audience, and to do so in the guise of beguiling them with promissory content. Here, the imaged bodies of influencers work in tandem with the cumulative bodies of their feeds to consolidate a vision of an aspirational ideal that is also suggestive of the everyday by virtue of the digital platform upon which it is posted.

How Fashion Travels

Instagram feeds, while often conforming to the gendered, racialized, ethnic and corporeal stereotypes of mainstream fashion, also rupture representations of fashion's bodily "norms". In the image-world of Fashion 2.0, individual and communal expressions of the non-youthful, the non-beautiful, people with disabilities, the plus size and the non-binary transform fashionable discourse in radical ways that are then reflected in mainstream fashion media. Nonetheless, as we have argued, in a fashion media landscape that is "increasingly converged, interconnected and networked" (Orgad 2012, 38), the fashionable ideal remains an aspirational, if not mythical, figure. While it is true that Instagram has made different types of ideals more visible and provided a platform for underground or subcultural style that would struggle to gain recognition by traditional industry and media players, the dominant ideal remains. For example, despite her 215k followers, Gold gets fewer jobs, is frequently offered a lower fee than her Caucasian counterparts, and is accustomed to being the only person of colour in brand campaigns (Koman 2017). Her experience echoes that of Naomi Campbell who, despite being one of the Supermodels who dominated fashion imagery in the late 1980s and 1990s, got paid "a lot less" than her white Supermodel counterparts and concedes she "always felt like the 'underdog'" (Capital Lifestyle 2017). Like Campbell, Gold is young, slim and exceptionally beautiful. But unlike Campbell, Gold is operating in a media environment that held the promise of being more democratic and egalitarian, one in which it was presumed that "a new politics of meaning" would undermine and replace "long-standing power relations" (Langlois 2014, 33). If we continue to think of the fashionable ideal

as young, female, white, able-bodied, thin and classically beautiful, it is because she usually is.

When Campbell appeared on the January 1990 cover of *Vogue* alongside Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington and Tatjana Patitz, fashion—and the fashionable ideal—was defined by an elite group of decision-makers comprised of designers, editors and photographers; professionals based in the traditional fashion capitals of London, Paris, New York and Milan. In the late twentieth century, the power of these cultural intermediaries emanated from the "instituting discourse" (Barthes 1983, ix), exemplified by the fashion magazine, which, in *The Fashion System*, Barthes evocatively described as "a machine that makes fashion" (51). In this mass-media universe, there were occasional representations of an ethnically, racially, and physically diverse fashionable ideal, but their appearance in fashion magazines or on the catwalk was still dependent on decisions made by a controlling elite and, in the broader scheme of things, could be seen as tokenistic. [3] While the participatory culture of Instagram has dented this hierarchical structure, as we have argued, influencers such as Asiyami Gold and Leonie Hanne mostly replicate the homogenizing logic of the fashion image.

The Age of Instagram

In attempting to account for the conservatism of the digital fashionable ideal, the question, then, is why (or how) the dominant paradigm of the fashionable

ideal has maintained its power and definitional status across diverse media and platforms. If anyone can open an Instagram account and produce regular posts, if we can all participate as a producer as well as a user, what are the forces that determine popularity? What determines visibility in the Instagram feed? What creates value? In short, what makes one account more influential than another? The answer partly lies in the process of representation itself, which has been theorised as inherently conservative (Orgad 2012, Fuchs, 2017). In *Media Representation and the Global Imagination*, Shani Orgad analyzes the ways in which the existing power relations of capitalism are reproduced and reinforced through representation and how, in turn, consumer culture embeds and reproduces ideals and stereotypes of size, age, ability, ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality. Drawing on Foucauldian discourse analysis, she argues that rather than communicating existing knowledge or realities—what is—media representations produce "truth effects" that legitimise, reinforce and reproduce certain discursive regimes while "rendering others illegitimate, deviant and 'false'" (Orgad 2012, 28). It is not, then, a simple question of being "inside" or "outside"; rather, media representations are constitutive of power; they are "the realm of the 'said'" (28), where the symbolic inclusion or exclusion of social entities and individuals interweaves with who has the authority or legitimacy to produce meaning: to write, to speak and be seen.

Representation is, however, a space of contestation that produces contradictory and parallel effects   and, as a potentially disruptive force, Instagram influencers travel through fluid, unstable terrain where meaning is a

site of struggle, and power operates in volatile, unpredictable ways. On the one hand, the authority of established institutions, frameworks and paradigms are open to challenge from alternative, competing, dissenting or subversive voices which then relocate power in enabling and transformative ways. On the other hand, the process of representation itself is construed as a conservative one that works to legitimise things and make them acceptable to the mainstream discourse. As Orgad writes, "bringing things into the realm of discourse works […] to inscribe them in hegemonic structures and to produce self-monitoring bodies that willingly submit to and, thus, help to create and legitimate the authority of experts" (2012, 28).

Legitimising that which begins "outside" and making it acceptable, appropriating newness, novelty and difference is, of course, what fashion does all the time. The independent subcultural style press of the 1980s was, by the mid-1990s, supported as much by fashion advertising as traditional, mainstream fashion titles; and in the first decade of the new millennium, street style and personal bloggers who provided an alternative fashion voice, went from being labelled "amateurs" or "hobbyists" to permanently joining the professional media. In replicating the aesthetic, logic and ethos of the fashion photograph and thereby shaping their content to remediate a familiar trope, influencers are, as Judith Butler has argued of gender constitution, effectively enacting a script that existed before they arrived on the scene (see Butler 1989). The tendency, then, to adapt and appropriate new media technologies and communication practices to the needs and interests of the dominant group is not a new development. Indeed, as communications scholar

Christian Fuchs (2017, 94) reminds us, "media and social media in contemporary society are shaped by structures of economic, political and cultural power". Always undergirding the workings of these structures is the question of who has (or does not have) power. What is new, however, is that there is now an interplay between human actors and non-human actors, the platform interfaces, protocols and algorithms that programmatically respond to content (Langlois 2014; Carah and Angus 2018). Starting from the premise that meaning making—the creation of value, the shaping of culture and the exercise of power—is "no longer simply a human process but […] one that is increasingly dependent on media technologies" (2014, 5), Ganaele Langlois points to the business model of social media platforms as one that is less interested in producing content—what we post and view—than in "hosting and retrieving large amounts of information" (26) that can be used for advertising and marketing.

The point here is not to embrace the logic of a technological determinism that conceives of technology as an actor while failing to recognize the complexities of the relationship between the technological and the social (Fuchs 2017; Rocamora 2017); on Instagram, human actors are, of course, important. While what influencers such as Gold and Hanne do—and precisely how they do it—may not be as firmly imprinted in the popular consciousness as the activities of the human actors in the world of the fashion magazine, but neither are their activities entirely opaque. The more engaged user knows what, and when, to post in order to optimize views, increase followers and, in the blunt language of the blogosphere, make money, with gaps in knowledge

conveniently filled by any number of tutorials providing tips and tricks. The narrative of participatory culture as a vehicle of self-actualization and a space where users are free to express themselves may continue to resonate, but it does so in the face of a user experience that is increasingly pervaded by capitalist logics that serve the commercial interests of both the platform and the influencer. Scrolling through an Instagram feed requires fielding automated targeted advertisements that provide a "constant prod towards consumption" (Langlois 2014, 125) and, at least anecdotally, the volume of ads a user sees in their home screen feed is proportionate to the status and quantity of influencers followed. What delineates this experience from the traditional media model of the fashion magazine (in the case of, say, American *Vogue* with its hundreds of pages of ads), is that a platform such as Instagram, is not "primarily in the business of accommodating large amounts of human-produced meaning", but rather in "finding ways to create meaningful connections that can be mediated through a for-profit motive" (Langlois 2014, 19). In other words, the model of Barthes' "fashion making machine", in which meaning making is produced by human actors (publishers, editors, designers, photographers, art directors, models, stylists, and so on) has, in the age of Instagram, developed into "automated and semiautomated ways of producing meaning", what Langlois calls "meaning machines", in which the human user is "a component, but not the driving force" (2014, 52).

On Instagram, meaningful connections are made when influencers produce content that draws us in and keeps us engaged, winning us over by creating a comfortable space where we encounter things we like and that are

recommended to us by people who feel like trusted peers. But as Langlois points out, beyond our interaction at the level of the interface, whole parts of the communication process are relegated "to back-end and invisible software processes" (2014, 46) and other non-human actors that shape, control, guide and manage what we see. Rather than being neutral or impartial, then, software "has an aesthetic and ideological role in providing cultural frameworks that human users rely on to interpret what is being communicated to them" (69). Inevitably, this reproduces existing hierarchies and serves the interests of the mainstream and commercial. As part of the capacities of Instagram, for example, the hashtag function connects and ranks disparate posts; algorithms sort and order information according to the volume of followers; and the most popular posts are also the most prominently displayed. The conditions in which meaning takes place on Instagram, then, are not unlike the conditions that saw personal style blogging shift from accommodating the open-ended possibilities of creative self-representation and alternative fashionable ideals (see Findlay 2017) to providing a platform for "neoliberal 'entrepreneurs of the self'" (Pham 2011, 16). By casting themselves in a familiar mould and generating commercial content that is meaningful for their followers, influencers become "an ideal living capitalist subject that feels and responds to the world in accordance with a capitalistic logic" (Langlois 2014, 88), thereby producing a fashionable life that is also profitable.

Conclusion

In this article we have asked why the fashionable ideal continues to dominate digital platforms such as Instagram. As we have argued, beyond their capacity to extend the reach of the promotional industries, influencers are not as disruptive as they may first appear. Furthermore, the transformation of the world into a "dramaturgical landscape" (Larsen 2008, 143) for an ongoing personal performance of aspirational living is less of a transformation of the fashionable ideal and more of a migration. The influencer's position in time and space, while fantastical, remains undergirded by commercial logics that reinforce the hegemonic aesthetic. What has shifted is the discursive power of this digital iteration of the fashionable ideal, which draws on the trope of authenticity that still lingers on Instagram despite the diversification of its users and the ends to which they employ the app. In remediating the conventions of fashion photography, magazines and blogs, influencers situate their content in a familiar media landscape, even as the specificities of Instagram as an interface—its structuring algorithms and software design— independently shape the ways audiences (or, indeed, consumers) make meaning of their feeds. As it is, the fashionable ideal has travelled from print to digital, morphed from the embodied self of the professional fashion model into the influencer, yet the effect remains remarkably the same.

Endnotes

[1] These categorizations are by no means an industry standard: for example, niche influencers are another influencer demographic not here represented, which other sites situate between macro and micro influencers (see Morin

31

2016); whereas TINT, a branding company, defines micro influencers as anyone with less than 10k followers (Gallegos 2018). However, given the breadth of Launchmetrics' report and the number of high profile fashion clients the company works with, including Karla Otto PR, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, ASOS, Topshop and L'Oreal, their categorizations have been adopted for our purposes here.

[2] Interestingly, the relationship between the image and the caption in this instance reverses Barthes conceptualization of the hierarchy between written and image clothing where the caption works to pin down the "slipperiness" of the fashion image. In other ways, the coding features of Instagram, such as the hashtag function, perform the work of the caption in print media by connecting users and brands in a model of consumption that replicates the overt commercial relation between fashion photograph and commodity in advertisements or editorial spreads (see De Perthuis 2016).

[3] Some examples include: in 1966, Donyale Luna was the first black model to appear on the cover of British *Vogue*; Issey Miyake used "old and beautiful" (Quick 1997, 167) models for his Fall/Winter 1995 collection; at the turn of the millennium, Alexander McQueen and Nick Knight worked with model Aimee Mullins, a double amputee; and for his Spring/Summer 2007 Ready-to-Wear collection, Jean Paul Gaultier sent the voluptuous burlesque star, Velvet d'Amour down the catwalk in lingerie.

Reference List

Barthes, Roland. 1983. *The Fashion System*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Benkler, Yochai. 2006. *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Berezhna, Victoria. 2018. 'Brands Boost Influencer Marketing Budgets', *Business of Fashion* [website], April 6. Available at: https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-bites/the-evolution-of-influencer-marketing. (Accessed: 23 April 2018).

Berry, Jess. 2010. "Flâneurs of 2.0." *SCAN Journal of Media Arts Culture*, 7(2). http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=152.

BOF Team. 2017. 'What Makes A Great Instagram Campaign?' *The Business of Fashion* [website], October 31. Available at: https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/sponsored-feature/what-makes-a-great-instagram-campaign. (Accessed: 23 April 2018).

Bogle, Ariel. 2018. "Is Instagram making Australian fashion bland, or saving its life?", *ABC Science*, October 5. Available at: https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2018-10-06/instagram-making-australian-fashion-bland-or-saving-its-life/10338352. (Accessed: 18 November 2018).

Butler, Judith. 1989. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40 (4), pp. 519-531.

Capital Lifestyle. 2017. "Naomi Campbell slams social media sensations." January 2. Available at: https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/lifestyle/2017/01/02/naomi-campbell-slams-social-media-sensations/. (Accessed: 25 May 2018).

Carah, Nicholas and Daniel Angus. 2018. "Algorithmic Brand Culture: Participatory Labour, Machine Learning and Branding on Social Media." *Media, Culture & Society* 40 (2): 178-194.

Cartner-Morley, Jess. 2015. ''When is it socially acceptable to wear black tights?'' *The Guardian*, October 20. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/oct/19/fashion-black-tights-women-fashtag. (Accessed: 9 May 2018).

Connell, Catherine. 2013. "Fashionable Resistance: Queer 'Fa(t)shion' Blogging as Counterdiscourse." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 41 (1/2), pp. 209-224.

Dahl-Wolfe, Louise. 1950. "Linen — Handled With Care." *Harper's Bazaar* [US]. June. New York: Hearst.

De Perthuis, Karen. 2005. "The Synthetic Ideal: The Fashion Model and Photographic Manipulation." *Fashion Theory* 9 (4), pp. 407-424.

De Perthuis, Karen. 2016. "People in Fashionable Clothes: Street Style Blogs and the Ontology of the Fashion Photograph." *Fashion Theory* 20 (5), pp. 523-543.

Duffy, Brooke Erin. 2013a. *Remake, Remodel: Women's Magazines in the Digital Age*. Baltimore: University of Illinois Press.

Duffy, Brooke Erin. 2013b. "The New 'Real Women' of Advertising: Subjects, Experts and Producers in the Interactive Era", in McAllister, Matthew P. and Emily West (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Advertising and Promotional Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 223-236.

Duffy, Brooke Erin and Emily Hund. 2015. "'Having It All' on Social Media: Entrepreneurial Femininity and Self-Branding Among Fashion Bloggers." *Social Media + Society* July-December, pp. 1-11.

Entwistle, Joanne and Elizabeth Wissinger. 2012. "Introduction", in Entwistle, Joanne and Elizabeth Wissinger (eds.) *Fashioning Models: Image, Text and Industry*. London & New York: Berg, pp. 1-14.

Entwistle, Joanne and Elizabeth Wissinger. 2012. "Fashion Modelling: The Industry Perspective", in Entwistle, Joanne and Elizabeth Wissinger (eds.) *Fashioning Models: Image, Text and Industry*. London & New York: Berg, pp. 174-191.

Findlay, Rosie. 2017. *Personal Style Blogs: Appearances that Fascinate*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Fuchs, Christian. 2017. *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles & London: Sage.

Gallegos, Jose Angelo. 2018. "Influencer Marketing: Understanding the Difference between Micro-Influencers and Mega-Influencers." *TINT* [website], January 3. Available at: https://www.tintup.com/blog/micro-influencers-vs-mega-influencers-marketing/. (Accessed: 1 May 2018).

Gold, Asiyami. 2018a. "About", *Asiyami Gold*. Available at: http://www.asiyamigold.com/ss2016/. (Accessed: 18 November 2018).

Gold, Asiyami. 2018b. @*asiyami_gold* post [*Instagram*]. May 2. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BiSV-h4DQOL/?hl=en&taken-by=asiyami_gold. (Accessed: 30 May 2018).

Hanne, Leonie (n.d.) "About", *Ohh Couture*. Available at: https://ohhcouture.com/about/ (accessed: 18 November 2018).

Hanne, Leonie. 2018. @*leoniehanne* post [*Instagram*]. April 6. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BhPLL62nvgS/?hl=en&taken-by=ohhcouture. (Accessed: 30 May 2018).

Harrison, Martin. 1991. *Appearances: Fashion Photography Since 1945*. New York: Rizzoli.

Khamis, Susie and Alex Munt. 2010. "The Three Cs of Fashion Media Today: Convergence, Creativity & Control." *SCAN Journal of Media Arts Culture*, 7(2). http://scan.net.au/scan/journal/display.php?journal_id=155

Koman, Tess. 2017. "This Is What it Really Takes to Make it as an Influencer." *Cosmopolitan*. Available at: https://www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/a13517113/asiyami-gold-instagram/. (Accessed: 25 May 2018).

Langlois, Ganaele. 2014. *Meaning in the Age of Social Media*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Larsen, Jonas. 2008. "Practices and Flows of Digital Photography: An Ethnographic Framework." *Mobilities*, 3 (1), pp. 141-160.

Launchmetrics. 2018. 'The State of Influencer Marketing in Fashion, Luxury and Cosmetics', Report. Available at: www.launchmetrics.com. (Accessed: 23 April 2018).

Leadbeater, Charles and Paul Miller. 2004. *The Pro-Am Revolution: How enthusiasts are changing our society and economy*. London: Demos.

Lewis, Reina. 2015. *Muslim Fashion: Contemporary Style Cultures*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Luvaas, Brent. 2016. *Street Style: An Ethnography of Fashion Blogging*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Marriott, Hannah. 2016. "Secrets of a Professional Instagrammer", *The Guardian*, March 3. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2016/mar/02/instagram-professional-instagrammer-blogger-filter. (Accessed: 12 November 2018).

Marwick, Alice. 2013. *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity and Branding in the Social Media Age*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Maynard, Margaret. 2008. "The Fashion Photograph: An 'Ecology'", in Shinkle, Eugenie (ed.) *Fashion as Photograph: Viewing and Reviewing Images of Fashion*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, pp. 54-69.

Morin, Raymond. 2016. "The Rise of Niche and Micro-Influencers." *Maximize Social Business* [website]. Available at: https://maximizesocialbusiness.com/the-rise-of-niche-and-micro-influencers-24286/. (Accessed: 1 May 2018).

Orgad, Shani. 2012. *Media Representation and the Global Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity.

Pedroni, Marco. 2015. "'Stumbling on the Heels of My Blog': Career, Forms of Capital, and Strategies in the (Sub)Field of Fashion Blogging." *Fashion Theory*, 19 (2): 179-199.

Pham, Minh-Ha. T. 2011. "Blog Ambition: Fashion, Feelings and the Political Economy of the Digital Raced Body." *Camera Obscura*, 26 (1): 1-37.

Pike, Helena. 2016. 'For Young Brands, Is The Instagram Opportunity Shrinking?' *The Business of Fashion* [website], October 5. Available at: https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/intelligence/for-young-brands-is-the-instagram-opportunity-shrinking. (Accessed on 23/04/18).

Quick, Harriet. 1997. *Catwalking: a History of the Fashion Model*. London: Hamlyn.

Radner, Hilary. 2000. "On the Move: Fashion Photography and the Single Girl in the 1960s", in Bruzzi, Stella and Pamela Church Gibson (eds.) *Fashion Cultures: Theories, Explorations and Analysis*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 128-142.

Rocamora, Agnès. 2018. "The Labour of Fashion Blogging", in Armstrong, Leah and Felice McDowell (eds.) *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 65-81.

Rocamora, Agnès. 2017. "Mediatization and DIgital Media in the Field of Fashion." *Fashion Theory, 21 (5):505-522.*

Rocamora, Agnès. 2012. "Hypertextuality and Remediation in the Fashion Media." *Journalism Practice* 6 (1): 92-106.

Salisbury, Meredith and Jefferson D. Pooley. 2017. 'The #nofilter Self: The Contest for Authenticity among Social Networking Sites, 2002-2016.' *Social Sciences* 6 (10), pp. 1-24.

Sokolsky, Melvin. 1963. "Blowing fashion through the heart of Paris." *Harper's Bazaar* [US]. March. New York: Hearst.

Thesander, Marianne. 1997. *The Feminine Ideal*. London: Reaktion Books.

Titton, Monica. 2015. "Fashionable Personae: Self-identity and Enactments of Fashion Narratives in Fashion Blogs", *Fashion Theory* 19 (2): 201-220.

Zappavigna, Michele. 2014. "Enacting identity in microblogging through ambient affiliation." *Discourse & Communication* 8 (2): 209-228.

Figures

1.Hanne, Leonie. 2017. *@leoniehanne* post [*Instagram*]. August 8. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BXi4LLWFVBH/. (Accessed: 12 November 2018).

2. Gold, Asiyami. 2017. *@asiyami_gold* post [*Instagram*]. September 6. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BYtjuIrgrgK/. (Accessed: 12 November 2018).

3. Hanne, Leonie. 2018. *@leoniehanne* post [*Instagram*]. May 5. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BiaByyAHahC/. (Accessed: 12 November 2018).

4. Hanne, Leonie. 2018. *@leoniehanne* post [*Instagram*]. April 6. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BhPLL62nvgS/?hl=en&taken-by=ohhcouture. (Accessed: 12 November 2018).

5.Gold, Asiyami. 2018a. *@asiyami_gold* post [*Instagram*]. March 29. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/Bg6vio_hDGJ/?hl=en&taken-by=asiyami_gold. (Accessed: 30 May 2018).

6. Gold, Asiyami. 2018b. *@asiyami_gold* post [*Instagram*]. May 2. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/BiSV-h4DQOL/?hl=en&taken-by=asiyami_gold. (Accessed: 30 May 2018).