6

Magical Names: Glamour, Enchantment, and Illusion in Women's Fashion Magazines

Brian Moeran

This chapter is about the role of women's fashion magazines in creating and sustaining the fashion industry as a magical network, primarily through naming practices.[1] Fashion magazines are an integral part of the fashion industry and adopt numerous magical practices to enchant their readers into desiring, if not buying, fashionable clothing of all sorts, together with the accessories and beauty products advertised in their pages (*Spin a magic spell in dreamy dresses, cool capes, and beyond-the-veil headpieces*). These practices consist of textual and visual enchantments enacted by editors, photographers, stylists, art designers, makeup artists, and hair stylists employed by fashion magazines, as well as by their fashion and beauty advertisers, and the fashion designers whose work they portray. As such, fashion magazine practices parallel those found in magical and religious rites in general: they tend to have different agents performing them; and their performances take place in different locations and in different circumstances (secretly, in the case of studio fashion

B. Moeran (✉)
University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

© The Author(s) 2018

B. Moeran, T. de Waal Malefyt (eds.), *Magical Capitalism*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74397-4_6

shoots; or in public, as with the six-monthly cycle of fashion collections) (Mauss 1972: 24).

Fashion magazines make use of professional magicians, who perform a series of magical practices (*weaving magical effects*), whose rites and spells are behind the fantasies (*the fantasy of this gently distressed style*), seduction (*prints with a seductive touch*), and transformations (*vixens who transform a black le smoking with a slick of merlot gloss*) characterizing the fashion and beauty industries (Lipovetsky 1994; Entwistle 2000).[2] Together, they sustain a "magical worldview" (*the magical expression of a fragrance*) (Wax and Wax 1963), in which spells (*spellbinding seduction*), rituals (*the crucial ingredient of a complete cleansing and purifying ritual*), and elixirs (*potent elixirs*) charm (*charming silhouette*), bewitch (*bewitching femininity*), mesmerize (*mesmerizing beauty*), captivate (*captivating features*), and entice (*enticing choice*) readers of fashion magazines with an *alchemy of refined and powerfully addictive contrasts* designed to give them *irresistible allure* and a *mysterious* or *seductive aura*.

The fashion network makes use of two kinds of agents in the performance of fashion: fashion houses and their designers, on the one hand, and fashion journalists, editors, bloggers, advertisers, marketers, and publicists, on the other.[3] While the former provide the clothes they wish to be seen as fashion, the latter create the images that make them so with the public. In order for designers to be known and become world famous, they need to be legitimated by those who, like Anna Wintour of *Vogue*, have the power and authority to influence (Kawamura 2005: 72–73, 78).

The consecration takes place through the "orgy" of the biannual collections.[4] It is at the collections that the *illusion*—that is to say, the *social*, rather than simply visual, illusion—of fashion is produced and reproduced, as inherently ambiguous matters of taste are spoken of with absolute certitude by players who know, and play by, the rules of the game: "the positions and statuses within the field, as well as their own capacities to maneuver within it" (Mears 2011: 168).

Fashion designers and the fashion press have long been rivals over which produces the images that define fashion. For fashion designers (and the houses they work for), the defining images lie in the shows they put on in order to sell their collections of clothing every season and to produce items of dress that will be selected by fashion editors, forecasters, and buyers, before being promoted as trends (Crane 2000: 165). For

their part, fashion magazine editors broker these catwalk images, while adding many more studio and location photographs, which they then frame with textual matter consisting of magical phrases and names. In this way, they act as cultural mediators (rather than mere intermediaries) between sellers, buyers, and onlookers: between magicians and their audience. The tension between these two image-creating institutions in the fashion system has led to a creative alliance, allowing fashion images to grow all the more powerful in contemporary society.

Enchanting Visions

The production and reception of fashion is a product of social cooperation among those who form "a community of faith" based on a collective belief—or misrecognition (Bourdieu 1993: 138)—in the power of "style." It is this faith that drives the fashion system, for "style" is a constant (*ageless quality, grace and style*) that is over and above the necessary ephemerality of evolving fashion trends (*our editors spot the trends as they happen in real time*). Although its meaning is constantly being renegotiated, style grants "fashion" its licence to continue.

Those working for fashion magazines are specialists and experts in a particular branch of magic (Malinowski 1922: 410–411). They *see*, while remaining themselves invisible to outsiders (*the invisible backstage insiders who shape our wardrobes*); they publicize the unseen, and in many ways secret, world of fashion design (*fashion's dark angel takes flight*) (Pels 2003: 3; Geschiere 2003). All of those whose work I write about in this chapter at one point or another talked to me about their "vision"—of a magazine's contents and its brand, its cover, its layout, or of a feature story to be published there. Although fellow workers might try to persuade, dissuade, or otherwise advise, those concerned did their utmost to ward off such interferences and hold onto their vision. They wrestled with the vagaries of chance (e.g., a rival magazine title using the same model on its cover in the same month); they placed clear emphasis on feelings and instincts, as opposed to rational thought and logical arguments (*a dazzling whirl of new ways of seeing, dressing, hearing, feeling, and being*).

The fact that a vision is always subject to serendipity means that the end result of any part of magazine production is rarely foreseeable (*She*

just has some sort of magic juju). This is the irony of "vision." People pass back and forth between work and magical practices (Malinowski 1954: 33), between rational explanations and "gut instincts" (*And then there's that thing where you have to repurpose what you have. It's a pain, but it makes you think about your clothes in a new way, which might be when something magical happens*), operating according to rules of enchantment, rather than of Weberian disenchantment (*Enchantment. Dark florals, cool velvet, and ravishing Victoriana*).

In order to understand the values, myths, and beliefs found in fashion-as-magical network, I am going to follow Alfred Gell in considering fashion and beauty as "components of technology." In other words, as a category, the fashion magazine is the outcome of technical processes (writing, editing, design, photography, styling, modelling, etc.) which, like certain forms of art, have as their unified aim the *making of beauty and style*. Together, they are part of a gigantic technical system formed by the fashion and beauty industries, which make use of what Gell calls *technologies of enchantment* (Gell 1992: 43).

The power of fashion clothing and accessories stems from the technical processes they embody (*cutting glamorous evening fabrics into simple daywear shapes*). This means that technologies of enchantment are founded on our enchantment with technology: "the power that technical processes have of casting a spell over us so that we see the real world in an enchanted form" (ibid.: 44). Enchantment is integral to all sorts of fashion- and beauty-related activities and is practised by an *assemblage* (Latour 2005) of magical actors (as well as of materials, skills, knowledge, rites, and language), who are both enchanted by, and who utter their spells of enchantment over, the magical world in which they operate. (*Play dress up in seductive party wear that pairs dazzling prints and glittering finishes for a spellbinding look. The bewitching hour is now…*). In other words, the power of fashion lies in the *symbolic* processes surrounding fashion items, rather than in the items themselves, even though it is these that are exhibited, commented on, bought, and sold (*Donna wanted her delicate silk and chiffon dresses to be seductive and feminine*).[5]

These magicians of fashion and beauty (discussed elsewhere in this volume by Vangkilde, and Arnould, Cayle, and Dion) use technologies of enchantment as a means of thought control, since they entice us to see what might (or again, might not) be a naked king wearing fine clothes (*disguise

your flaws). Like the canoe prow-boards used by the *kula* flotilla in the Trobriand Islands, fashion is not dazzling as a physical object so much as "a display of artistry explicable only in magical terms, something which has been produced by magical means" (ibid.: 46) (*broad shoulders create the illusion of a small waist*). It is how a fashion has come into existence—its becoming, rather than its being (*wild-and-woolly shearling will be worn by leaders of the pack as the mercury plummets*)—that is the source of its power over us (*social types will flit from table to table in this embroidered tulle confection*).

This is partly because the costs of achieving such effortless glamour—in other words, the cost of people's labour—remain unseen (Postrel 2013: 81), and so allow people to be "seduced" by fashion, beauty, and consumerism in general (*Prepare to be seduced by Episode's new accessories range*). This is where the idea of magic comes in. Throughout history, magic has accompanied uncertainty of whatever kind, in whatever part of the world (Gell 1992: 57). People adopt magical technologies of enchantment when preparing to go offshore fishing, planting yams in their gardens, pitching and batting in baseball, or designing fashion garments and the technical means used to produce them (*the designer used* trompe l'oeil *to add a necklace to a sweater*). It is the ideal means of representing the technical domain in enchanted form (*sheer fabrics and delicate trimmings are so alluring*).

The fashion designer, then, finds him (or her) self in an ambiguous position—"half-technician and half-mystagogue" (ibid.: 59)—in the fabrication of fashion. Precisely because the ordinary technical means she or he employs point inexorably towards magic (*a miracle of construction*), fashion magazines present them as enchanted (*as though the dresses were emerging from some enchanted forest*). They make us stand in awe of fashion, seeing it as an idealized form of production because we're at a loss to explain how it comes into existence in the world in the first place (*romancing the collections*) (ibid.: 61–62). A matter of *vested interests*?

The Grammar of Glamour

The idea that fashion (or clothing) is a form of magic is not new, as any reader of the Bible (Adam and Eve) or children's fairy tales (Cinderella) can readily surmise. "Dress, like drama, is descended from an ancient religious, mystical and magical past of ritual and worship… Even today

garments may acquire talismanic properties" (Wilson 1987: 21). Initially, it was their magical, rather than ornamental or decorative, properties that gave articles of clothing a meaning beyond their functional use (Flügel 1930: 72).

It's clear that those writing for fashion magazines also regard fashion as in some sense "magical." We find the word used to title fashion stories (*White Magic*; *Animal Magic*); describe new fashion collections (*Here's how the costume designers, hair stylists, and makeup artists make the magic happen*) and individual garments (*Sleeves are magic. Now you see them, now you don't*); (Fig. 6.1) and generally account for designers and their work (*The name Dior is absolutely magical*). Magazines cast numerological spells: *5 spring must-haves*, *49 wanna-buy-now swimsuits*, *138 figure-fixers*, *275 objects of desire*, and *394 smart ways to look sexy*. They ensorcel with *sassy* suits, *slinky* jerseys, *bold* collars, *saucy* stilettos, and *adventurous*

Fig. 6.1 Sleeves are magic

lingerie in *sleek* satin. They enchant with *alluring* accessories, *charming* trinkets, a *captivating* dress, a *glamorous* blouse, a *bewitching* bustier, a *spellbinding* fragrance, and so on. The language of fashion is full of references to the realm of magic.

Glamour is the essential ingredient of fashion and celebrity (*sparkly sequins and lashings of Lurex add film-star glamour to this summer's wardrobe*)—both of which are based on an "enchanted fabrication of images of seduction" (Lipovetsky 1994: 182). Glamour is visual deception—an old Scottish word, *gramyre*, meaning "magic, enchantment or spell." It came into English in the early 1800s to mean "delusive or alluring charm." Since then it's come to refer to "an enticing image, a staged and constructed version of reality that invites consumption" (Gundle and Cestelli 2006: 3–4, 8) (*Buy the glam*)[6] (Fig. 6.2).

Fashion magazines, and the fashion world they depict in their glossy pages, are all about glamour (*high-octane glamour mixes with street style*). Just how glamour works, though, is never quite certain and those who

Fig. 6.2 Waiting at Hermès to buy the glam

would be glamorous recognize the inherent magical qualities that accompany the fame constructed about them. As one American singer, actress, and model once put it:

> It's kind of degrading to think that you're just famous for singing, or just famous for acting, or just famous for dancing, or just famous for being funny. I want to be famous for the magic I possess. I've never happened before. (Angelyne, quoted in Gamson 1994)

The function of fashion magazines is to overcome this uncertainty, generally by one of two means. First, they make use of a language which refers either directly, or indirectly, to the realm of magic (*Magisch Anziehend* and *Magic in the Moonlight*). By bringing magic into the open, fashion magazines make it—and fashion itself—seem real and not illusory (*There is nothing quite as iconic as a classic Chanel tweed piece… Its texture, its weight, and its very aura are the things magic is made of*). In other words, they do not describe clothing or dress so much as *perform* fashion (Austin 1962) (*Fashion's mood is shifting—from touchy-feely soft to don't-mess-with-me hard*).[7]

Second, fashion magazines use *names* in support of their performative language and images.[8] They allude to those who are already stars to comment on fashion items: *Madonna's name-check T-shirt, Sarah Jessica Parker's corsage—sometimes a star's look is so* right *it changes the way we dress*. They also turn fashion designers into celebrities by showing their readers who's wearing what, made by whom, for what occasion, where and with whom (who is also wearing what, made by whom, etc.). This process of osmosis is carried over into the rest of the fashion world, where photographers, models, makeup artists, hair stylists, and other "gurus" are all thrust into the celebrity spotlight. The photographs, the gossip, the clothes, the accessories, the makeup, the hair, and perfumes combine in glitterati mode (see Morin 1972: 79, 138–139). This is sympathetic *and* contagious magic at its most effective (Frazer 1922).[9]

Names fix meanings "by transposing them into terms of other significations" (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 172), so that:

> What is in a name is a potentiality, not only to re-present reality to ourselves in a form that makes it less anxiety-provoking, less refractory to control, but

> to act more confidently in situations that are unpredictable, dangerous and subject to a high degree of uncertainty. (Jackson 2005: 79)

Fashion magazines participate in naming processes in two ways: by creating equivalence between concept and form in the rhetoric of fashion (*The shoe du jour is the new flat*) and by bringing names from different realms together seamlessly in readers' minds (*Juliette Binoche in Jean-Paul Gaultier*). Illusion is employed in each.

The Language of Illusion

The rhetoric of fashion magazines makes arbitrary links between things that signify and those that are signified (*dramatic sleeves and strategic zips*). In so doing, it does its best to hide the fact that the links it is proposing have merely symbolic meaning by slipping easily between unclearly defined causality and finality (*soft cotton camisoles, delicate lace, and the sweetest embroidery come together in a sensual summer wardrobe*). In the process, it transforms "an arbitrary link into a natural property or a technical affinity" (Barthes 2006: 42) (*graceful gowns*, *elegant jackets*, and *exuberant colour*), by deploying such phrases "*as if* they were 'motivated' and non-arbitrary" (*dainty smocking gives romantic charm*) (Jackson 2005: 87). Moreover, in that many of these transformations are somehow disengaged from everyday life—either in lifestyle (*castaway girl stays chic in Chanel's cascade of lace and ruffles*), or by price (*Chicly chained: Stella McCartney Falabella Embossed Fold-Over Tote, $1445*)—fashion magazine rhetoric performs the role of spells in magic (ibid.: 83). It meets the requirement of what Malinowski (1935: 218) called "the coefficient of weirdness."

Second, fashion magazines create a seamless web of names from different economic realms in a variety of ways. They can, as we've seen, link celebrity to fashion house (*Hillary Clinton in Oscar de la Renta*); fashion style to place, as well as fashion designer to occasion (*A sweeping ball gown from Dolce & Gabbana's Alta Moda presentation at the famed La Fontelina Beach Club*); an item of clothing (and its maker) to an activity (*Fox Trot:*

those entwined, face-to-face interludes call for a silky, low-cut number that swings and tosses as you sway. Robert Cavalli silk dress); celebrity crossovers (*Suki Waterhouse* [a model] *transitions to autumn—and Hollywood—with retro flair*); and combinations of any, or all, of these (*Marella Agnelli in Givenchy, in the Chinese Gallery at the Agnelli family home Villar Perosa, 1962*). In this way, celebrities are made to move from a distant "horizon of individuation" so that they can be assigned to more general categories that are closer to our everyday lives (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 174).

This movement of names "travelling through the minds and speech of others" (Munn 1986: 105) makes fame a *transactional* process (ibid.: 107), thus linking the practices of classical "primitive" economies analysed by anthropologists with those of contemporary capitalism. In certain important ways, the construction of fame in the world of fashion parallels that in the world of *kula* in the Trobriand Islands, where armshells and necklaces are circulated from one island to another by men who achieve fame through the ability to receive and give away renowned shells. In other words, human fame is achieved through the handling and passage of material shells, so that references to a person's fame and the shells are interchangeable (ibid.: 105–109). So, too, with couturiers and gowns.

In the fashion industry, a designer achieves a "name" in several different ways (education and training under the guidance of other designer "names," employment by brand name fashion houses, etc.). One of the most important of these, perhaps, is the name of a celebrity or star who wears his or her clothes at media-covered events, or on the cover of a magazine (*Jessica Chastain in Dior Haute Couture*). It is this that enables a *material object* (silk jaquard dress), to be referred to as a *brand name* (Dior Haute Couture), which itself is indelibly linked with both a celebrity (Jessica Chastain) and a designer's name (Christian Dior).[10]

It isn't the dresses as such, therefore, that circulate among the stars of the fashion, film, and music worlds, but brand and designers' names (as the fashion magazine makes clear). When a dress is lent out by a designer to be worn by a star (e.g., for the Oscars), the "self-decoration" is detached from him or her and made public by another. Just as shells decorate the person in Gawa, so the dress "refers back to the owner, adorning him through his capacity to physically adorn another. In this respect, the

wearer becomes the publicist of the donor's influence, as if she or he were mentioning his name" (ibid.: 113).

So the system of fame in the fashion world is made up of three elements: a (celebrity's) body which wears a dress; "an attached material décor" (the dress itself), which "adds a seductive intensification of beauty to that of the body"; and "a noise" which accompanies both body and material dress so that "what may be out of sight may nevertheless be heard" (ibid.: 114).

The "noise" (or buzz) is provided by fashion magazines and the fashion press, which necessarily make the exchange between celebrity and designer triadic by bringing in a single, anonymous, third-party observer: their readers, who read about and may themselves pass on news of each transaction. In this way, fame shifts from immediate effect to a discourse, which circulates beyond individual acts as a "*virtual form of influence*" (ibid.: 117), allowing names to become detached from their physical persons and fame to become "the circulation of persons via their names in the realm of other minds (or in the oral realm of the speech of others)" (ibid.).

Magical Transformations

The world of fashion is pervaded by a magical consciousness, which informs, shapes, and on occasion transforms both individual behaviour and the organization of the fashion world. We find this consciousness in brand name fashion houses and their seasonal collections, whose clothes provide occasions for enchantment, glamour, and illusion—allowing transformations of bodily awareness more typically found in societies characteristically studied by anthropologists (*the look is modern in an old-fashioned kind of way; a sleek tuxedo jacket lends Martine Sitbon's delicately distressed dress a structured edge*; and *when did coloured lingerie become chic rather than tarty?*) (Fig. 6.3).

Each fashion season presents fashion magazine readers with a cyclical dilemma. Or, rather, magazines first conjure up the dilemma which they then attribute to the season. What should women wear that will carry them seamlessly from day to night, dressing up or dressing down according to

Fig. 6.3 When did coloured lingerie become chic rather than tarty?

time, place, and occasion, as the weather warms up or cools down (*Suit of the season*; *Workwear now;* and *Evening Essentials*)? How to make that effortless transition from *cool and classic* to *colourful city chic*, as you *update your wardrobe*, *accentuate your assets*, and *maximize your look*? Fashion magazines reassure you that you can *cherry pick a personal style*, *picking up on an idea*

here and an item there rather than buying into a look wholesale, but they also consecrate by advising you in formulaic style what the ten *key looks* of spring or autumn are, as well as *what's in, what's out*, to help you toe the seasonal line

Magazines always provide hints to help readers cope with the seeming arbitrariness of change (*making the most of what you've got*). They insist that each item has its purpose, by alluding to the virtues of clothing transmitted through contact (*a delicate lace trim gives Chanel's white vest subtle sex appeal*), thereby suggesting that sympathetic magic is inherent in fashion (*create a vertical illusion with pinstripes*) (Mauss 1972: 58). The blouson dress *hides hips and flattens the tummy*; the pantsuit jacket *disguises a full bust and gives the appearance of a slim figure*, while the slit ankles on pants *hide the bust by drawing the eyes to shapely legs*.[11]

Fashion magazines, and other elements of the fashion press, form an integral part of the fashion network. It is participation in this network that is key to an understanding of its magical practices (Greenwood 2012: 26). As intermediary between producers and consuming public, fashion magazines' main purpose is—by sleight of eye rather than of magician's hand—to *propose*: to make proposals about what in particular makes the latest clothes "fashion" (*Fashion's new take on black is all about strong, sexy femininity*); about what the latest trends are likely to be (*Designers are working between the extremes of girlie-feminine and powerful-masculine looks*); about the importance of the names behind them (*the delicate glamour of Gaultier's pleat-bust dress*); about reasons why fashion should be important in readers' lives *(As designers, we give people reasons to dream*); and about where the clothes themselves may be purchased (*Boots, to order, by Sonia Rykiel, at Browns*). Proposals like these effect transformations on what is basically mere material (*Distressed fabrics and hand-crafted detailing are the latest in survivor chic*) and, in so doing, legitimize fashion and the fashion world in cultural—and commercial—terms (Moulin 1987: 86). Fashion magazines make public fashion designers' belief in the effectiveness of their techniques, fashionistas' belief in the power of the designers, and the faith and expectations of the fashion world as a whole. This is what Bourdieu meant when he talked about "the consecration of belief."

Fashion magazines make meaningful connections between things that seem to be essentially independent (*A tailored tux and a tiered pleated skirt meet in Balenciaga's brand of Gothic femininity*); they give them social lives by creating an imaginary world about them (*Romany wanderer meets urban chic at YSL*); they create awareness in participants of the field of fashion in which they work (*He's the only one giving us something interesting in the cut, the look, the fantasy, the imagination*); and they provide historical and aesthetic order in a world whose products, by their very seasonality and potentially chaotic quantity, are likely to go unnoticed (*Sculpted Fifties hourglass figures* or *Replaying classic Parisian chic*) (see Blumer 1969: 290).

With such semiotic transformations, fashion magazines help form a collective concept of what "fashion" is. At the same time, though—like art critics (Hauser 1982: 431)—they will bring in such aesthetically irrelevant forces as snobbery, elitism, trendiness, and a fear of lagging behind the arbiters of prevailing taste in what Pierre Bourdieu (1993: 135) once called a "dialectics of pretension and distinction." So we find magazines proposing to their readers that *Sofia [Coppola] is a style arbiter whose face is worth a thousand words (or probably more)*. They suggest that they *forget the perfect handbag. This season, the ultimate accessory is the perfect boat*; and (with a nod to inverted snobbery) that *looking like your clothes matter to you is all wrong. In fact, the more you care, the less it should show*.

So the production and reception of fashion are interdependent, both in terms of communication and of their organization. Designers need mediators and interpreters of one sort or another to ensure that their work is properly understood, because "proper" appreciation—they're convinced—translates into sales.[12] In other words—as in the worlds of politics, art, and academia—fashion is marked by a struggle to enlist followers, and one of the fashion magazine's tasks is to convert the agnostic. This means that the reception of fashion involves social cooperation among those who believe in the power of *haute couture* and *prêt-à-porter*. It is this faith that drives the fashion world in its quest for magical transformations that enable clothes to become "fashion."

Those working for the fashion magazine are its apostles, or "high priestesses" (Ferguson 1979: 119), who spread the word, who portray and interpret designers' collections each season—proposing meanings

that readers can cling to, removing all the strangeness that accompanies novelty, reconciling what at first glance may be confusing with the already familiar, and thereby creating continuity between present, past, and future trends. Their job isn't simply to appreciate new stylistic trends—often by setting up a series of oppositions between these and the previous season's styles (*After equestrian chic, a pastoral mood is breezing into fashion*) (Entwistle 2000: 237)—but to suggest new discoveries, re-evaluations, and reinterpretations of styles that have been misunderstood and/or belong to the past (*Even Alpine knits are chic in a trim tank and mini-combo*). If designers create the form of fashion items, therefore, fashion magazines create their legend (*Patent Manolo Blahnik stilettos add a kinky edge to a Chanel classic*) (Hauser 1982: 468). In so doing, they fabricate mythical personages out of designers and the fashion houses they work for, as well as of other members of the fashion world (*Alexander McQueen gives the bustier a light touch for Givenchy*). As a result, collections tend to be judged not by their intrinsic worth but by the names with which they are labelled: *Bally high*, *Hedi times*, and *Model T. Ford*.[13]

And yet, the public needs fashion magazines since they help it distinguish what's "good" from what's "inferior" in the apparent chaos of each season's collections. In so doing, the magazines also help transform fashion as an abstract idea and aesthetic discourse into everyday dress (Entwistle 2000: 237). Thus, when reflecting on the passing of a season, they can proclaim that *surprisingly wearable looks leapt from the catwalk straight into women's wardrobe*, and so show that the magic it wrought is *effective* (Mauss 1972: 19).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the role of fashion magazines in transforming clothes made by dress-makers into "fashion" created by "designers." This they do by means of language and visual images that make use of enchantment, glamour, and illusion. In one respect, my search for an understanding of fashion magazines has engendered its own form of magicality (Taussig 2003: 278). By revealing what is already known, but for the

most part not articulated by those in the world of fashion—that is, by bringing into the open "that which it is known not to know"—I may be said to have added to "the mysterium tremendum of magic's magic" (ibid.: 297, 300). In other words, the rite of scholarly exposure enacted in this chapter—an exposure that itself may be seen as skilfully concealing the trickery of anthropological magic—may merely strengthen the magic of the fashion network itself (ibid.: 298).

My argument has been that fashion magazines are part of a magical network, which employs as its magicians, on the one hand, designers who transform ordinary items of dress into "fashion" in such prescribed rites as the fashion show and, on the other, fashion editors and fashion photographers who transform actual fashion items into images by means of fashion stories and their magazine's fashion well. To help them in this task of metamorphosis and to consecrate them as "Fashion," magazine editors also make use of verbal spells to transmit the particular virtues of an object (*elegant* pencil skirt, *sensual* perfume, *cool* sneakers, and *hot* corsets) to their readers. Such spells are a form of both sympathetic magic, in that they name qualities that the products then bring about, and contagious magic, in that, once named, such products maintain a lasting connection between maker and user (Frazer 1922).

Three main elements—magicians, rites, and spells or representations (Mauss 1972: 18)—operate simultaneously in this magical network. Fashion photographers work with fashion models in a controlled environment out of which, they hope, an unexpected "moment of magic" will appear. Fashion designers, in conjunction with their muses, look for equally unpredictable moments of "inspiration" to guide their work. Editors and art directors agonize over their choice of topics, images, and words in putting together every issue of their fashion magazine. *Every*one is intent upon making a name, because names detach themselves from the physical world of people and things and, like fragrance, circulate magically in the air.

Because they are both cultural products and commodities (Beetham 1996: 1–5; Moeran 2015: 28–29), fashion magazines contribute effortlessly to the ways in which names, like magical modes of thought (superstition, sorcery, myth), form an implicitly coherent system of seemingly

magical connections between genres, styles, materials, texts, and culture, on the one hand, and advertising, brands, and the economy, on the other hand. These connections are capable of infinite extension, as they use basic elements in a variety of improvised combinations to generate new meanings. Thus, a pop singer will walk down a runway during fashion week; a model will appear in a music video; and a reality TV series star will release a number of eponymous fragrances. This is the concrete science of celebrity *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 16–22).

All forms of cultural production, and not just fashion, routinely create and make use of the reputations of individual people, organizations, and brands as part of their promotional activities. It is these reputations, rather than any common form of social organization, production methods, market structure, or value chain, that bind together the different industries of fashion, film, media, music, publishing, and so on under the single denomination of "creative industries" (Caves 2000)

The fact that it is reputations—and *only* reputations—that are common to all forms of cultural production *in equal measure* suggests that the worlds of fashion, film, music, art, and so on operate according to the requirements of an economy of fame. This economy is based on names: the names not just of *people* (celebrities, designers, photographers, editors, fashion stylists, models, bloggers, makeup artists, etc.) but also of *organizations* (mainly fashion houses, but also industry associations) and *brands* (supported image-wise by their logos). To ensure that a name performs well in economic terms by remaining foremost in the public eye, those concerned need to resort to illusion, magic, and, if necessary, sleights of hand. This is the primary role of fashion magazines in the fashion network.

Different forms of cultural production are organized in similar, though different, ways as they struggle with the vagaries of their respective "markets of singularities" (Karpik 2010), where every product differs from all others both now and from the past. But in all of them, what *matter* are the reputations of all concerned because they help define and sustain the different fields, together with the aesthetic evaluations that take place therein (as well as their ensuing valuations in terms of price). They contribute to

the kind of symbolic capital required in an "economy of prestige" (English 2005).

The fact that reputations enable and sustain an ongoing exchange between cultural, symbolic, and economic capital means that contemporary economies—especially those parts of them imbued with magical elements—function according to a *logic of names*. We wear Chanel No. 5 perfume, Doc Marten boots, or an Yves Saint Laurent gown. Sometimes we use a person's name (a Cardigan), at other times a company's (Burberry), as convenient shorthand to describe products. We also use abbreviations (LVMH, when referring to Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy), even metaphors (the Chanel logo's "Double C"), and substitute a brand name for the thing itself (a Mackintosh).[14] In the world of reputation, "the relation of worth is a relation of *identification*" (Boltanski and Thévénot 2006: 181): consumers identify with what they choose to wear, with whom, and on what occasion. This is why fashion magazines (and advertisers) make use of names to give "personalities" to inanimate things—a form of "animism" that reinforces the magical aspects of cultural production (*Ungaro's frivolous chiffon smock*; *slouchy Balenciaga dress*; *Helmut Lang's delicate boa*).

Names take on particular importance in two ways in fashion and other fields of cultural production. First, they are actively used and disseminated as part of an industry's promotional strategies (the primary aim of which is to enhance reputations rather than sell products) (Boltanski and Thévénot 2006: 156). In this respect, names perform "more as incantations than as objects with properties" (Mauss 1972: 77) (*Be bold in Chanel*; *Ralph Lauren's sophisticated body suit*). To ensure that a name performs well in economic terms by remaining foremost in the public eye, those concerned need to resort to illusion, magic, and, if necessary, sleights of hand (hence, the enormous presence of PR in all its multiplicity of forms). Names are a crucial site for the functioning of the field as a whole, as each strives to "make its mark" in a struggle for power and so legitimate fashion's "categories of perception and appreciation" (Bourdieu 1993: 106) (*Chloe's twisted bikini is simple perfection*; *Prada's cape is an ultra-chic alternative to the winter coat*).

Second, the main means of linking corporations to the products they sell is through celebrities of one sort or another. Celebrities constitute a "world of fame," in which opinion—rather than any specific professional

quality—establishes equivalence. The worth of each depends on the opinion of others, so that corporations try to take advantage of the fact that "fame establishes worth" (Boltanski and Thévénot 2006: 171). This is in large part why designers and fashion houses spend a lot of time and money on preparing special clothes (which may not be worn) for actors and actresses attending the American film industry's annual Academy Awards.

Names, then, satisfy an intellectual demand for order, involving a long-term accumulation of social and cultural capital that is then converted into economic capital and back again. They "transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour 2005: 39, 59). Like animals and plants in a totemic system, names (of designers, fashion houses, celebrities, brands) are deemed to be useful or interesting because they are first of all known rather than known as a result of their usefulness (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 15). Initiating evaluations and valuation, and operating as cultural markers in a particular commercial field, names constitute a *name economy* (Skov 2000: 158).

By vesting individual designers, fashion houses, and their brands with particular powers by virtue of their names, fashion magazines themselves grasp power (think *Vogue*). Making use of the art of the magician, they suggest means (*Every fashionista needs a statement bag*), enlarge on the virtues of objects (*Dresses that are hand-crafted, hand-stitched and moulded to the body like a glove*), (Fig. 6.4) anticipate effects (*There is only one shoe to accompany the rebirth of elegance this season—the stiletto*), and "by these methods fully satisfying the desires and expectations which have been fostered by entire generations in common" (Mauss 1972: 141–142).

The name economy derives its existence from, and depends upon the struggle among, magical names—a struggle that maintains a structured difference, synchronically and diachronically, within and between the different creative industries and fields of cultural production in which they operate. For each of those participating, Shakespeare's line still rings true: *'Tis but thy name that is my enemy*. To enemies and friends alike we may doff a cap, but (unlike Romeo) we cannot doff a name in the name economy.

Fig. 6.4 Dresses that are moulded to the body like a glove

Notes

1. The material in this chapter is based on 15 years of on-and-off fieldwork among magazine editors and publishers in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and London, as well as on content analysis of more than

650 issues of 4 international fashion magazines: *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. For a more detailed analysis, see Moeran (2015).

2. The ways in which clothes and materials are described in fashion magazines (*sexy silk*, *frivolous chiffon*, *soft knits,* etc.) echo Evans-Pritchard's discussion of magic among the Azande, for whom "material substance… is the occult and essential element in a rite, for in the substance lies the mystical power which produces the desired end" (1937: 441). Fashion magazines, like Zande magicians, address their materials and then the object that they wish to influence (ibid. p. 450): *Gleaming gilded leather, sparky sequins, and lashings of Lurex add film-star glamour to this summer's wardrobe*.
3. They also rely on trend forecasters, whose work focuses on future sociocultural events, "ethnographic" observations of major urban environments, and a healthy dose of "performative utterances" intended to convince those in the industry. Their work is also in some sense magical, as they design, rather than predict, trends (Interview, Wessie Ling, fashion forecaster, Paris, February 11, 2003; see also Hoskins 2014: 45–49).
4. Weber (1978: 401) defines an "orgy" as a "primordial form of religious association."
5. As Tansy Hoskins (2014: 10) notes: "It is everything that *goes around* clothes that makes them fashion."
6. More recently, Delphine Dion and Eric Arnould (2011) have argued that luxury retail strategy in the fashion world relies on art and magic to create brand charisma. See their contribution to this book. Many of the words cited here, like *glamour*, owe their etymological origins to forms of magic. *Pretty*, for example, once meant "cunning, skilful, and artful," and is derived from *prættig* meaning trick or wile; *fascinate* meant to bewitch, or enchant (from Latin, *fascinum*, meaning spell or witchcraft); *allure* to attract, tempt, or captivate, primarily through "a gait, way of walking"; and *charm* referred to a magical incantation or spell (*Oxford Dictionary of English*).
7. Fashion magazines make use of both illocutionary (*a different kind of cool*) and perlocutionary (*grey suddenly looks newly fresh and chic*) acts. The former are designed to "secure uptake" on the part of their readers and the fashion world, thereby taking effect and inviting a response (Austin 1962: 117–118; *low-key cool*) which leads into the next fashion "season" with its collections (*a dark sense of cool*), and so on (*colour—strong colour—is now cool*) ad infinitum.

8. Fashion magazines publish fashion photographs in order to achieve through non-locutionary means the response (or sequel) invited by their perlocutionary acts (Austin 1962: 119).
9. See http://www.bartleby.com/196/5.html, http://www.bartleby.com/196/6.html, and http://www.bartleby.com/196/7.html for relevant discussion.
10. As with the *kula*, there is a hierarchy of fame at work here, from unknown designers whose dresses circulate in material form only, to those who can attach their individual names to material designs (*Organza dress, £4500, Christopher Kane*). Some names are indissolubly linked to the fashion houses for which they work (*Nicolas Ghesquière's debut collection for Louis Vuitton*); others are free-floating, because they have established their own fashion houses with their own names (*Joan in Tom Ford twisted wool coat and velvet dress*). Here material items circulate in generic verbal form (*Hilary Swank in Michael Kors*). A designer's ultimate aim, and accolade, is to make an item of clothing that is itself named (the *Berardi glass corset*, the *Monroe dress*, the *Birkin bag*, etc.) and talked about throughout the fashion and film worlds.
11. Clothing items are multifunctional when it comes to what they can do for different parts of a woman's body. *Marie Claire* USA (February 2001) advises its reader that a blouson jacket conceals a small bust; long jackets disguise a big butt; vertical lines flatter all silhouettes. With the latest lingerie, you can slenderize your body, firm up your thighs, downplay curves, flatten stomach bulges, create cleavage, and disguise your flaws. Trenchant advice for those in the trenches.
12. Angela McRobbie argues that fashion pages in fashion magazines do not have to sell the clothes depicted, even though they list stockists, talk about designers and retailers, and report on the new collections (1998: 163 [Kindle version]). Nevertheless, in the longer term such images are presumed to contribute, if but indirectly, to sales.
13. As Bourdieu (1993: 138) acidly points out: "if you're a fashion journalist, it is not advisable to have a sociological view of the world."
14. "To make oneself known, it is a good idea to have a *name*, or, for products, a *brand name*" (Boltanski and Thévénot 2006: 180).

References

Austin, J.L. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Barthes, Roland. 2006. *The Language of Fashion*. Oxford: Berg.

Beetham, Margaret. 1996. *A Magazine of Her Own*. London and New York: Routledge.
Blumer, Herbert. 1969. Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection. *The Sociological Quarterly* 10 (3): 275–291.
Boltanski, Luc, and Laurent Thévénot. 2006. *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Bourdieu, Pierre 1993 *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Edited and introduced by Randal Johnson. Cambridge: Polity.
Caves, Richard. 2000. *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Crane, Diana. 2000. *Fashion and its Social Agendas*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
Dion, Delphine, and Eric Arnould. 2011. Retail Luxury Strategy. *Journal of Retailing* 87 (4): 502–520.
English, James. 2005. *The Economy of Prestige: Prizes, Awards, and the Circulation of Cultural Value*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Entwistle, Joanne. 2000. *The Fashioned Body*. Cambridge: Polity.
Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1937. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
Ferguson, Marjorie. 1979. *Forever Feminine*. London: Heinemann.
Flügel, John. 1930. *The Psychology of Clothes*. London: Hogarth Press.
Frazer, James. 1922. *The Golden Bough*. New York: Macmillan.
Gamson, Joshua. 1994. *Claims to Fame*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Gell, Alfred. 1992. The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology. In *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
Geschiere, Peter. 2003. On Witch Doctors and Spin Doctors: The Role of 'Experts' in African and American politics. In *Magic and Modernity*, ed. Birgit Meyer and Peter Pels. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
Greenwood, Susan. 2012. *The Anthropology of Magic*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
Gundle, Stephen, and Clino T. Castelli. 2006. *The Glamour System*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Hauser, Arnold. 1982. *The Sociology of Art*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Hoskins, Tansy. 2014. *Stitched Up: The Anti-capitalist Book of Fashion*. London: Pluto Press.
Jackson, Michael. 2005. *Existential Anthropology: Events, Exigencies, and Effects*. Oxford: Berghahn.

Karpik, Lucien. 2010. *Valuing the Unique: The Economics of Singularities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kawamura, Yuniya. 2005. *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*. Oxford: Berg.

Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Lipovetsky, Gilles. 1994. *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

———. 1935. *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*. Vol. 2. London: Allen & Unwin.

———. 1954 [1948]. *Magic, Science and Religion, and Other Essays*. New York: Anchor.

Mauss, Marcel. 1972. *A General Theory of Magic*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

McRobbie, Angela. 1998. *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* London and New York: Routledge.

Mears, Ashley. 2011. *Pricing Beauty*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Moeran, Brian. 2015. *The Magic of Fashion: Ritual, Commodity, Glamour*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Morin, Edgar. 1972. *The Stars*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Moulin, Raymonde. 1987. *The French Art Market*. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press.

Munn, Nancy. 1986. *The Fame of Gawa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pels, Peter. 2003. Introduction. In *Magic and Modernity*, ed. Birgit Meyer and Peter Pels. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Postrel, Virginia. 2013. *The Power of Glamour: Longing and the Art of Visual Persuasion*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Skov, Lise. 2000. *Stories of World Fashion and the Hong Kong Fashion World*. Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Hong Kong.

Taussig, Michael. 2003. Viscerality, Faith and Skepticism: Another Theory of Magic. In *Magic and Modernity*, ed. B. Meyer and P. Pels. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wax, Murray, and Rosalie Wax. 1963. The Notion of Magic. *Current Anthropology* 4 (5): 495–518.
Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Vol. 1. Ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Wilson, Elizabeth. 1987. *Adorned in Dreams*. London: Virago.