

THREE STYLE  
HEROINES WHO  
LIVED IN  
NEW YORK  
ONCE UPON A  
TIME.

Gloria Vanderbilt

Grace Kelly

Jackie Kennedy

JAMES WALDRON  
DEGRE  
1988



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Thesis No. 526

**T**hree Style Queens of New York.  
Their lives and influences on Society  
and the rag trade in New York 1945 - 1965



"Style is the most intoxicating release from the banality  
of the world"

(Diana Vreeland, 1985)



## CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		p1
INTRODUCTION		p4
CHAPTER 1	GLORIA VANDERBILT	p14
CHAPTER 2	GRACE KELLY	p37
CHAPTER 3	JACKIE KENNEDY	p48
CONCLUSION		p69
QUOTES		p75
BIBLIOGRAPHY		p76



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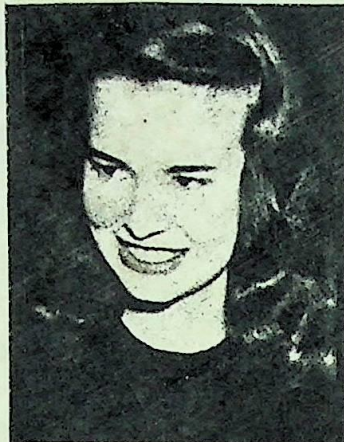
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Gloria Vanderbilt

1945

Fig. No. 1



Grace Kelly

1955

Fig. No. 2



Jackie Kennedy

1965

Fig. No. 3



## INTRODUCTION

I have always been interested in things American. I suppose it stems from a mis-spent childhood of afternoons watching those sitcom's and sloppy soaps we've all come to love or hate. The characters were perfectly formed human beings, each a member of a cast on the stage that is the American dream. They live in neat little bungalows with a white picket fence or on Park Avenue in a 'cosy' triplex. The culture that has enveloped American society is unique in the world. The media culture. Idols in the American society evolve from the fantasy of celluloid. The world of the movie star or the society queens was far removed from that of the average American. The basic need of a public is fantasy. Books, art, music have provided a gap in the void that is boredom, for centuries. With the introduction of entertainment as a pastime for the masses. Idol watching became part of the culture of going to the movies. Society Goddesses of New York are unique for the influence they have had in the category of idols.

My thesis is a self indulgent study of society vs fashion in New York. That city that has been called the centre of the world. New York is the natural focus for my study. In terms of American history, New York has proved to be a focus, the starting point of the ideas that built America. I will deal with characters that play the role of society's "beautiful people"(1) — The select few who are synonymous with style. In order to find a focus I will cover the



period of three decades the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's, a time when style, society and fashion received world wide attention. My characters are interesting in themselves, but are ultimately a means to an end. (The means) by which I discovered the culture of the city and the focal point of its 'rag trade' (to coin a slang phrase). My train of thought will link the period I have chosen to discuss, by paralleling important world events and the progress of the <sup>clothing</sup> industry.

**I**n essence, my thesis will follow thus:

I will introduce a historical background that will give grounding for my arguments. I will begin in the 1880's and in the city of New York. The main reason being that it became the centre for ideas that formed the industrial revolution that ultimately built the railroad across America, including the industrial and residential parallels that developed this city into a centre for society, "The haute monde" business, industry and the arts. America was still a new country even in the 1880's <sup>when</sup> perhaps much of the country had yet to come under the fist of the white man. While the city was being built, so also did its industries flourish. The garment industry developed with the help of Polish and other European countries with traditions in clothing manufacture.

**M**y pivot historically will be the 'haute' monde that shaped New York. The families that built the city and therefore held its purse strings. The queens of these families who



(Elegant New York, 1987)

The Diamond Horseshoe at the Metropolitan. Here the wealthiest people of the age came to hear the finest musical artists. Although the opera was the drawing card the occasion was a golden opportunity for the rich to preen in their finery.

Fig. No. 4





unabashedly flaunted their wealth yet had the pedigree to become style goddesses. I will trace the role of society as the platform where style becomes a religion. I will then take the reader on a journey giving important events relating up to fashion to 1945. The year when World War Two ended and was the time American Fashion was really coming into its own being. Gloria Vanderbilt is present as a society girl in New York.

Her presence and influence in New York's society proves to be an important landmark of style. My dissertation leads through the growth of the fashion industry in America, how personalities <sup>and</sup> whose images were created by designers. I will deal with the history of American design and Manufacturing how it developed independantly of Europe yet retained its desire to be directed by the Fashion Capital of the world - Paris.

My thesis will move to 1955 when I will deal with Grace Kelly, her life in New York and the creation of the Grace Kelly look. A look born of Hollywood yet with strong implications for style direction in New York. The country's acceptance of fashion as part of the vocabulary of style led to the success in terms of style of the third subject of my thesis, Jackie Bouvier Kennedy. I will introduce Oleg Cassini as designer in depth, dealing with his efforts to mould the style of the first lady, as official couturier to the White House. This relationship lead to a world wide acceptance of American Fashion



worldwide. From the accumulative affect of the 1940's, the 1950's and early 1960's led America into a phase in the early 1970's where American design became a worldwide phenomenon with leaders such as Calvin Klein, Oscar de la Renta, Ralph Lauren, Stephen Sprouse and Donna Karan to name but a few.

Throughout my research in America, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Arts Boston, The Kennedy Institute Mass, London at the V+A Library and in various libraries in Dublin I have come across an enormous array of people that have had an effect on the building of New York, both physically and <sup>socially</sup> anthropologically. Names like Theodore Vanderbilt, the Astors, the Guggenhiems, the Carnegies etc. Names that have left their mark on the history of the 'big apple'. I discovered among this society a strata of people that lived in this century. I tried to pin down an aspect of New York society that defied any definition I tried to label it with. These people had style. In itself style is a vague word. The physical attributes of a persons style are evident by the clothes they wear. My thesis is a self indulgent foray into the lives of selected characters that best exemplify my appreciation of the word style.





*I*llustration shows 5th Avenue as seen in 1900

(Elegant New York, 1987)

(Fig. No.1)



For a society to develop there must be a basis of people and money. The America of the 1800's was still vast, land was cheap and the prospects for making money were vast. New York was the arrival point of hundreds of immigrant ships. After thousands of miles New York became the natural place to set up home. From this society made up largely of immigrants sprouted the property brokers and the millionaires that made money from such a variety of careers as retailing, manufacturing, stockbroking.

The money that created Americas age of elegance which only lasted from the 1880's until the coming of World War One, flowed from the industrial wealth and belonged to the new industrial aristocracy. It was a time of great family fortunes and of consumption on a grand scale and as conspicuous as possible.

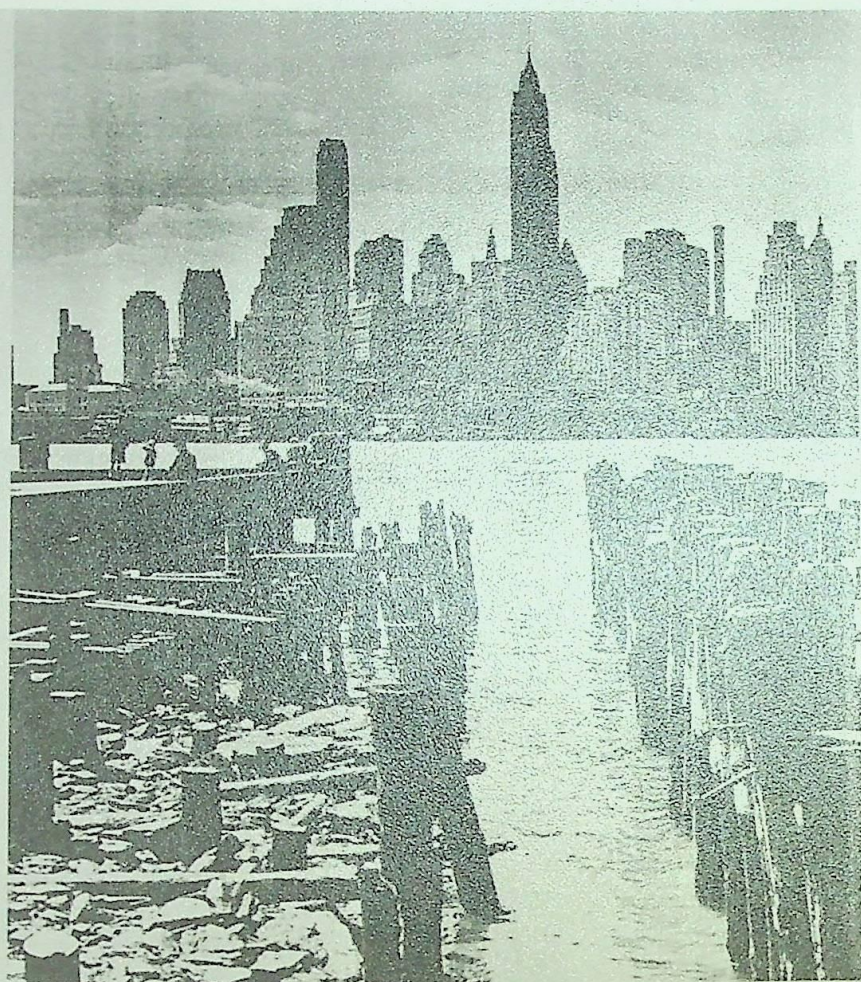
The monied families from the Vanderbilts to the Astors unabashedly flaunted it, and one of the great places to spend it was New York city. As a centre for culture business and finance the city had numerous clubs that held parties, soirees. The wealthy threw open the doors of their ballrooms to the glitterati of the city.(2)

These wealthy families as mentioned were responsible for the city's first wave of residential, cultural, corporate and municipal palaces, and they laid the groundwork for the city that has become the financial centre of the world



today. The boom in house building in New York seen between the 1850's and the early 1900's resulted in the American Renaissance which manifested itself in neo-Italian palazzi and neo-Loire valley Chateaux (3), while adherents to the city beautiful movement saw to it that the building of vast palazzi was balanced with a cultural display of neo-classical statuary. During this period new building techniques were making sky scrapers possible and ideas on city planning were being translated into zoning laws. These zoning laws laid down guidelines for the areas of the city in which certain businesses could set up. The laws would for instance prevent a vast industrial plant being built in a residential area. Because of rent restrictions and space restrictions. Government appointed city planners controlled and zoned manufacturing, business and residential areas that would ultimately lead to the present regulated layout of streets by number. Much of New York was built directly or indirectly by the same tightly knit power elite that was shaping and building the nations wealth. Morgan, Vanderbilt, Astor, Carnegie and Pulitzer headed a long list that firstly made their fortunes from the land and then returned much of this money to the masses in the form of municipal buildings such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie Hall. In the form of literacy awards. The Pulitzer Prize leading a long list of literacy awards and bursaries donated by the wealthy. My main reason for giving an outline of how New York develops from the 1850's has its roots in the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in America. Property and land, two commodities inexorably linked with a consequence of success





12 Downtown Manhattan from pier at Brooklyn Heights. With the financial district as a backdrop, Brooklyn residents gather on an old East River pier to take the sun and air. The white building with the stepped-back profile is the 33-story structure at 120 Wall Street, the latest building constructed on the street.

**I**llustration (see page)  
 (Elegant new York 1987)  
 (Fig. No.2)



The wealthiest of the New Yorkers dabbled in real estate. Their foray into real estate netted vast profits (4). As Manhattan is an island of only 25 square miles the possibilities of choosing property in a less sought after corner of the island is virtually impossible. the characters I will discuss in my thesis are the next generation of this pioneering breed in New York society. The characters of my thesis are women, women of abiding style. I won't pick just any women to discuss. My first prerogative is to examine their style after 1945. The end of World War Two up to the mid sixties and the height of the Kennedy Presidency. To focus the mind in terms of interest I feel these three decades express in the beginning of the 40's a new self sufficiency in terms of fashion to the mid 60's which saw the death of American influence in style bibles. London then took the reigns.

The first subject of my thesis will be Gloria Vanderbilt, daughter of the powerful Vanderbilt family who built Grand Central terminal in 1890. The Vanderbilt family made their fortune from transportation, one of the 19th Centuries great growth industries. The dynasty was started by Cornelius Vanderbilt in .... He accumulated an estate estimated at \$100 million on his retirement in... (5). The bulk of his fortune was left to his son William H. Vanderbilt who started life as a black sheep but who proved as resolute as his father. Cornelius Vanderbilt started out life as a ferry boat owner who ferried passengers between Staten Island and Manhattan, he eventually became



commodore owner of a fleet of steam ships that plied the world and made millions. On his retirement, not content with rest, he built a railroad network across America, resulting in even <sup>an</sup> a larger fortune. He and his wife Sophia Johnson Vanderbilt had thirteen children, all of whom became millionaires as a result of a trust fund set up by her father. <sup>whose?</sup> Her father, Reginald Claypoole Vanderbilt was third generation from this union. Her mother Laura Kilpatrick Morgan was the daughter of General Judson Kilpatrick, American minister in Santiago, Chile (6). On Gloria's birth in the Vanderbilt home on 5th Avenue, Gloria became 4th generation Vanderbilt. Her father died when she was just two years old. Gloria had an eventful, if not harrowing childhood, most of which was spent between custody trials between her mother and paternal grandmother and trips to Europe in the caravan (the term she used to call the travel companions, her mother and her nanny). In later life with the sadness of childhood behind her she spent a glittering life, mostly in New York where she became a society girl of the late 40's and early 50's.

**T**he second subject of my thesis will be Grace Kelly. I will deal with the social times <sup>life in</sup> of New York from the mid 50's. Grace, daughter of an Irish immigrant family who made a fortune in construction in Philadelphia. Her life spent in New York as an actress at acting school and on Broadway led to a social whirlwind romance with Oleg Cassini, a celebrated Russian-Italian-American, one time husband of the Hollywood actress of the 40's, Gene Tierney.





GLORIA VANDERBILT



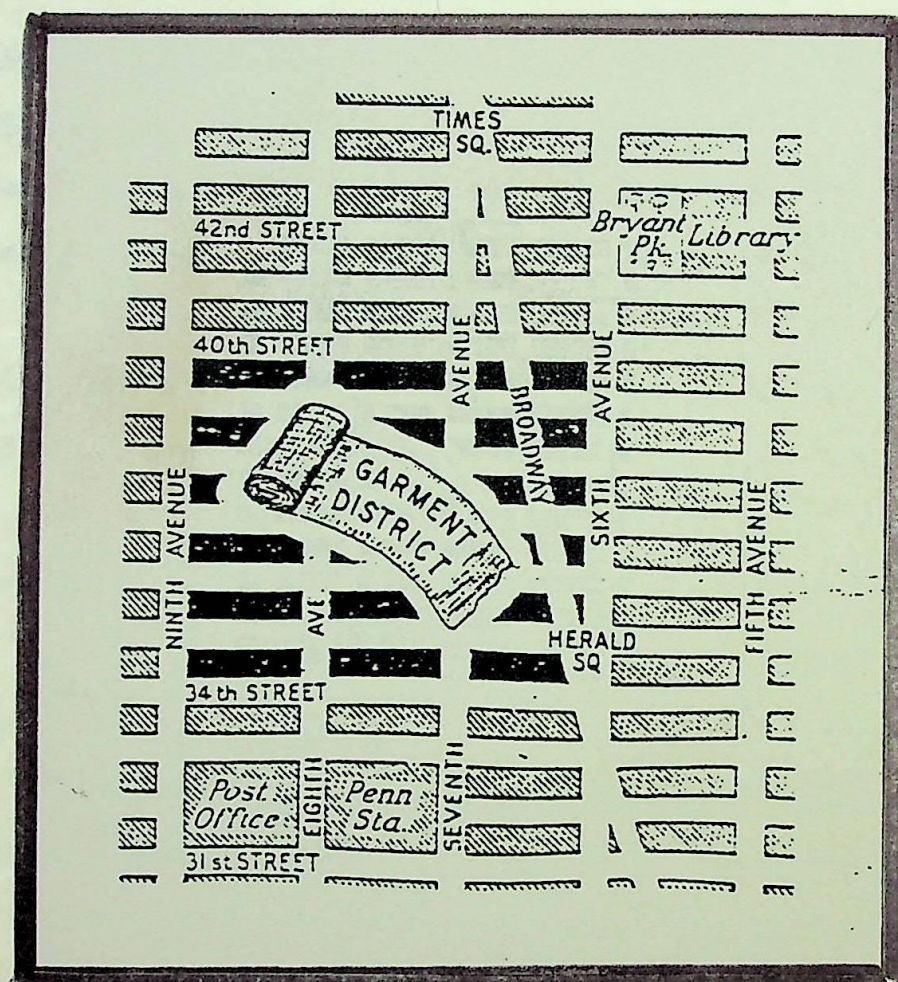
Money obsesses New Yorkers, the perks, the cost, and the price of living in the centre of the world all contribute to this love of the green paper (7). Its a vicious circle in circle, in a city where everything being done is seen to be done. Why live in a cornucopia if one is not able to sample the fruit? Money is needed, above all, to pay the rent. Because of the physical constrictions of the island of Manhattan, the hub of the city, space equals money, a sentiment easily understood by the property barons of New York. real Estate consequently is one of the biggest businesses of all. The Vanderbilts, having made their fortune from shipping and the pioneering of the railroad industry in America at the later half of the 19th Century, plunged their finances into real estate. By the mid 1880's the Vanderbilts had staked out their claim on Fifth Avenue. Mr. & Mrs. William H Vanderbilt lived on the northwest corner of 51st Street. Various other members of the Vanderbilt family lived on both sides of Fifth Avenue, including Reginald Claypole Vanderbilt, who fathered Gloria Vanderbilt, who became a fourth generation Vanderbilt. In the mid 1930's. Many U.S. housewives without so much as a cadillac to call her own, wrung her hands in anguish over the plight of a pathetic ten year old waif named Gloria Vanderbilt. As time progressed Time magazine became one of the many newspapers and society magazines such as Journal America to comment on "one of the most publicized custody trials of all time" (8). Gloria emerged largely unscathed if not a slight bit confused by the whole event. From an



early age she had known only the constant companionship of her nanny, as her mother spent much of her time on holiday in Europe, in a relentless pursuit of a future husband. She displayed the characteristics of a stylish woman even as early, as her adolescent years were to display. At the tender age of fourteen she made her official entrance into New York Society as a debutante on New Years Eve in 1938 (9). With vast sums of money to dress her in finery. The tools of her style were being put together. At a time when Hollywood was in its heyday. Movie stars became idols. They influenced what people wore, Adrian, Irene, Travilla, Travis Banton, the list is endless, these were the dream makers that robed the stars. A different kind of idol lived in New York. The monied classes patronized couturiers. The couturiers became their dream makers. A strong parallel exists between society and the development of the clothing industry.

The rag trade could no longer look to Paris in the austere years of the Second World War 1939-1945. At the onset of war and the invasion of France by the Nazi's, most of the couture houses closed their doors to the public. The industry was put on a temporary hold. Before this New York was <sup>relying</sup> on Paris for style direction season by season. In 1942 when the United States entered the war, Americans began to experience hardship at first hand (10)s. Mrs. Roosevelt, the Presidents wife, visited Britain to study the immense field of womens war work. New York whose lights were normally visible sixty miles at sea, got used to a "brown out" rather than a real blackout. The





Above map shows the layout in streets of the New York garment industry.

(The Economist, Jan 1960)

(Fig. 1)



Breakers, the magnificent Newport Long Island "cottage" built by cornelius Vanderbilt was thrown open to all as a public air raid shelter' (12). Suddenly New York nightclubs and restaurants, traditionally dead in Summer, were full of uniformed servicemen and their girls in evening dress and offered special rates and the best tables for servicemen.

New York was losing the glamour with which it was so synonomous in the 1930's (13). Money was no longer being lavished on gala events. Sobriety entered the vocabulary. This had a tremendous effect on the New York rag trade.

From its beginnings the American clothing industry has been centred in New York. It has its heart between sixth and ninth avenue, 34th and 40th Street. The sobriety of World War Two did not see the end of an integral industry. It merely adjusted to the whim of the times. Flexibility proved to be the key that has kept the industry so strong in New York. American clothing manufacturers first appeared in the 1840's during the days of the westward migrations (14). Because the family on the move in the wilderness obviously had no time for making clothes, manufacturers saw this need and developed an industry to cater for the needs of the people. Thus saw the birth of ready to wear clothes that could be bought off the peg at a relatively inexpensive cost. Mr Lord and Mr Taylor in New York, the Oak Park Store in Boston became the first in a fast growing phenomenon known as the department store. Many others such as L.L. Bean and Sears set up mail order houses. A



business which sent clothes on order vast distances across America, thus saving a customer <sup>a</sup> long journey to the nearest town, which might not have stocked the garment or fabric desired. By 1880, when the Vanderbilts and the Astors had become part of New York's elite, the clothing industry was reaching a peak in its manufacturing capacity. With the constant flood of immigrants into New York, the industry was in a constant state of self perpetuation. The Triangle shirtwaist factory fire and the early union troubles, seen in New York in the 1880's are preserved in the pages of the New York Times and other dailies that provide a valuable record of the progress of the industry (915). In its role the newspaper had a parallel fascination with the haute monde. The monied families were the only equivalent America had of the European Royal Families.

Essentially the New York rag trade history is a culture of small businesses, an ambivalent culture of cut-throat competition coupled with a neighbourly affection. Two rivals might battle to the death for available business and when the smoke had cleared, be pleased to see that each is still alive. Both sentiments and logical and heart felt.

It is a unique culture in that it has lived on well into an era of big and bigger business. As other businesses grew and more money was made by fewer firms, the garment industry still remained divided into thousands of small firms, independant units in which the traditions and production methods of half a century ago have been preserved.



For over three hundred years Americans relied upon Europe for their fashionable luxuries. The inventories of those early sailing ships listed damasks, and velvets from Italy, woollens and calico's from Paris etc. Dressmakers in the latter part of the nineteenth century up to the thirties imported dolls dressed in the latest French fashions as models for their clients. When advanced printing made illustrated magazines and journals possible nineteenth century dressmakers made copies of outfits that would have been worn in Paris. The largest department stores in New York, i.e. Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord & Taylor bought models of Worth, Doucet, Camille and others as well as their fabrics and trimmings. These were copied in New York workrooms.

The fashionable lady of the 1920's and 1930's was an inveterate shopper. At her stores she bought fabrics, laces and trimmings for her dressmaker but rarely did she buy off the peg garments "that were not atrocities" (16). The hiring of dressmakers was an inexpensive process. A dressmaker could, on demand, alter out dated styles and alter a dress to fit in with current trends. But for her 'real' wardrobe she relied on Paris. Elegant women such as Nancy Astor visited Paris on to couturiers for personal fittings. Parisian outfits did not come cheap. 'Many a Worth cost around \$2,000. Should fur have been used as a trim, as was often the case, the individual outfit would cost as high as \$19,000' (17), an astronomical sum in inflationary terms if compared with a creation by a couturier today.



The New York that bred new money was happy to see it spent in an extravagant fashion. Mrs Whitney Vanderbilt, Gloria Vanderbilts mother, 'lit up her ballroom dressed as the apotheosis of Aurora in multicoloured chiffon flashing with beads and diamonds' (17). The chill democratic tide that almost inundated the aristocrats and oligarchs at the turn of the century brought an end to most of their glittering routs and fancies. When a ball held by Bradley Martin, a wealthy industrialist, sometime in 1908 to celebrate some forgotten occasion. The proceedings were reported to have cost in the region of a six figure sum, there was such a storm of indignation in press and pulpit that Martin and his family fled to France. They were followed into exile by those elegant industrialists and arbiters of style and manners as Berry Wall and James Hazen Hyde.

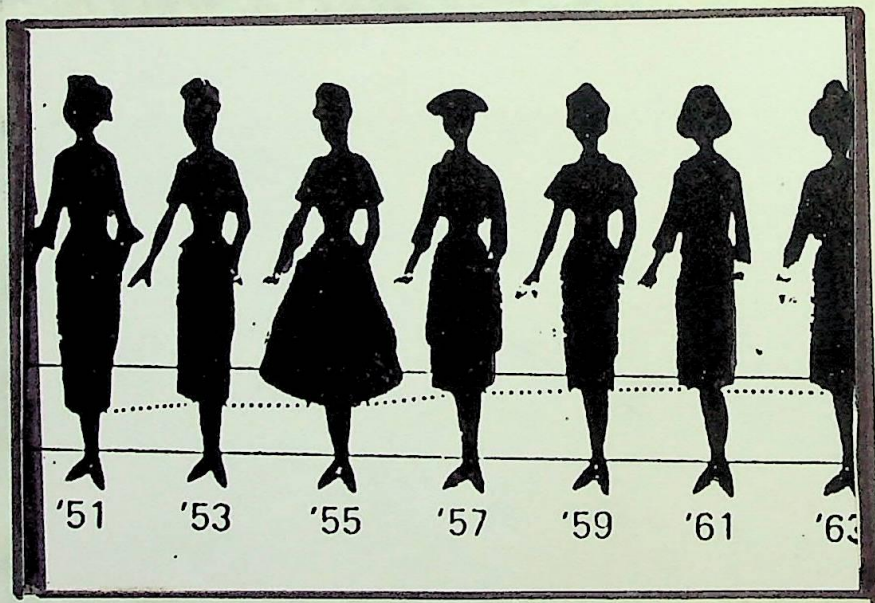
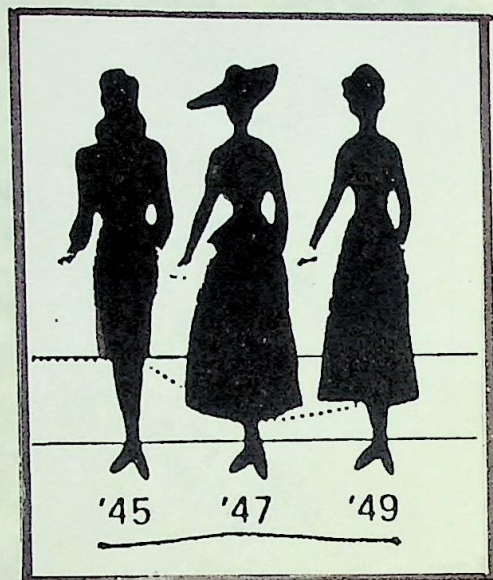
As a couturier of the time observed "Even princesses nowadays sometimes ride the omnibus" (18), even the American dollar princesses wore the new ready to wear clothes to please the demanding customer, American wholesalers and retailers attempted to raise their standards to emulate the fit and workmanship of custom models brought over from Paris by agents and buyers for the large department stores. In leading stores, along with the creations of Callot and Lucille, there was an increasing stock of simple ready made simplified for machine production from French originals. By 1930 wholesale adaptations of Louisboulanger, Lelong, and Chanel were everywhere.



With some background history set for the purposes of this dissertation, I hope to have established the parallels between the society or haute monde, its influence on the masses vis style and a response by manufacturers. One year and one person are of particular importance, land marks in the history that established the "American look" created by American designers, a look that broke with the tradition of slavishly copying the French. The year was 1932 and the person, Dorothy Shaver. As the Vice-President of Lord & Taylor, she changed the course of fashion in America. For the first time in American retailing history she advertised clothes designed by Americans. Over the years the buying public read about and bought products by Elizabeth Hawes, Clarepotter, Tom Brigance, Vera Maxwell, Claire McCardell to name but a few. The rule that all clothes must be French to be acceptable had been broken.

By the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 the haute monde could no longer look to Paris for inspiration. As the Nazi's moved in on Paris, all the couture houses closed. Chanel went into retirement, with the sales of her Chanel No.5 perfume a healthy retirement laid before her. The houses of Balencagia, Molyneux and Mme Gres attempted to set up salons on the French Riviera to stem the flow of customers. This was thwarted by psychological onslaught of the war. It was also thought unpatriotic to be seen in extravagant outfits by couturiers. The American woman had now to rely on the creations made by American couturiers and manufacturers. Gilbert Adrian and Norman Norell were among the designers in New York who responded to the new





The recurring cycle in skirt lengths from 1945 to 1965.

( )

(Fig. )





Gloria Vanderbilt  
aged 16 years  
(Black Knight.1987)  
(Fig. <sup>1</sup> )



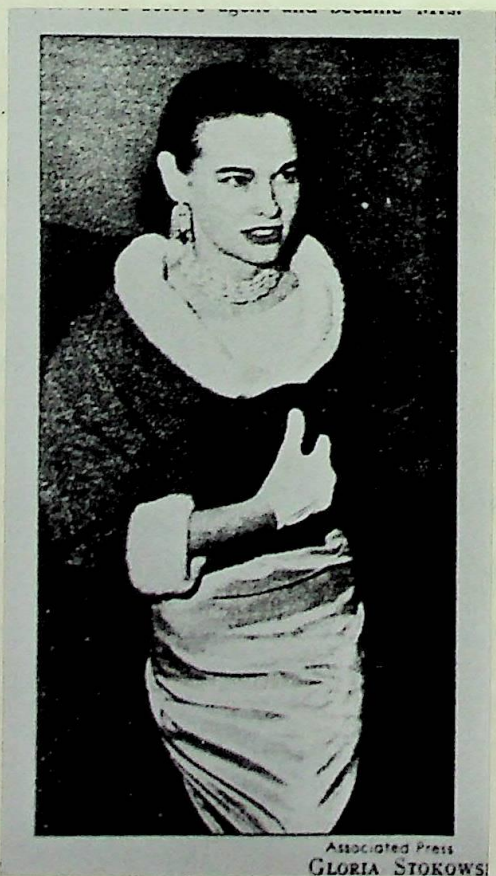
Gloria Vanderbilt  
Aged 17 years  
(gloria Vanderbilt  
Black Knight, 1987)  
(fig. <sup>2</sup> )






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Gloria at 18, one  
year after marriage  
to Pat de Cicco  
(Fig. )



Associated Press  
GLORIA STOKOWSKI

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Gloria Vanderbilt  
(Stokowska)  
Janio 1955)  
(Fig. )



need for home produced clothes. One of the future Doyenes of New York society then entered the scene, after a sheltered adolescence shapperoned between Los Angeles and New York and holidays in Europe, <sup>she</sup> met a Hollywood actors agent Pasquale de Cicco. She was not long over her 17th birthday when she wed him against her family's wishes. Her husband proved to be a different person to that she knew during the courtship, she discovered to her horror that Mr. Cicco was'nt the man he had led her to believe he was. Large gambling debts remained unpaid until Gloria was asked to delve into her family's money to pay off these debts. From her insecure childhood at the hands of her society queen mother, the marriage to Mr. Cicco proved too much for her, after five violent years at the age of twenty one, she divorced Mr. Cicco. Shortly afterwards in 1945 she moved to New York and embarked on a second marriage, this time to Leopold Stokowski, then 63, a divorced veteran of two previous marriages and of a well publicised journey (to Europe with Greta Garbo) (19). Like Garbo and Stokowski, Gloria had by this time developed a considerable talent for gaining publicity by seeming to avoid it. Her furtive elopment with Leopold Stokowski was attended by at least one reporter. During the first years of her marriage to Stokowski, Gloria lived in relative obscurity. The birth of her children and their care took up most of her time. In their Manhattan apartment where the Stokowskis had set up, Stokowski kept about conducting orchestras while Gloria flitted from one enthusiasm to another. She tried painting, poetry, modelling and became a much talked about socialite about town.

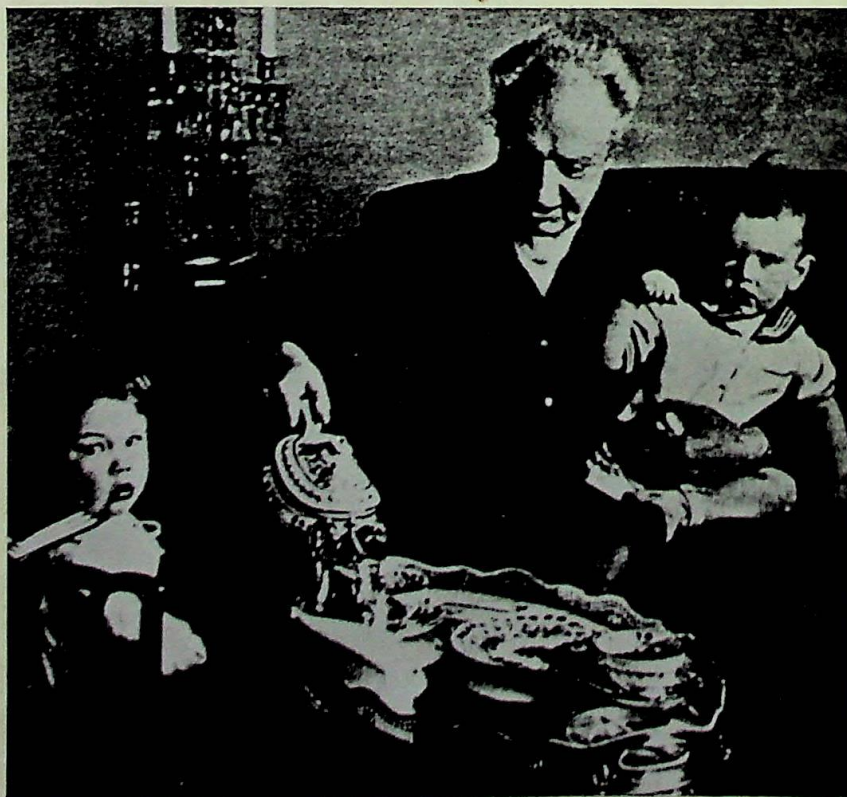




Wedding portrait of  
Gloria (De Cicco)  
with her mother  
(left) and her Aunt.

(Time 1942)

(Fig. ^ )



Leopold Stokowski

(Husband No. Two)

(W. magazine Jan.  
1988).

(Fig. ^ )



When one analyses the particular style of a character one takes into account her history and her physical attributes. Gloria's style transcends others. From the vast amount of visual research I have uncovered relating to Gloria and the other subjects of my thesis one can establish a definite style about each person by what they wear and how they wear it. Every photo I have come across reveals a different facet of her character. She is a truly modern woman. She manages in that much hackneyed word to become timeless. An all American girl of impeccable pedigree. She had characteristic good looks that were always shown to their best advantage. The careful choice of a dress the right attitude and poise are evident in photographs of Gloria even from an early age. As photographed for Harpers Bazaar in 1941 at the age of 17 (see illustration), she has the subtleties of character presence that other women dream of. Perhaps because of this self perfection in looks and wardrobe, she needed protection from herself, from her past. By 1955 her marriage to Stokowski had become sour. She spent more and more time socializing with such escorts as the actor-singer Frank Sinatra. After long association over a period of months she left her home and moved into a nearby hotel. As Time magazine reported in January 1955 "On the arm of crooner Frank Sinatra at the opening of a new Manhattan musical Mrs. Stokowska"(20) (she was always fussy about the added 'a' onto her name, the feminine spelling in Polish, her husbands nationality) confirmed the news , 'But' she said "I don't think I can say any more than that my



Gloria at El  
Morroco with  
(right) Rita  
Hayworth (left)  
(pat) Pasqual de  
Cicco  
(Journal American)  
(Fig. )







Sheep Meadow,  
Central Park,  
opposite centre,  
the apartment block  
where Gloria and  
Leopold Stokowski  
set up house.

(Fig. )



The garment  
district at 39th  
street and sixth  
Ave. The clouds of  
steam that wafted  
from the pressing  
machines in  
Manhattan's loft  
factories gave  
evidence of the  
good health of the  
City's garment  
industry.

(Fig. )

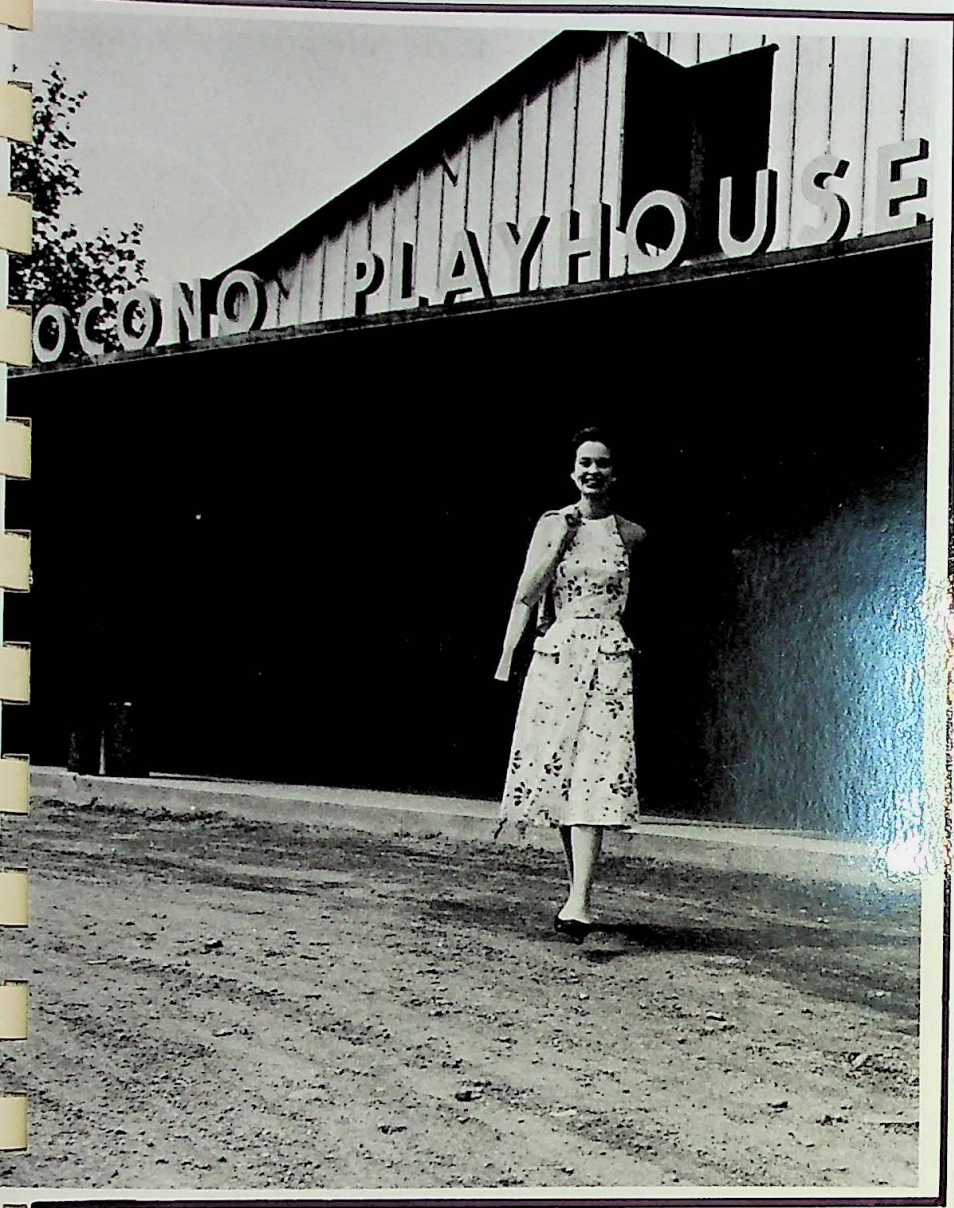


husband and I have separated. Next day still escorted by Mr. Sinatra and as Time put it "Tastefully clad in Mink over shocking pink dress and stockings" (They're divinely warm she gusted" (20). (See illustration ^ )

Gloria played a hide and seek with the press, pausing only to insist that "this separation has nothing to do with any third person".<sup>ref</sup> During this time Gloria patronized such designers as Galanos and Norman Norell. The publicity these designers received each time Gloria was snapped in front of <sup>a</sup> this club or café set her up as a sort of idol to which the public could look up to. Her name and status was that of a movie star, except in this case Gloria was for real and not a fabled character on screen.

Despite the effects of World War Two on the tastes and pockts of the New York woman, the new self sufficiency from a Parisian influence that abounded in the district years before led to a yearning for the direction that once was so strong from Paris. The retailers, began to feel that although the industry had new sources of inspiration a customer needed a more traditional palate to choose from. Rather than spend an unknown amount on untried experimental designs in the Shops, manufacturers were anxious to see a return to Paris for its values in design and skill. After all ten years had passed since the end of the Second World War. The industry in France had returned to its former self. The twice yearly buying trips made once by the wealthy were now made by buyers. In Paris a mass distillation of new colours, fabrics and shapes and the new





Comparison between  
(left) outfit worn  
by Glora Vanderbilt  
and (bottom left)  
gown by leading New  
York Manufacturer.

(Fig. 1)





way in which they could be used, were being manufactured. The time honoured skills of cut, line, proportion and fabric choice, so synonymous with Parisian chic could be bought.

While American buyers were anxious to see something new and saleable, they were apprehensive of anything too new, too revolutionary. Over the years much of what the American customer bought was a gentle persuasive evolution of ideas. J.C. Flugel, author of The Psychology of Clothes makes reference to the woman's wardrobe. Our wardrobes as they exist today "consist of a number of garments of fairly well defined type, each of a particular character, shape, size and cut (and often material and colour). For the sake of convenience one distinguishes each type by a special name, and take for instance blouses, shoes, and coats. All the individual garments belonging to a particular type have some essential similarity, chiefly determined by the part and extent of the body which they are destined to cover, at the same time they may, within certain limits, exhibit considerable individual variation as regards shape, colour, material and size" (21). The basis of proportion with which a designer must constantly struggle in order to achieve the ideal attitude when examining photographs of Gloria Vanderbilt (Dr.) Cicco Stokowska one can see the parallels Flugel draws. Basic principles of garment selection are evident. Her choice is not unique. It is as a result of her interpretative nature that draws from the current garments that are fashionable in her wardrobe. The average American woman looked to women of style for direction.



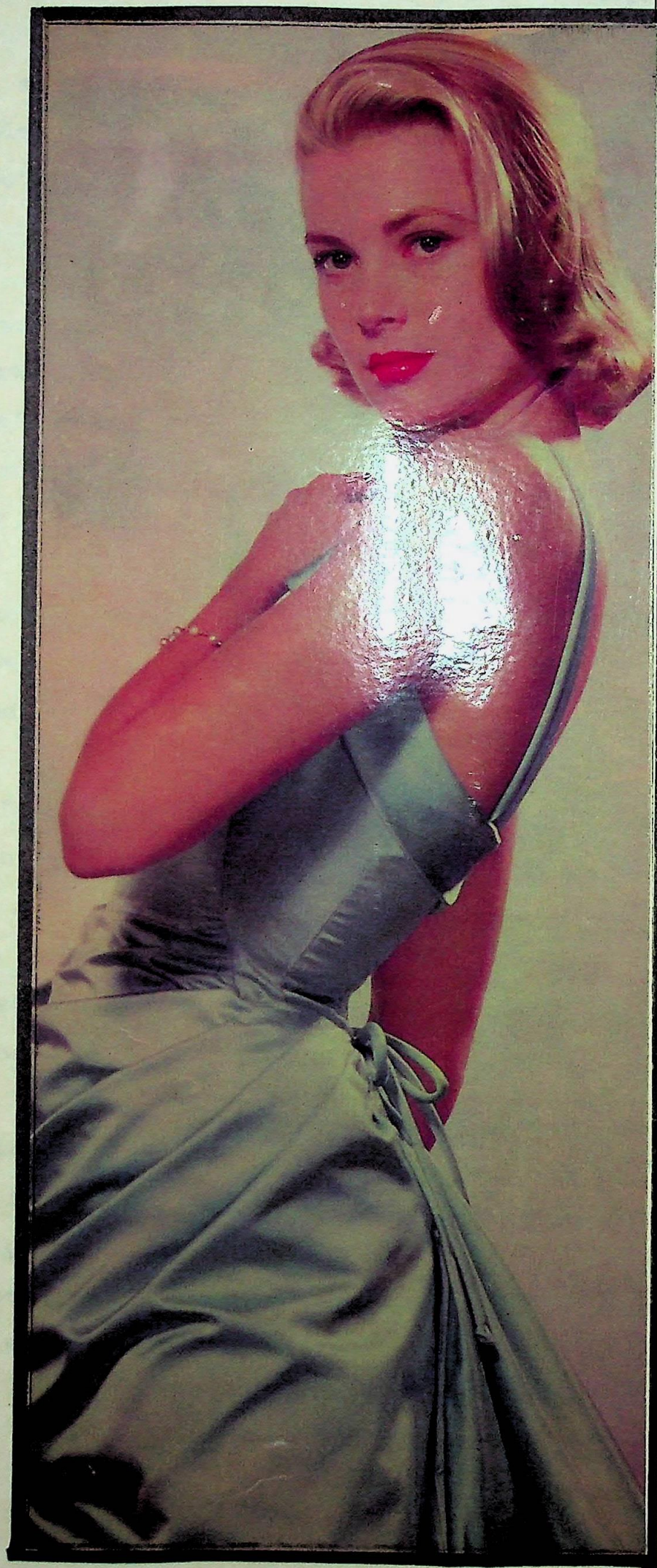
New York society of the late forties and early fifties was that of an established "haute monde" (22) of old money. The role of reporting society's games, of women like Gloria Vanderbilt or Grace Kelly fell to the gossip or society columns in most of New York's newspapers. Many U.S. dailies gave more space to society news than to foreign dispatches, few parts of newspapers were read with more scrupulous devotion by women readers. Once metropolitan society news hews concentrated on the doings of the very few - a group rigidly defined by such social dictators as New York's Ward McAllister of Journal American. But changes in American life and the hard realities of Newspaper circulation building, transformed the face of U.S. society news. Running a society page, explains Ward McAllister "is something like running a restaurant. If you have only fancy food and high prices your clientele is limited".(23) The New York newspapers like the Times and the Herald Tribune, covered engagements, events of those "who are in terms of their respectability, accomplishment and educational background". For other papers society was a mixture of Social Registrars, comment on, cafe society and mention of stage screen and other entertainers. Such society gossipers as Igor Cassini (brother of fashion designer Oleg Cassini on whom I will elaborate later) of the gossip rag Journal American operated on the principle that "there is nothing more deadly boring than a group who have just social position and nothing else" (24) In his syndicated column of elegant key hole peeping and pub crawling, Cassini was far from boring. He only covered the



fanciest of parties and the loudest brawls. Since most society news was considered a service to readers, society reporters were more considerate about those who made the news than other reporters were. An etiquette was built up between the reporter and the reported as to what was suitable for publishing.

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GRACE KELLY



## CHAPTER TWO

Clubs such as El Morrocco and the Colony in New York were the playgrounds of the beautiful people of New York in the mid 50's, actresses and society girls mixed in the same social circles.

Designers such as Mainbacher who returned from Paris where he worked after World War Two. The fifties saw the most successful flow of clients he had since Paris. He dressed some of the most important style setters of New York society - among them Princess Paley, Mrs. John C. Wilson, Gloria Vanderbilt and Daisy Fellows and it was through photographs of these elegant women in newspapers and magazines that Mainbachers understated elegant style remained in the public eye.

Grace Kelly emerged at this time as an unlikely society girl in New York. Unlikely for two reasons, firstly she wasn't a native New Yorker. She was from Philadelphia stock. Her background was Irish, yet her surname was the only betrayal of her ancestry / she was also ice cold in character.

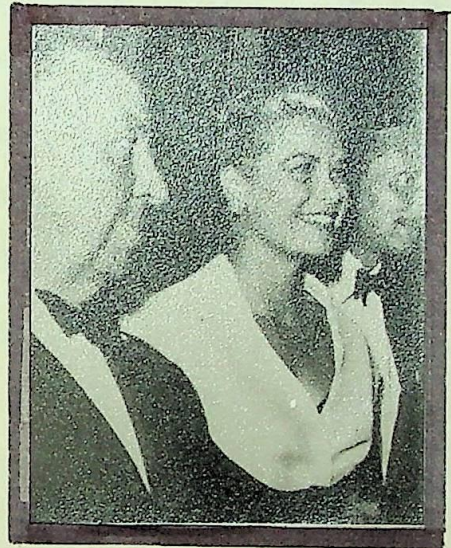
When she first was in New York she had just finished her second film "Mogambo" with Clark Gable and Ava (her first was "High Moon" with Gary Cooper). Hers was a style that was subtle in character. In the early days of her movie career she had a careful control over how she looked as she herself explained once, "If I'd been a little less good



Grace Kelly <with  
Alfred Hitchcock>  
wearing the famous  
Peter Pan Collor.

(Cassini, In my own  
fashion, 1987)

(Fig. )







Cool poised and with a serenity that only masked a tender warmth, Grace Kelly won stardom in High Noon. No matter what the role — a High Society lady or a country girl — her appeal remained constant throughout the 1950's.

(Fig. )



Debonair Grace on the eve of her departure to Monaco where she was followed by Oleg Cassini during her filming of 'To Catch a Thief'

(Fig. )



looking I might have been just a typical school teacher" (25). She developed into a character that seemed to draw media attention by her mere presence in a room at a party or at a club such as El Morocco. The press coined phrases like 'forbidding', 'unapproachable'(26). Unlike Gloria Vanderbilt, who always had distinguishing stylish characteristics like the way she wore her hair or the way in which she gave attitude or a sense of presence no matter what she wore. Grace initially had a style that was not stunning/ to quote Oleg Cassini, a fashion designer who worked in New York from the early fifties, "In Hollywood there was always a buzz, almost a physical sensation when a star entered a room. Grace seemed to disdain such profanities. My particular interest in Grace Kelly was how her look was achieved, how she at first 'blended into the crowd'(27) and then all of a sudden blossomed into 'an overnight sensation'(27). It all had to do with her first role and her unsureness as to how to lead her career, she was concerned that MGM would not renew her contract. After only one film MGM seemd 'too willing'(280 to lend her out to other studios and other producers. Her role in the Country Girl with Bing Crosby, her most demanding film to date, required an intense suffusion in the role. She lived her character both on and off screen as a result her appearance mirroring that of the character she was playing had a distinct lack of style. Oleg Cassini designed some outfits for her and used some outfits from his collection to promote her style. She still needed, as Milton Green, a famous New York photographer of the timne, suggested, "You must design something that conveys your sense of her, how



Grace Kelly with Oleg  
 cassini "I will not  
 participate in  
 fashionable innuendo  
 and false gossip about  
 Grace. We were in  
 love, we were engaged  
 to be married - no  
 more, no less" Poor  
 Oleg.

(Cassini in My Own  
 Fashion, 1987)

(Fig. )



I had been seeing Grace Kelly platonically in Los Angeles and New York. Events took a turn after she wrote me from location in France: "Those who love me shall follow me."



With Grace in Cannes, during the filming of *To Catch a Thief*. I think Grace was at her most charming, magical on these delightful days.



With Hitchcock and Grace. Grace is wearing a dress I designed for her, with a variation on the famous white Peter Pan collar which exemplified the Grace Kelly Look. It is obviously not the dress that is capturing the eye of Hitchcock, whose crush on Grace was a well-known secret.



At Joan Whitney Payson's *bel montage*, dressed as Paris and Helen of Troy.



I will not participate in fashionable innuendo and false gossip about Grace. We were in love. We were engaged to be married—no more, no less.



you feel about her"(29).

Cassini designed a simple top and a "complicated petal like skirt"(30), it was made of heavy taffeta, an almost antique, soft pink, carefully selected to compliment her skin tones. Milton Green took photos of her and presented them to various magazines. Thus was formed the classic "Grace Kelly look"(31). As a result she made the New Yorks society best dressed list for the first time as a consequence to her new look. Thus also followed a relationship with Oleg Cassini which lasted a number of years. People became hungry for news of the new Grace Kelly. Gossip columnists relentlessly followed her private life much in the same manner as Gloria Vanderbilt.



Fashion in the fifties still relied heavily on Paris for style direction even though the industry was self sufficient with regard to its own designers.

Bergdorf Goodman sent their buyers to Paris to select outfits by lesser known couturiers whose prices were more modest, but whose taste for the new, looser fitting styles was original and copiable. From about the mid 1950's onwards, this two way trip twice yearly brought large trade to the French couturiers and indirectly caused the birth of the French 'Pret a Porter Exhibition'. It soon became apparent to the French couturiers that there was more money to be made from producing their own boutique lines and selling them internationally.

The 1950's brought the end of the kind of expensive, time-consuming workmanship demanded for such elegance. A higher turnover was now possible as garments became simple in cut, i.e. the dirnol skirt, the halter neck top, the sack dress. Manufacturing of these styles became more refined. With the perfection of synthetic fabrics such as Dacron, Orlon, Nylon and Bankon, styles could be copied and sold for a fraction of the couture garments.

The appeal of the society people and French couture to the Average American person, was evident through the large amount of magazines available (Vogue, Harpers Bazaar), the advent of the popularity of television, the power of cinema and the continued fascination about society through gossip columns.



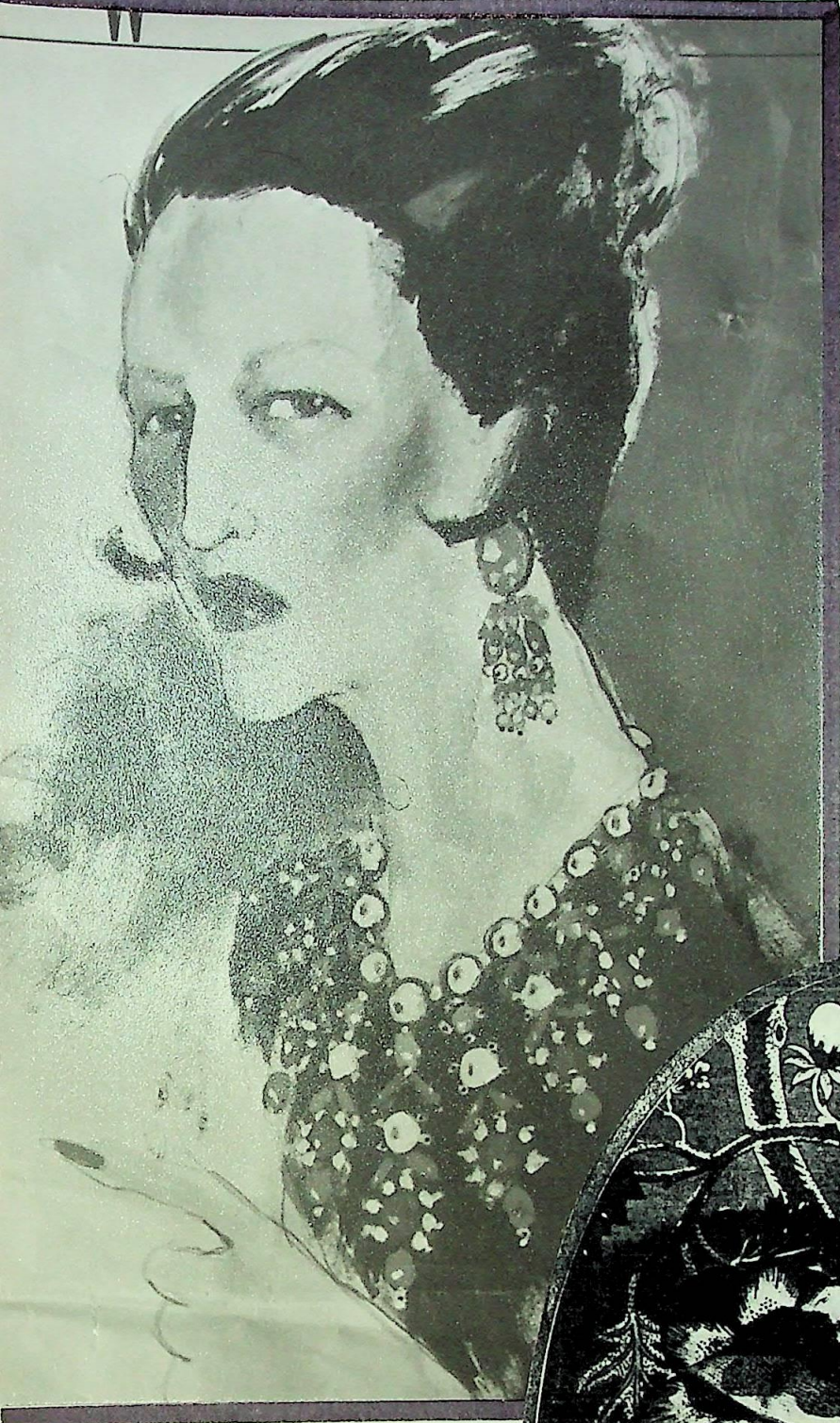
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*D*iana Vreeland 1937  
(D.V. 1984)

*D*iana Vreeland 1984  
(D.V. 1984)





Harpers Bazaar was perhaps the definitive bible of style of the 50's, it was surveyed over by the shrewd eye of its editor Diana Vreeland. She did much to augment the standard of taste for American Fashion design in the fifties. Although she says of her time at Harpers Bazaar, "I was the most economical thing that ever happened to the Hearst Corporation" (31) (The company who owned the Harpers Bazaar publication). Her now legendary column which she contributed to Harpers Bazaar, "Why don't you...?" epitomized her lack of interest in convention. She exhorted followers to "wash a child's hair in flat champagne, to turn an old ermine coat into a bathrobe"; "Unshined shoes are the end of civilization", she once proclaimed, she even insisted that the soles of her own should be polished every day. A wonderfully eccentric way to keep ones shoes in good order.

Diana Vreeland's wonderfully prosaic novel is probably her biggest statement on style to date. Although she didn't enter journalism (Fashion Journalism) until after a number of years of marriage. Her own quote best sums up her role as a style setter:

What these magazines gave was a point of view / most people haven't got a point of view, they need to have it given to them and what's more they expect it from you" [(the Magazine)] (32)

This could be adapted to any form of journalism used in the promotion of style. It is so succinct in prose. It also



gives a due to the link between society and the masses. Society fashion the manufacturers and the masses. Once something is spelt out to people it becomes clear to them.

Diana Vreeland left Harpers Bazaar in 1959 to join Vogue, unhappy with the salary she got for her efforts "San Simeon must have been where the Hearst money went. I never saw any of it" (33). At Vogue "They offered me a very large salary, an endless expense account... and Europe whenever I wanted to go"(34). She had an influential part in shaping the public's view of fashion through Vogue. As she says herself, "I don't think anyone has ever been in a better place at a better time than I was when I was editor of Vogue. Vogue always did stand for people's lives". According to Diana V, "a new dress doesn't get you anywhere, it's the life you're living in the dress, and the sort of life you had lived before and what you will do in it later"(35).





Oleg Cassini with Grace Kelly at El Morrocco 1955

(Oleg Cassini, *In My Own Fashion*, 1987)

(Fig. 1)





JACKIE KENNEDY



### CHAPTER THREE

Two names I will now refer to are linked with an important period in this century in terms of style setting. Both are linked to the sixties, a time of social upheaval in American Society. Jackie Bouvier was the lady and her designer Oleg Cassini.

Jackie Bouvier came from a New York family of Stockbrokers. She married Senator John F. Kennedy of the Boston Kennedy Stronghold. 'Jackie was raised among the elite' as Oleg Cassini mentioned in his autobiography, she was young and very beautiful and had a subtle sophisticated sense of style in all things - in food, furniture and in fashion. In clothes she was a follower of conventional wisdom, "Paris is fashion"(36), she believed. At the time of her marriage to John Kennedy in 1953, her expense account did not allow the freedom she would have eight years later as the President's wife. Her effects on the style of the early sixties were to be world wide in terms of style. Oleg Cassini, a New York Fashion Designer created the Jackie Kennedy look.

At the time of John Kennedy's election in March 1961, as President of the United States, society was going through the beginnings of a breakthrough. The teenager had been invented in the rock n' roll late fifties. A youth culture was becoming more evident with the mainstream acceptance of the rock n' roll music phenomenon. The James Dean - Elvis Presley image had permeated through to the manufacturers





Jacqueline Bouvier, on holiday from her job as photographer with the Washington Herald, took sun in Hyannis Port, mass during a visit with the Kennedy clan in July 1953. Two months later the 23 year old socialite and the senator married.

(Life Magazine May 1953)

(Fig. 1)



who churned out the leather jacket and the denim pants like <sup>as</sup> never before. Kids did not grow into adults as quickly as their parents used to when they were young. America had reached its apogee during the Kennedy Administration after so many years of doldrums. After all the fifties in America were more remembered for the emergence of a new music culture and the growth of an emphasis on youth that for any fundamental change.

Oleg Cassini enters the scene in the guise of Fashion Designer, he was of Russian aristocracy. His mother was the daughter of the Russian ambassador to Washington at the turn of the century. His father was a member of the Corps Diplomatique in Paris. He was born in Paris in 1917 but spent his early childhood in Russia where his grandfather Count Dimitri Cassini was on the Corps Diplomatique of the Tsar. At the outbreak of the Russian revolution the Cassini family left everything and fled to Italy. Oleg Cassini and his brother went to school in Florence. At this time his mother sent him on excursions to the Paris Collections to sketch outfits suitable for copying in his mothers salon in Florence. He was introduced to Patou at whose house he spent some time "at the lowest on the totem pole"(37). He returned to Florence a year later in 1936 and at the age of nineteen set up as a designer for the "creme de la creme of society". His clients included the family of Benito Mussolini. His customer list grew in size and importance but was short lived. He eventually left Italy after a number of scandals one of which included a relationship with a society girl, named Donnina Toeplitz, daughter of an English movie mogul - a partner in Toeplitz/Korda Films - that caused his eventual departure.



He had set his sights on America, moreover New York, where his mother had arranged contacts with business and society friends whom she had made during her time as daughter of the Russian Ambassador to Washington, thirty five years earlier. He spent a number of unsuccessful years in various jobs ranging from designer to sketch artist for manufacturers. He met and married a New Yorker named Merry Fahrney. After a turbulent marriage that ended in divorce, Oleg Cassini moved to Hollywood where he had an illustrious career as a costume designer for Paramount and MGM.

My interest in Oleg Cassini involves his relationship as designer who created the wardrobe for Jackie Bouvier Kennedy, wife of John F. Kennedy. The year that provides my focus is 1960. Oleg had been summoned by Jackie Kennedy's secretary to George town Hospital, outside Washington, where Jackie was resting after giving birth to her second child. he had been instructed to come up with some designs that would be suitable for various occasions, both she and the President would be visiting. "Upon entering her room"(38) Oleg explains, "I was surprised to see sketches all around her by the best American designers - Norell, Sarmi, Andreas of Bergorf Goodman, Calaros etc."(39). he was not daunted by the "quality of their work"(40). He had proposed a radical concept none of the other designers apparently had envisaged. He wanted to create an overall image that would reflect her youth and her rôle as first lady. He designed simple clothes in exquisit fabrics, i.e. Swiss double satin, double faced wools. His designs "had to suit not only a lady with well defined preferences but also a public figure whose life was



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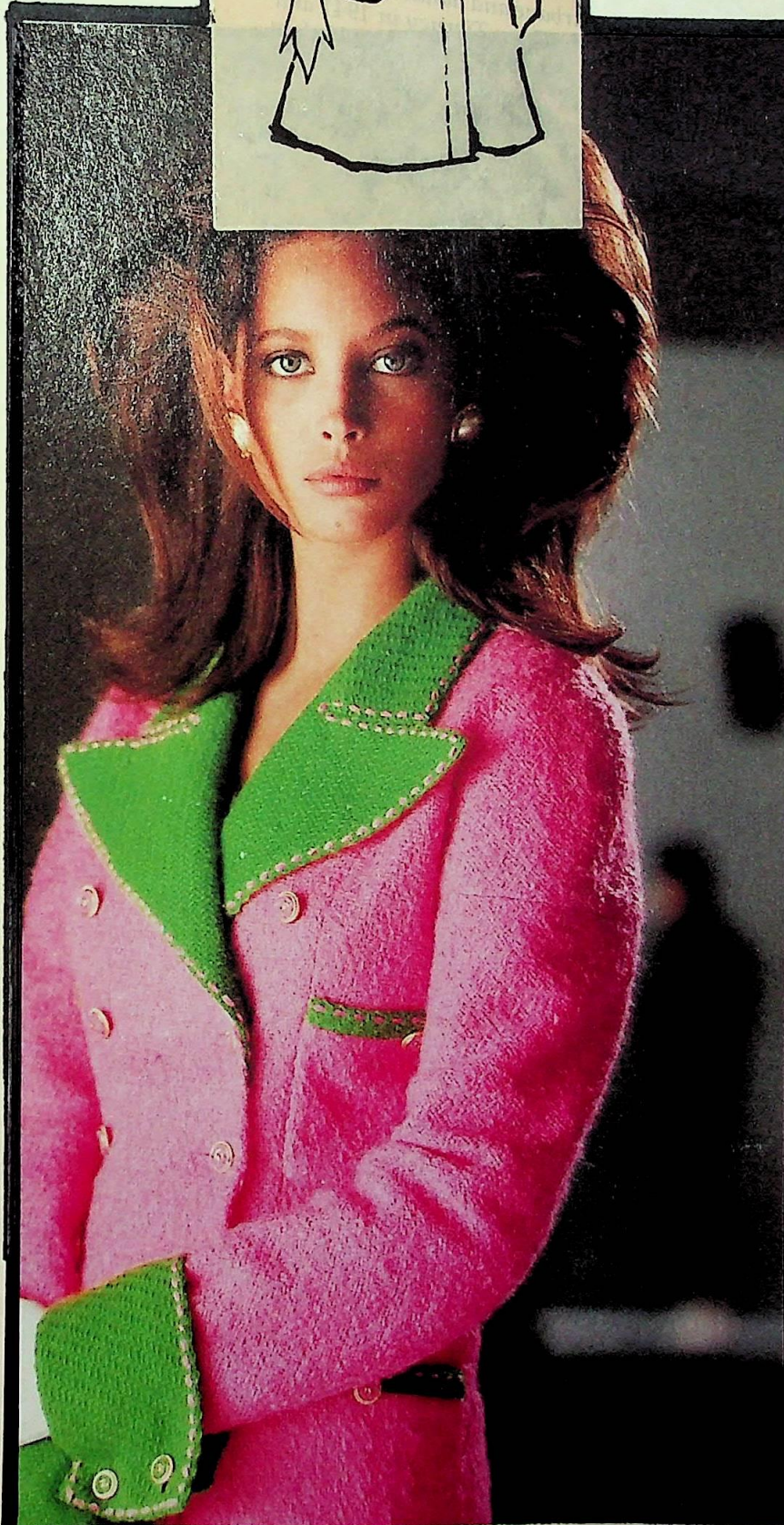
governed by the strictest of protocol" (Cassini, 1987, pg.311). On seen the designs were liked by Jackie and Oleg Cassini was chosen as the official couturier to the Whitehouse. Jackie sent him a letter which outlined her wishes in a series of "incoherent thoughts"(41) demonstrating the precise personality of a woman who clearly knew what she wanted. A summary of the letter follows for one main reason, it clearly explains the relationship between a customer and a designer.

'Dear Oleg,

Thank heavens all the furore is over - and done without breaking my word to your ofr Bergorf's. Now I know how poor Jacks feelings are when he was told three people they can be secretary of State. But I do think it turned out nicely for you - no? and you were charming and gallant and a gentleman and everything you should be and are. This letter is just a series of incoherent thoughts that I must get settled so I can spend these next weeks truly recuperating and not have to think about details, otherwise I will be a wreck and not strong enough to do everything I have to do.

1. I wired Bergdorf to send you my measurements so you can go ahead with the clothes...
2. For every evening dress I order from you, will you please send a colour swatch to
  - a) Mario at Eugenia of Florence to have evening shoes made - State if shoes should be satin of Faille - if necessary send material to make shoes in





Will the real Jackie Kennedy please step out (right) the real lady and below (copies) "I want all mine to be original and not fat little women hopping around", in the same dress. The women (below right) aren't quite fat but they are certainly copies. (Fig. )





- and tell him to hurry.
- b) to Koret - for simple envelop bags - send him material as dress.
  - c) to Marita Hatter at Bergdorf Goodman (New York) for hats and gloves.
3. Diana Vreeland will call you about the dress she wants. If I can't have fitting before they can always pin it in with clothes pegs for marvelous Avedon picture.
  4. Send me sketches' of cape or coat to wear with your white dress for Inaugural Gala on Jan. 19th (1961). It must be as pure and regal as the dress.
  5. Check with me before you cut Organza Dress. It is the only one I am not sure of, remember I thought of pink...

Are you sure you are up to it? Please say yes."

(Cassini, 1987, p.308)

The letter went on to outline her position in realtion to other first ladies from previous administrations. Perhaps its main point of force is the insight it gives not only between customer and designer but also reveals the remarkable insight into the role she would be playing alongside her husband.

A conflict of interest exists between Oleg Cassini's compunction as to how he sees his part in the creating of





Different roles as the Presidents wife meant a flexible wardrobe.

(1961, 1962, 1963)

(In my Own Fashion, 1987)

(Fig. 1)



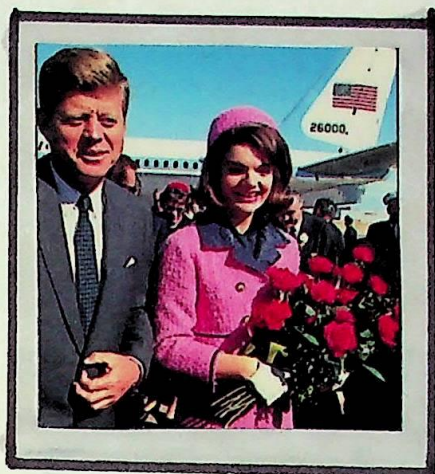
Givenchy, (The world renowned coutier renowned for having designed most of Audrey Hepburns film wardrobe) who reportedly leaked a story that Lee Radizwill (Jackie Kennedy's sister) was covertly buying his dresses for jackie and that Mr. Cassini was taking credit. Both Client and Designer were unmoved by such a criticism.

At the time a controversy arose as to the originalty of the pillbox hat / it was said at the time that the hat and other garments were designed by Hallston. In truth it was a collaborative effort made between Jackie Kennedy and Oleg Cassini <sup>the</sup> the hat was made by Marita at Bergorf Goodman.

Stores like Bergorf Goodman, Maceys, Sak's and Fifth Avenue continued on the forefront of retail sales in America. There is a strong link between design manufacuring and retail that has been forged since the turn of the century. The knock-on effect of Jackie Kennedy's influence throughout the fashion spectrum was increased sales turnover for manufacturers. Oleg Cassini quotes from his autobiography: "The top executive in the belt industry for example told me that because Jackie so noticeably wore belts, the entire industry had been rejuvenated". The clothes being produced were straight metaphorically when compared to the revolution that was taking place on Carnaby Street in London.

In 1962, at the height of the office for Jackie Kennedy, Paris was in the throes of just another season. Thelma Sweetingburgh, the paris reporter for Women Wear Daily,





Jackie Kennedy & John Kennedy on arrival in Dallas. Jackie wears her ubiquitous 'hot pink' suit by Oleg Cassini with now typical Pillbox Hat.

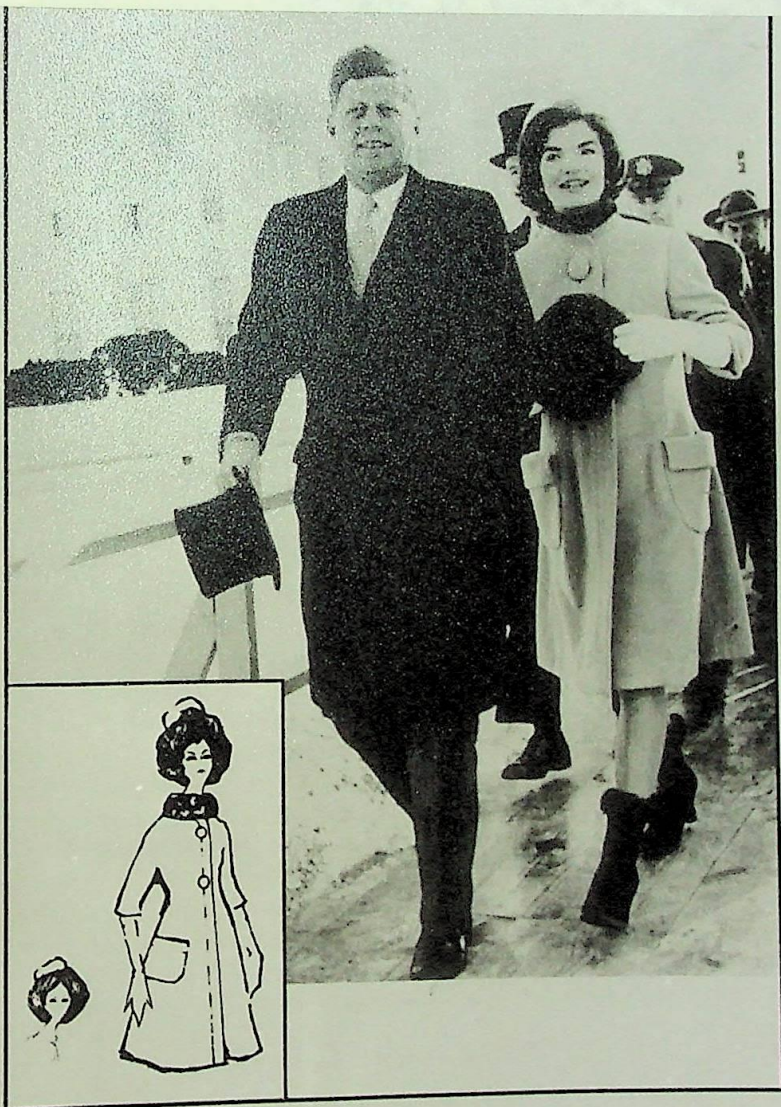
(Time Autumn 1986)

(Fig. )

President and Mrs. Kennedy on Inauguration Day 1961. The coat is of very simple cut the only added note of excess being the mink collar and muff. The coat had been made up unfortunately without the weather in mind. The lining was only a light silk. Frantically Oleg chased around Washington to purchase correct lining and found a work room to sew in lining.

(Cassini, My Own Fashion, 1987)

(Fig. )





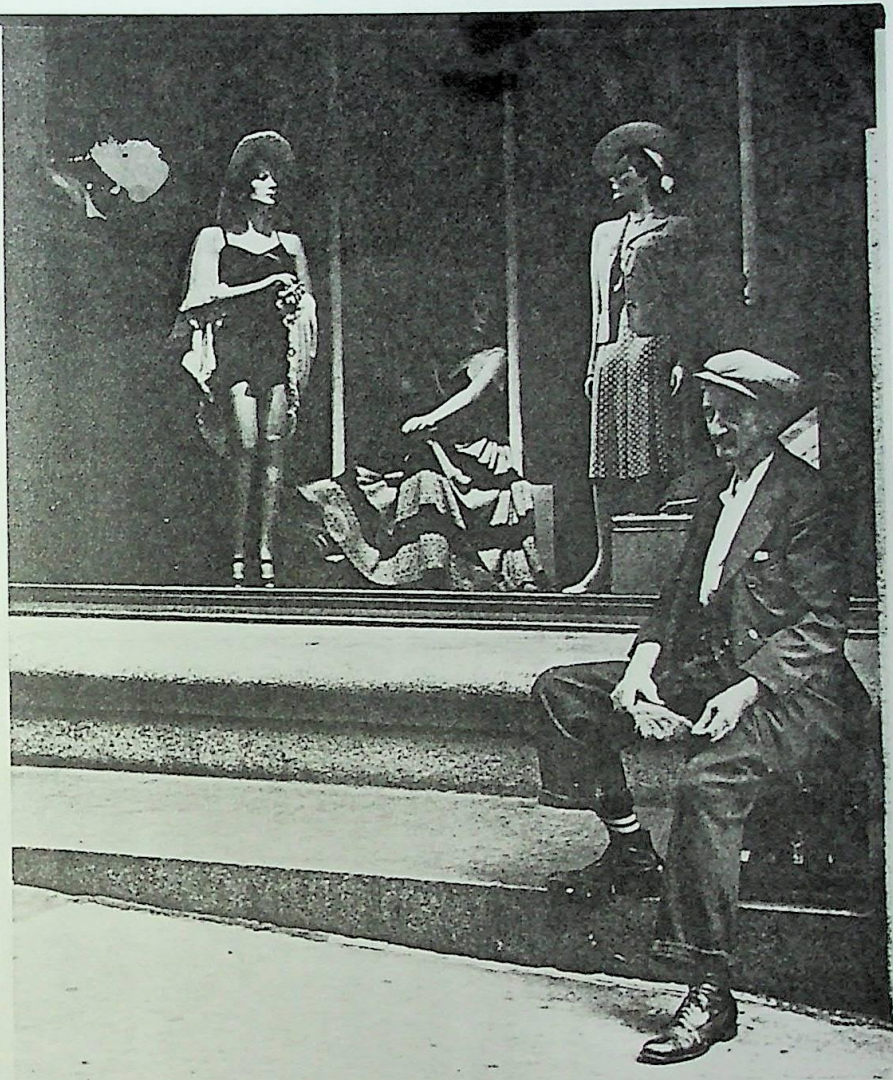


ILLUSTRATION SHOWS WINDOW OF ALTMAN'S  
(Time, 1945)



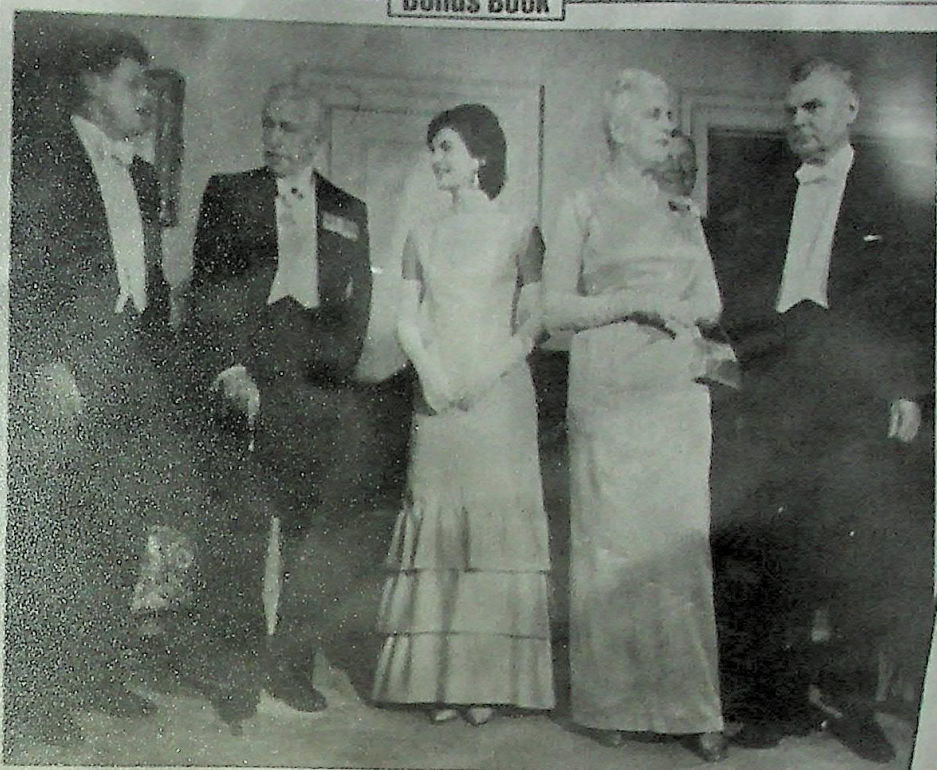
reported on the lengths of skirts at the collections. The presence of American buyers continued to help the success of such Designers as Cardin, Ungaro and Chanel. They buying power of stores such as Sak's, Bergdorf Goodman, Lord & Taylor and Maceys was such that trips were made by buyers twice even three times a year to Paris to purchase from the couturiers' collections.

By January 1960, to back track two years in order to quote from an article from The Economist magazine, "The firms which make womens clothes number in all about 16000, most of them specializing in one particular line of business in 'unit-priced dresses' or in the cheaper dozen priced dresses producing 250 million a year altoether or in blouses 180 million a year"(45). These small "shops" have only on average 40 employees each and they survive partly because it takes relatively little capital to set up in business - anything from \$15,000 upwards, partly because of the overwhelming importance in this industry of attractive new styles, and partly also because of the traditions of fierce invididualism and mutual distrust established by the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who provide most of the original employers in the industry.

The industry by the early 60's still retained a quantity of the sweat shop characteristics it had been infamous for throughout this century. Nevertheless there was a high degree of vertical specialization in the trade, with garments being moved backwards and forwards between firms, pushed on mobile, dress racks around the crowded streets



Bonus Book



In Ott  
Canada  
his w  
baker

PHOTO BY JAMES L. FIFE

In this world, she adorned Cassini to did more than 100 dresses.



A label



near New York's Pennsylvania Station. This scene still exists today. On Broadway and 34th Street last Summer was phenomenal, the manufacturing plants are cluttered together according to product. Furrier manufacturiers and retailers exist side by side on 7th Avenue/similar arrangements exist for other elements for leather accessories, seperates etc. The mecca of retailing exists on Madison Avenue where European boutiques have retail space alongside American manufacturers and designers. The congested heart of Manhattan has been the centre of the American apparel industry since the 1850's. While rival centres have been set up in cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles, "two of every three manufacturers have their headquarters in New York City". New York even in the 60's was a centre for banking, finance, industry which continued to be a support to the industry. Geographically speaking the closeness of New York to ports also established it as a centre of fashion. Also the psyche of the New York person has had an abiding affect on the continuing success of the industry.

Oleg Cassini made New York the natural headquarters of his business. He commuted between Washington and New York by plane. He designed outfits for the Presidential visit to France in 1962, also for other international visits made during the Presidential term in office.

The success of the Kackie Kennedy look had much to do with her own origins as with her choice of designer. The general acceptance of her image did much to re-establish the old values of the haute monde. This "classically" (46)





A painting of the first lady in a gown by Oleg Cassini  
c.1963

(Modern Screen Magazine 1971)

(Fig. )





At a New Delhi  
Banquet 1962, the  
first lady caused a  
stir in her white  
satin Cassini gown  
with floating panel.  
As with a lot of her  
official outfits  
especially those for  
official functions.  
Jackie Kennedy  
favoured heavy Swiss  
satin

(People Aug, 1987)

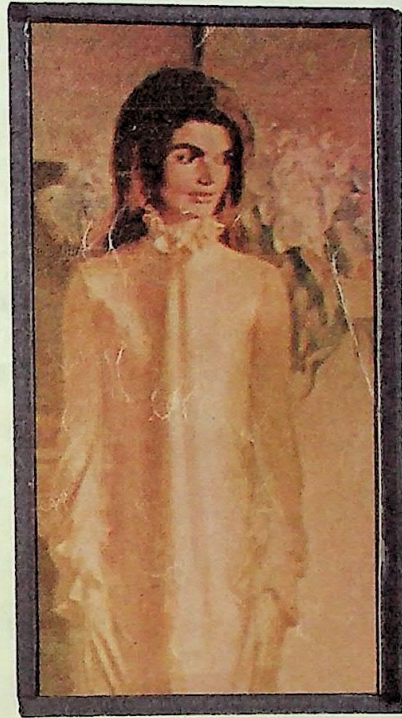
(Fig. )



The dashing first  
lady in Cassini gown  
of Swiss double satin  
(silk)

(People 1987)

(Fig. )



= repetition



dressed wife of the President had a similar effect as that of Grace Kelly on New York in the Fifties. Basically the city of New York had a code of moral values steeped in quasi-protestant immigrant morals. A sharp comparison exists between the London of the early 60's and the New York of the 60's. New York had of course a street style and its underground art movements/it had its youth culture, it was though on the whole carefully controlled. London however, was riding on the waves of a great change, music and fashion became the new by words/the emergence of a pop culture fuelled by its acceptance had a parallel development with old values that pervaded English Society.

The Kennedy administration with its young appealing image soon came to an end and in a sense opened a proverbial can of worms with assassination of John Kennedy in Dallas on November 1963. Oleg Cassini had become a close friend of the Kennedy family <sup>and</sup> which had a tremendous effect on the appearance of the New York Fashion industry worldwide. This high profile link with official office came to an abrupt end with the death of John Kennedy.

On that fateful day Jackie Kennedy became an enigma, her presence throughout the days that followed revealed for the first time the helpless side of a wounded nation. Her role as fashion ambassador had been shattered. However, unimportant the historians will look at an American first lady in retrospect remains to be answered. Jackie Kennedys presence reinforced home and family values. It was all that was good about American society. The aftermath of



John Kennedy's death left a nation in mourn. Even though Cassini's three years as a couturier to the White House had come to an abrupt end, he nonetheless made a recovery. The cruel blow was to become in a later life his greatest laurel, — his association with the White House ensured constant custom, / however, although his links with Jackie on an official basis ceased, he remained her designer for a number of years until her marriage to Aristotle Onassis, the Greek shipping millinaire.

After Jackie Kennedy's years in the White House, women no longer had someone of importance to look to. The focus changed from admiration of the establishment to abhorration of the very rules it lived by. As fighting in the Vietnam war intensified and the death lists grew longer, society reached (against its own establishment) subtle guises such as music, literature and fashion. People dressed as cowboys, hippies, babies (baby doll) / pirates paraded the streets of Washington and New York advocating withdrawal from Vietnam, the abolishment of racism and womens liberation.



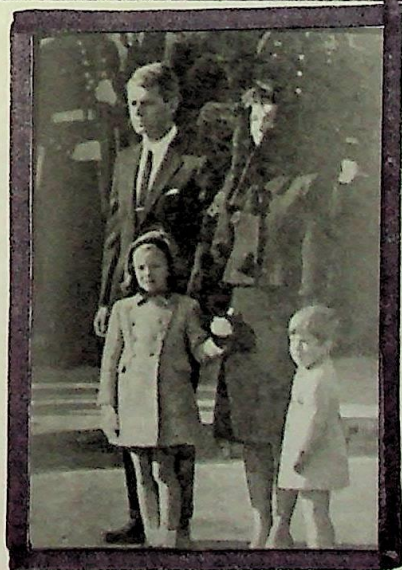


ILLUSTRATION SHOWS FUNERAL OF JACK KENNEDY  
JACKIE & FAMILY IN MOURNING  
(Time, 1963)



DELL  
18-405-103

**ALI MacGRAW's Agony: Your Baby Son Isn't Breathing Properly**

**PATTY'S Baby Born! DESI At Her Side—Not Her Husband!**

**exclusive! We Watch Bobby Burgess & Kristie Take Their Sacred Vows**

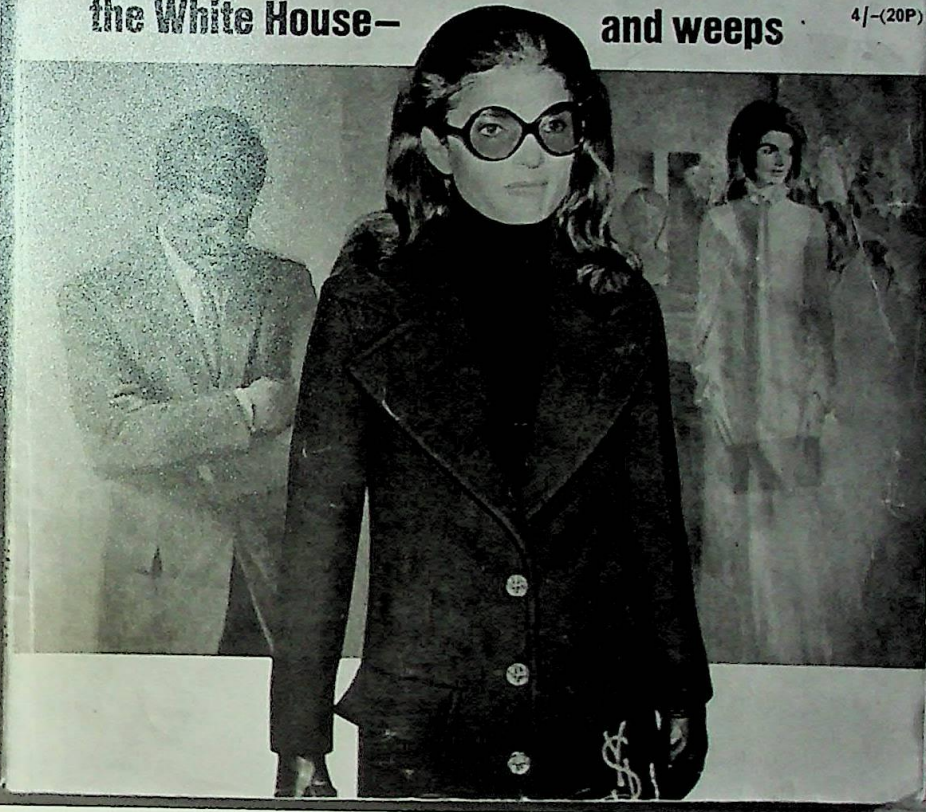
# modern screen

MAY 50c

**REMEMBER US THE WAY WE WERE—**

**Why Jackie secretly brings her children back to  
the White House— and weeps**

4/-(20P)





# KENNEDY DEATH SITE TO GO ON VIEW

By KEITH HOBBS in Dallas  
DALLAS is coming to terms with the eight seconds on November 22, 1963, when Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy.

In the autumn, before the 25th anniversary of Kennedy's death, Dallas plans to open a permanent exhibition about the assassination on the sixth storey of the Texas School Book Depository, from where Oswald is believed to have fired.

"Dallas needed time to heal after the assassination but it is time to acknowledge the importance of the event," said Conover Hunt, project director for the Dallas County Historic Foundation.

Until now, a plaque in front of the building and a concrete and granite memorial a few blocks away were all that Dallas had done to commemorate the killing — not enough for the thousands of visitors who wander through the area and into the red-brick building every year.

The museum, called simply The Sixth Floor, will not be a traditional one with items and artefacts on display, according to Hunt. Oswald's rifle, for example, will remain at the National Archives in Washington.

## PRESENTATIONS

Instead, the exhibition area will feature multi-media presentations about the period, the assassination and its aftermath.

Visitors will be taken back in time with an enlarged photograph of the depository stacked with boxes of school books. Then they will view displays about the early 1960s, the life and career of John F. Kennedy and his ill-fated trip to Texas.

The south-east corner window area

will be recreated as it appeared when Oswald fired at the presidential motorcade.

Radio and telex announcements of the assassination will carry visitors back to the initial moment when the president was shot.

Also included will be results from the four separate investigations into the assassination as well as information on the various theories of conspiracy and multiple gunmen.

Visitors will be able to view films on the worldwide response to the assassination, including rare footage of a prayer vigil in India, as well as historical film of Kennedy's presidency, focusing on his legacy of hope in order to conclude the exhibit on a positive note, Hunt said.

For years, many argued the 81-year-old building was a symbol of the shame and pain the city felt. They wanted it razed.

## DEVELOPER

Dallas County finally purchased it from a developer in 1977, renamed it the Dallas County Administrative Building and converted most of it into courts and offices.

But the sixth storey has remained shuttered and bare except for a wire fence surrounding the south-east corner where vandals had chipped away at the bricks around the window from which Oswald fired.

While Southfork Ranch, from the television show "Dallas" is now the most popular tourist attraction in Dallas, according to the Chamber of Commerce, The Sixth Floor is expected to surpass it by drawing more than 500,000 visitors annually.



John F. Kennedy and Jacqueline in the Dallas motorcade

VARIOUS GOSSIP MAGS FOLLOWING OF JACKIE KENNEDYS LIFE



## CONCLUSION

In each chapter I have dealt with a personality that effected the decade in which they lived. Their origins have been inexorably linked with their character, I have established a link between their lives and the industry which fed from their life styles. Suzy Menkes, a fashion journalist with the Independent, stated on a recent television programme dealing with a party to honour Diana Vreeland's association with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. "Society's need for money is best exemplified by the clothes that the haute monde wears" (47). Conspicuous consumption <sup>is</sup> are the cliched characteristics of fashionable society. The wives of wealthy men are no longer praised for being glorious in garb, indeed they constantly declare in interviews that they choose their clothes for ease, comfort, convenience and practicality, however practical clothes always turn out to have been bought from the most expensive shops. The role of the designer slips in and fulfills madams needs for an expensive wardrobe. The process of buying to display ones wealth works two ways. Firstly the woman desired the object and is willing to pay anything to get it and ensure no one else gets it, take for instance Jackie Kennedy who on mentioning the amount that her wardrobe would cost to Oleg Cassini said, 'Just make sure no one has exactly the same dress I do - the same colour or material - I want all mine original [and am prepared to apy] and no fat little women hopping around in the same dress' (Cassini, 1987, p.310).



Her determination to be a woman of style would not be stopped by anyone. Oleg Cassini reinforced Jackie's position not by displaying accesses of wealth in her costumes by the traditional methods of including obviously expensive fabrics and trims, but by a subtle play on clothes that were simple in cut, subtle in colour combination with only a touch of mink or a hint of pearls.

In a world of good society, dress plays an important part in the expression of culture. the America of the early 60's best expressed its youth and character in the guise of Jackie Kennedy. Her image was widely photographed, thus generating an unprecedented interest in the White House. Style direction from the White House had been unheard of before the Kennedy Administration. The death of John Kennedy saw American society moving on to a new plane. An acceptance of the norms that ruled society turned to rejection of those values.

I could not go further without quoting from diana Vreeland's autobiography D.V. Her description of a painting by the artist John Sargent of a woman, ~~its title~~ "The Mosquito Net". The description follows thus:

"It's a painting of a woman in a yellow-white dress, almost faint banana, lying under a black net. the painting of the dress is marvelous - the way the fabric is draped and the way the light falls on it. then... the expression on the women's face is the most delectable thing. She's half smiling and half asleep and you don't know whether she's



really worried about mosquitos or whether the whole thing is fantasy. thats not the point. The point is the aura the woman gives and the shadows and the lusciousness and the lightness of the whole allure of it which is too beautifull" (Diana Vreeland, 1985)

Its owner Whitney Warren, a connoisseur of art and friend of Diana Vreeland was to have given the painting to Jackie Kennedy "who has given this country such an inspiration of style, of beauty, of everything our civilization stands <sup>ref.</sup> for". Both the deed and Diana Vreelands description of the painting makes such a total statement on Jackies quintessence of style. The painting was about to be received at the White House when the moment was lost forever with the death of the President.

The description of the character <sup>portrayed</sup> described by Sargent in the painting fits neatly into the two other women I've discussed. On a different level, yet it links the three women in terms of style.

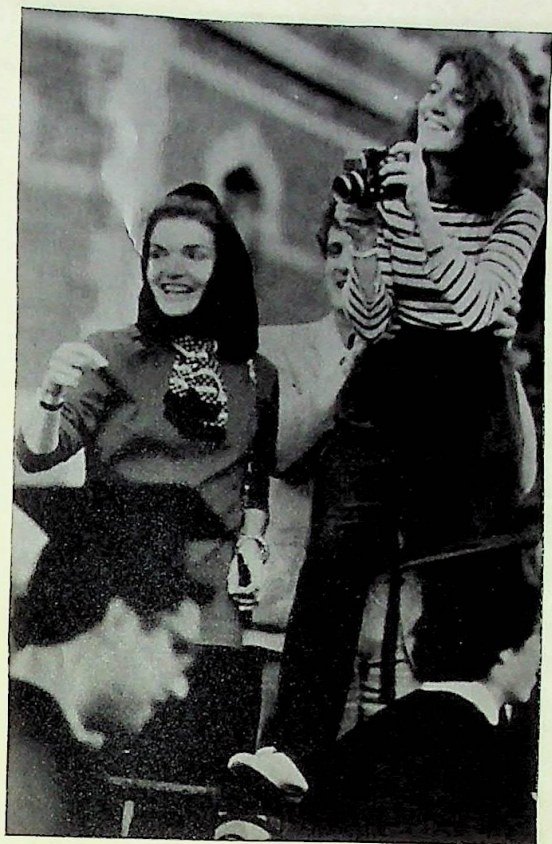
Twenty three years later Gloria Vanderbilt lives in New York, Grace Kelly is dead and Jackie Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, twice widowed, lives in New York where she edits books for a New York publishing house, Doubleday & Co. Ltd. The three women I have dealt with have been dealthwith for the affects they have had on the times they lived in. The reason I used Oleg Cassini as a character in the role of designer in relation to Grace Kelly and Jackie Onnassis does much to explain the emerging public acceptance of



design into their lives. His role as designer was important in both cases. It was the response of the manufacturers who gained most from the styliness of each decade.

*have automobile?*





Jackie Kennedy Onassis (1987)



Gloria Vanderbilt (1985)

Grace Kelly (died 1982)



# QUOTES

Page No.	Quote No.
4 (Introduction)	1.(5) p.30
5 (Chapter 1)	2.(6) p.
6.	3.(6) p.
7.	4.(6) p.
7.	5.(13) p.
8.	6.(9) p.
10	7.(5) p.
10.	8.(5a) p.
11.	9.(7a) p.
11.	10.(14)
11.	11 (14)
12	12.(14)
12.	13.( )
12.	14.(4a)
13.	15.(4a)
14.	16.(8)
14.	17.(8)
17.	15(17)
18.	15.(17)
19.	17.(6A)
20.	20.(6A)
21.	20.(3)
22.	21.(2)
23.	21.(6A)
24. Chapter Two	24.(1)
25.	24.(1)
26.	24.(1)
27.	24.(1)
28.	24.(1)
29.	25.(5A)
30.	25.(1)
31.	27.(15)
32.	27(15)
33.	28.(15)
34.	28.(15)
35.	28.(15)



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