

From *cronista* to *directora de moda*: The Birth and Evolution of the Role of Fashion Editor in the Women’s Press in Spain

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Abstract

This research falls within the framework of studies on fashion journalism and the women’s press in Spain. During the 1930s the previously unknown professional role of fashion editor began to take shape in the American media: a position whose main activity was no longer directly linked to writing and which was implicitly associated with the photographed image. In Spain, where fashion reporting had not yet been professionalised into such specific positions, women’s publications consolidated the practice of including journalists in their staff, writing being their main activity. Adopting a comparative perspective across a series of newspapers from the Francoist period and through a methodological approach that combines the use of oral and newspaper sources, this article focuses on describing the birth of the role of fashion editor in the Spanish context. Our research starts with the columnists of the illustrated press of the early 20th century, goes through the journalists affiliated to the *Círculo de Escritores de la Moda* [Circles of Fashion Writers] in the 1960s, and concludes with Sofía Torga de Caruncho’s appointment at *Telva* and the institutionalisation of the “*directora de moda*” position.

Keywords: *Círculo de Escritores de la Moda*; Journalism; Francoism; Spanish Fashion; Sofía Torga de Caruncho.

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Introduction

In the *Fashion Journalism* (2018), Sanda Miller and Peter McNeil agree on the fact that the increased circulation and dissemination of magazines in the 18th century enabled the creation of new roles and spaces for women within the publishing sector in Western Europe. Their argument, initially focused on the participation of women writers in review journals, shifts mainly to fashion journalism. “The profession of editing fashion magazines was generally occupied by women”, both authors note, “as this ‘sex’ was felt to possess the right understanding, access, and viewpoint to write about women’s fashion.”¹ The female nature of the role of *review writer*, which over the 19th century became more professionalised and was no longer *amateur* as in previous periods, would also be patent in fashion journalism which, according to Kate Nelson Best, began to be perceived as a “serious profession” towards the end of the 1940s,² when many female editors emerged from anonymity to become almost famous personalities, as the cases of Bettina Ballard and Diana Vreeland reveal.

Focusing on the discourse from a terminological perspective, in *The Berg Companion to Fashion* encyclopaedia, Valerie Steele deals separately with the definitions “Fashion Journalism” and “Fashion editor”, the main difference being in the type of medium involved: newspapers and magazines, respectively. Regarding the former, Marylou Luther summarised the chronological evolution of this sector starting with Virginia Pope,³ who started writing a fashion column for the *New York Times* in the early 1930s, precisely when the American fashion industry was shaping the *Fashion Group*: a project that emerged with the aim of professionalising the role of women through educational and informative work.⁴ In this regard, it is striking that Luther uses the terms “fashion editor” and “fashion journalism” interchangeably and as synonyms, using “fashion editor”, for example, to define the roles occupied by Eleanor Nangle and Nina Hyde at the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Washington Post*. Furthermore, with regard to the transformation over time of the role of the fashion journalist, Luther points out that nowadays, “most magazine fashion editors do not write.”⁵ The fact that since the 1950s writing was no longer a priority within the fashion editor’s functions — something that occurred more in magazines than in newspapers — is confirmed by Grace Mirabella, editor-in-chief of American *Vogue* from 1971 to 1988. In her autobiography, the then “shop hound fashion editor” quoted an excerpt from the controversial article *Editors Who Never Write Staff Fashion Magazines*, published in June 1956 by the *New York Times*: “Though she’s [Mirabella] called an editor and listed as such on the masthead, she never lifts her manicured fingers to a typewriter.”⁶

The production of articles and the exercise of writing were crucial activities in the work of female editors only during the earliest stage of the main fashion publications. Paraphrasing Mark Holgate, Nelson Best highlights the fact that the primacy of image over word in fashion magazines — a true metamorphosis from textual “to visual thinking” — was accelerated by the First World War, when news and propaganda highlighted “the power of the visual”, establishing the priority of image over text.⁷ This led to the subsequent transformation of the job of “editor” from being implicitly associated with writing to one of a professional image-maker in the American media. In *In and out of Vogue*, Mirabella recognized the confusion generated by the use of the term “fashion editor” to describe a professional not engaged in editorial work.

People on the outside of the fashion world [...] often have trouble understanding what it

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1. Sanda Miller and Peter McNeil, *Fashion Journalism: History, Theory, and Practice* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 40.
 2. Kate Nelson Best, *History of Fashion Journalism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 134.
 3. Valerie Steele, ed., *Berg Companion to Fashion* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2010), 293–296.
 4. Rebecca Arnold, *American Look: Fashion and the Image of Women in 1930’s and 1940’s New York* (London: Tauris, 2009), 93–101.
 5. Steele, *Berg Companion*, 295.
 6. Elizabeth Harrison, “Editors Who Never Write Staff Fashion Magazines,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1956, <https://www.nytimes.com/1956/06/21/archives/editors-who-never-write-staff-fashion-magazines-interested-in.html>.
 7. Nelson Best, *Fashion Journalism*, 134.

is that a fashion editor does [...] Fashion editors can see how a twisted suede belt with a gold edge tied around the waist of a tweed jacket “lifts” the tweed, “creates” the texture...or they can see how the tonality of a leg blends with the hem of a coat, how the opacity of a stocking draws out the shine of a shoe. They can see things that other people don’t even have the words to describe them. And they can find fashion logic, indeed, they can find fashion history, in just about anything.⁸

Interviewed by the journalist Elizabeth Harrison, Mirabella categorised her responsibilities in two areas: the preliminary search for products in small American shops and the coordination of photoshoots. While for this second stage it was important to construct a context for the garments (the so-called “story”) and select the models for the report, in the market exploration stage it was essential to be familiar with the retail distribution sector.⁹

Diana Vreeland was undoubtedly the one who knew how to capitalise on the progressive transition of the editorial profession from the typewriter to the photographed image. During her time at *Harper’s Bazaar* (1936–1962) and especially throughout her years at *Vogue* (1962–1971), Vreeland forged a working method and her curatorial stance towards certain aspects of the photography session, with the mental construction of an ideal image of the fashion report, where the locations, the models and the clothes were part of a predetermined project.¹⁰ Vreeland’s modern approach to the staging of the photographed image and her ability to oversee in detail all aspects of reporting are reflected in *Memos*, a volume of editorial directives and comments she regularly sent to her collaborators.¹¹ In Nelson Best’s view, her inclination towards a conceptual approach to photo-report made Vreeland “a stylist before the term was invented.”¹²

Indeed, at the beginning of the 1960s, the notion of stylist, in its contemporary sense, did not yet exist. According to Philip Clarke, the profession of stylist as the creator of the photographed image and mediating figure between the designer and the readers of fashion publications was consolidated with the arrival of the first independent British magazines in the 1980s, its closest chronological antecedent being the fashion editor in conventional and institutionalised media.¹³ From an etymological point of view, “stylist” is a term difficult to tie to a single meaning and its polysemic value covers both the role of the designer with words such as *styliste* and *stilista*,¹⁴ and the person who works in the image-making process in magazines.¹⁵ Born in the context of America, this concept was initially used in the field of automotive design¹⁶ and later moved on to the mass clothing industry and started to sporadically appear in women’s publications in the 1930s.¹⁷

The characteristics of tastemaker, i.e. “arbiters of style and taste,”¹⁸ and of “cultural intermediary”¹⁹

8. Grace Mirabella and Judith Warner, *In and out of Vogue* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 96.

9. Harrison, “Editors”.

10. Eleanor Dwight, *Diana Vreeland* (New York: Harper Design, 2011), 85.

11. See Alexander Vreeland, *Memos: The Vogue years, 1962–1971* (New York: Rizzoli, 2013).

12. Nelson Best, *Fashion Journalism*, 172.

13. Philip Clarke, “Stylist: Etymology and History of a Role,” in *Fashion Stylists: History, Meaning and Practice*, ed. Ane Lynge-Jorlén (London-New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 21–22.

14. Paolo Volontè, *Vita da stilista: Il ruolo sociale del fashion designer* (Milan: Mondadori Bruno, 2008), quoted in Clarke, “Stylist,” 24.

15. Clarke, “Stylist,” 34.

16. Clarke, “Stylist,” 25.

17. Sarah Mower and Raúl Martínez, eds., *Stylist: The interpreters of fashion* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), VII; Débora Russi and Alessandra Vaccari, “La relazione tra Stati Uniti e Italia nell’origine dello stilista: tentativo di definizione di un termine,” in *Proceedings CIMODE 2018*, eds. Ana C. Broega et al (Portugal: Universidade do Minho, 2018), 90.

18. Steele, *Berg Companion*, 285.

19. Clarke, “Stylist,” 21.

which have been associated with the idea of fashion editor since the early 20th century²⁰ survive both in the contemporary meaning of the job of stylist for the publishing sector and in the profession of fashion editor as it took shape from the 1950s onwards.

Looking at the fashion press in Spain, with magazines that followed the patterns of French publications from the 19th onwards, it should be noted that although fashion photography had its place, it was not the central component of fashion reports; the textual element was thus predominant at least during the first three decades of the 20th century. This situation continued even during the developmentalist period of the Franco regime when, despite its modernisation, fashion narrative was still linked to a textual dimension, as revealed by the emergence of the *Círculo de Escritores de la Moda* (CEM), a trade organisation founded in 1963 to give recognition to fashion journalism as a profession, which still did not have well-defined roles. In this regard, the case of Elizabeth Howell Buckley appointed Madrid editor for the US edition of *Harper's Bazaar* in 1963 is striking.²¹ This professional position was not entirely clear in the eyes of the Spanish media, who were convinced that the New York publication had sent Buckley to write a monthly section for Spain. Although her duties consisted of organisational tasks such as coordinating the photography sessions for the Madrid collections, Sofía Morales described the functions she was asked to carry out from the pages of the newspaper *La Voz de Almería*:

Betsy has a column in *Harper's Bazaar*, which she writes about Spanish subjects from here, under the title *Las cosas que pasan*. She talks about fashion, theatre, painting, exhibitions, restaurants...²²

The aim of this research is to describe the gradual shift of fashion editors from being *cronistas*, linked to writing texts, to overseeing the visual aspect of fashion reports. It adopts a methodological approach that combines interviews with professionals in the sector active since the 1960s, with the systematic analysis of informative texts on fashion published in the women's press. In terms of the latter analysis, "high-end"²³ publications have been selected: *Blanco y Negro*²⁴ for early 20th century reports, and *Boletín de la Moda*, *La Moda en España*, *Alta Costura* and *Telva*.

Fashion Stories in Illustrated Magazines at the Beginning of the 20th Century: *Blanco y negro*

Specialisation of the periodical press took place in the final years of the 19th century and was based on the weekly sections of general information magazines, but without doubt, the illustrated magazines are the editorial predecessor of the specialised magazines (fashion, sports, travel etc.) of later years.²⁵

20. In a notable 1923 tribute to Edna Woolman Chase, Condé Montrose Nast defined the main talent of a fashion editor not so much as "a literary or journalistic problem", but rather as a set of practical qualities, ranging from organisational skills to certain knowledge of the advertising industry. Caroline Seebohm, *The man who was Vogue: the life and times of Condé Nast* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), 86.

21. Daniele Gennaioli, "Elizabeth Howell Buckley, Aline Romanones y el oficio de Madrid editor para *Harper's Bazaar* y *Vogue*. Estrategias y modelos utilizados en el proceso de construcción de una identidad internacional para la moda española (1952-1975)," (PhD diss., Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2021), 176-224.

22. Sofía Morales, "Crónica de Madrid," *La Voz de Almería*, December 29, 1963, 11.

23. Following the model proposed by Anne-Marie Dardigna for the French case — this challenged structure is also mentioned by María Paz Hinojosa (2007) and María Filomena Sánchez (2009) — the women's press is classified into the following segments: "intermediate category", "sewing pattern magazines", "gossip press" and "publications aimed at middle or upper class women". Anne-Marie Dardigna, *La presse "féminine". Fonction idéologique* (Paris: François Maspero, 1979), quoted in María Paz Hinojosa, *La persuasión en la prensa femenina: análisis de las modalidades de la enunciación* (Madrid: Vision Libros, 2007), 83.

24. Taking into account the formal quality of *Blanco y Negro* as an editorial product — modern design, the use of coated paper and the incorporation of colour photography — Roberta Bueso and Mónica Codina include this magazine within the group of publications aimed at the higher social strata. Furthermore, although it did not strictly adhere to the women's press sector, *Blanco y Negro* soon identified women readers as potential clients and oriented its content towards them. Roberta Bueso and Mónica Codina, *La democratización de la moda en España: Telva 1963-1975* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2020), 93.

25. Juan Miguel Sánchez, *Revistas ilustradas en España. Del romanticismo a la guerra civil* (Gijón: Trea, 2008), 89.

Within the illustrated press, the weekly *Blanco y Negro*²⁶ became one of the best-selling magazines of the mid-20th century, along with *Nuevo Mundo* and *Mundo Gráfico*. In addition to its modern approach and the ability to quickly take on board technical advances, its most revolutionary innovation was the appearance of photography in 1892, a year after the publication began.²⁷ Images and illustrations played an essential role, they were its *raison d'être* and they forged its success.

Blanco y Negro addressed women's issues right from the start and always focused on having female contributors, thus it included such prestigious women as María Martínez Sierra, María Perales, Theresa Clemenceau, and Emilia Pardo Bazán.

Fashion stories were gaining importance and were consolidated thanks to María Perales, who, under the pseudonym of Countess D'Armonville, brought Paris fashion to readers in Spain, with a journalistic style typical of that time. Her early stories were similar in style to those by many other countesses, baronesses and viscountesses published in 19th Century fashion magazines. These texts were written in a straightforward style with plenty of Gallicisms to highlight their origin and status. In the beginning, the fashion pages consisted of a photograph of a model signed by the French photographer Reutlinger, and an extensive story by the author, which paradoxically was not always a description of the photograph, but rather a report on the latest Paris fashion. The photography was so powerful on its own, and it was such a novelty for readers, that it did not require any text. This segmented way of presenting fashion was the general style of these reports until well into the 20th century. At first, the model photographed was placed in an artificial and static space, as Gautier says, as if on a theatre stage, "especially using those places that fashion photographers like so much and which, in architectural terms, have a decorative function."²⁸ However, at the beginning of the century, other more modern scenarios emerged showing a pendulum movement between imitation and differentiation, essential in the consolidation of fashion. One such place was the racecourse. New fashion trends were presented each season at the races and newspapers covered them with photographs and articles full of descriptions. The racecourse thus became a laboratory in which to experiment with the most daring innovations; new ideas were introduced to a large audience ready to make all kinds of judgements. The models that the fashion houses employed, chosen from among their workers, were in charge of taking the new fashion trends to the racecourses. The specialised magazines called them *mannequins*.²⁹ María Perales described this profession in her report of 24 July 1910, titled *El maniquí*, and her story hints at modernity in the way fashion was communicated; it was not only the description of the garments that was of interest, but the whole of the broad social framework around them.³⁰

Although it is true that in these early days fashion reporters were more likely to give literary descriptions of what they saw, it is clear that their work was the first step towards modern fashion writing, a profession that was booming in the mid-20th century and that would become richer and more diversified over the years, as we shall see below.

26. In 1891, Torcuato Luca de Tena created the weekly *Blanco y Negro*, inspired by the famous German magazine *Fliegende Blätter*, and twelve years later the daily *ABC* appeared. Both were part of the *Prensa Española* publishing company. *Blanco y Negro* started under the umbrella of the illustrated magazines typical of the early 20th century, but it evolved in line with the changes to journalism in Spain until it became the Sunday supplement of the *ABC* newspaper at the end of the 20th century.

27. María Villanueva, "La moda femenina en las publicaciones periódicas: Blanco y Negro (1891-1910)" (PhD diss., Universitat de València, 2016), 186.

28. Guy Gautier, *Veinte lecciones sobre la imagen y el sentido* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992), 133.

29. Villanueva, "Blanco y Negro," 374.

30. Villanueva, "Blanco y Negro," 372.

The Origin of the Modern Fashion Magazine in Spain: The *círculo de escritores de moda* and the First Fashion Editor

Even though Spain is hardly ever included in the international fashion narrative by contemporary historiographical studies, over the two decades following the Second World War it achieved a prominent position in the international geography of *haute couture* alongside countries such as Italy, England, and France. This period, which has been overshadowed by the great media impact of the *Movida* countercultural movement and the *Moda de España* project,³¹ began in 1952 with the first fashion show aimed at American buyers and was definitively consolidated in the period from 1962 to 1969 under the leadership of Manuel Fraga Iribarne as Minister of Information and Tourism.³²

It was precisely during the Franco regime's developmentalist period that certain social changes took place in relation to the traditional role of Spanish women, which determined new practices and, consequently, new aesthetics. In 1964, to cite one example, the American edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine highlighted the metamorphosis of Spanish girls with expressions such as the following: "She has cut her long hair. She uses more makeup and feels free to smoke in public. She wears slacks, blue jeans, even a bikini."³³ This extensive report, entitled *New Roles for Spanish Women*, showed "today's *señorita*" as "a young woman in revolt". The article profiled different figures, such as the journalist Natalia Figueroa, the actress María Paz Ballesteros and the model Naty Abascal. The changes in culture and customs of the 1960s, to a certain extent amplified by the American publication mentioned above, translated into tentative advances in the field of women's rights, which from requiring the husband's authorisation to obtain a passport or driving licence, shifted to the Law on women's political, professional and labour rights of 1961 which opened up unprecedented possibilities for access to work.³⁴

In this regard, and similarly to the United States, where the fashion industry was historically a female sector,³⁵ in Spain women's magazines also offered one of the few job opportunities for females throughout the Francoist *Apertura* (Opening up) and even from the late 1930s. Referring to a 1937 article published by the reporter Márgara in *Vértice*, a newspaper close to the Falange, historian Kathleen Vernon points out that: "[...] it is also clear that fashion and fashion journalism gave women [...] access to the public sphere and to worlds beyond 'hermetic' Spain not just as models and specularised objects of the public gaze but as working professionals."³⁶ This fact is clear when we look at the staff of two of the most popular fashion publications during Franco's developmentalist period: *La Moda en España* and *Telva*, whose editors formally worked under Pilar de Abia, a figure linked to the most conservative sectors of the Spanish Falange National Movement, and Pilar Salcedo from the early 1960s onwards. In 1963–1964, resorting to a fairly common practice in Spanish women's magazines, both publications decided to present their staff to their readership through two editorials: *Galería de colaboradores* (1963) and *Telva entre bastidores* (1964); a large majority of them were women.³⁷

The professionalization of Spanish fashion journalism began to advance in the interwar period, with the

31. See Javier Gimeno, "Restructuring Plans for the Textile and Clothing Sector in Post-industrial Belgium and Spain," *Fashion Practice* 3, no. 2 (2011): 197–224, <https://doi.org/10.2752/175693811X13080607764818>.

32. See Neal M. Rosendorf, *Franco sells: Spain to America: Hollywood, Tourism and Public Relations as Postwar Spanish Soft Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Sílvia Rosés, "Spanish Couture: In the Shadow of Cristóbal Balenciaga," *Fashion Theory* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2020.1770399>.

33. J. P. Edwards, "New Roles for Spanish Women," *Cosmopolitan*, October, 1964, 60.

34. See María del Rosario Ruíz, "Nuevos horizontes para las mujeres de los años 60: la ley de 22 de julio de 1961," *Arenal* 2, Vol. 2 (1995): 247–268.

35. See Arnold, *American Look*.

36. Kathleen M. Vernon, "Women, Fashion, and the Spanish Civil War From the Fashion Parade to the Victory Parade," in *Fashioning Spain: From Mantillas to Rosalía*, ed. Francisco Fernández De Alba and Marcela T. Garcés (London-New York: Bloomsbury, 2021), 92.

37. *La Moda en España* listed a total of 11 contributors, 7 of whom were women, including: Pilar de Abia, Carmen Alvaro, Aurora Mateos, María Fernanda Th. De Carranza, Celia Gómez de Segovía, Dolores Fernández Palacio, and Mary de Abia. Of the 32 workers who made up the *Telva* team in 1964, only 7 were men.

pioneering incorporation of women in the Official Register of Journalists and through the first calls for applications organised by the publications of the time, all this peaked with the creation of the *Círculos de los Escritores de la Moda* (CEM) in the early 1960s. Reviewing her beginnings as a journalist, María Luz Morales, who held the position of president of CEM for six years, from 1969 to 1976, recalled having obtained her position as one of the directors *El Hogar y la Moda* after winning a place in one of the abovementioned calls for applications;³⁸ as she herself stated during an interview in 1975: “I wrote a column, entered the competition and won the job. At that time, there were no women journalists in Spain, only a few great writers, such as Concha Espina and Pardo Bazán. This prize was considered the first step in the promotion of women in the world of journalism.”³⁹

Created as an autonomous group in March 1963, during a meeting convened by the *Asociación de Empresas Confeccionistas*, CEM’s objective was to give fashion reviews the status of a literary genre.⁴⁰ From a practical perspective, it oriented its efforts towards collaboration with Spanish entities and designers, the organisation of cultural events and the creation of awards for professionals in the fashion industry.⁴¹

Its structure, divided into a Catalan and a Madrid section, was organised functionally around the editor of the magazine *Textil*, Antonio Abad Ojuel, who was appointed president, Santiago de Anta, secretary of the *Cooperativa de la alta costura*, and the writer Francisco Arnal, elected as vice-president and secretary of CEM, respectively. The Barcelona section also appointed Jaime Arias, in charge of external relations, and three members: María Luz Morales, Pilar Comín and Magda Solé. Madrid also had a person in charge of external relations, Carmen Debén, and the same number of members: Marichu de la Mora, María Pura Ramos and Carmen Álvarez.⁴²

Apart from gathering journalists specialising in the textile sector, the CEM’s purpose was “fashion information, guidance and review through the media,”⁴³ and it granted its members access to Spanish fashion shows. As Nieves Fontana, director of *Telva* magazine from 1997 to 2001, explains, this body “was made up of journalists specialised in fashion, who mainly dealt with the Spanish situation and wrote about trends, but were not stylists; for the most part, they did not travel to Paris or Italy.”⁴⁴

The creation of CEM is a true reflection of the way writing was still considered one of the main activities not only in newspapers, but also in fashion magazines, where the sections on foreign trends and season advances were organised according to two criteria: the graphic aspect, assigned to a photographer, and the text component, in the hands of journalists generally affiliated to CEM. Leaving aside *Boletín de la moda*, a magazine edited by the designer Asunción Bastida until 1968, when it changed its name to *Boletín de la Nueva Moda* (1968–1973), and whose interest was focused on publishing technical information,⁴⁵ the main Spanish high-end magazines followed the pattern described above still through the mid-1960s. *Alta Costura*, a publication founded in 1943 by Segismundo de Anta who, together with Pedro Rodríguez, was the driving force behind the *Cooperativa de la alta costura*, assigned the presentation of Spanish collections to María Pilar Comín, who wrote opinion columns at the Barcelona daily *La Vanguardia Española* and was a member of CEM. In turn, *La Moda en España*, a publication

38. María A. Cabré, *María Luz Morales, pionera del periodismo* (Barcelona: La Vanguardia, 2017), 50.

39. Josefina Figueras, “María Luz Morales: Cincuenta años informando sobre moda,” *Telva*, September 1, 1975, 13.

40. Figueras, “María Luz Morales,” 13.

41. Concha Albert, “Josefina Figueras Presidente del Círculo Escritores de la Moda en Madrid,” *Telva*, December 1, 1976, 34. In 1971, for example, the CEM organised the *Visión de Plata* award for the best article, report or set of articles published in the national press and dealing with the promotion of fur.

42. The organisational and functional structure of the CEM has been reconstructed using material from the digital archive of the newspaper *ABC*.

43. Albert, “Josefina Figueras,” 34.

44. Nieves Fontana, interview by Author, January 1, 2022.

45. Until its end the magazine repeated a practice that had been partially overcome: illustrating fashion show reports in France and Italy with sketches which were published in the “*álbum de dibujo*” section. In addition to this, *Boletín* often resorted to the practice of adapting photographs from external organisations such as the Commercial Service of the Cotton Textile Industry or the International Wool Secretariat, only occasionally resorting to self-devised reporting.

founded in 1939 by the then head of the Press and Propaganda Department of the Women's Section Marichu de la Mora, soon had a section called "*Modas*", which in the mid-1960s passed first to the photographer Romano Ferrari, and finally came under the direction of the journalist Pilar de Abia in March 1966.

The same approach of *La Moda en España*, where reports were created by a journalist-photographer duo, was also used in *Telva*, which, during its first three years of its activity, provided limited content in terms of fashion,⁴⁶ and repeated the pattern of separating the textual aspect of the report, generally written by the editor María Elena Leguina, and the graphic design, carried out by the photographers Miguel García Pimentel and Rogelio Leal.

Borrowing its title from Asturian literature, *Telva* had made its debut as a biweekly magazine of the Sarpe group, a publishing house close to Opus Dei, in October 1963. According to María Ganzabal, "although it represented the most traditional values of women [...] God, marriage, and children", the magazine was the first modern women's Spanish publication and marked a break with the women's press of the past.⁴⁷ Inspired by the editorial project of French *Elle*, it covered Spanish current affairs, alternating decoration, cooking, and beauty sections with a fixed fashion section. Through a heterogeneous editorial content, on the one hand, it was committed to the modernisation of Spanish women by addressing issues such as women's professional and university education⁴⁸ and, on the other, it was still in line with developmentalist Francoism with more domestic columns, such as the one called, *Ideas para el ajuar* [*Trousseau Ideas*].

Like American *Vogue*, which in March 1953 had inaugurated an annual issue dedicated to European presentations, *Telva* also established special supplements aimed at covering international collections during the months of February and September,⁴⁹ where initially only the Parisian fashion shows appeared, and later on the Italian and English shows were also included. The magazine was a pioneer in structuring a department specialising in fashion, managed until 1966 by Julia Abellanos and later headed by Sofía Torga de Caruncho. Abellanos, whose professional career is difficult to reconstruct due to the scant information available,⁵⁰ seems to have focused her work on a purely narrative dimension, writing the headings for articles and occasional informative texts about the Spanish fashion industry. The fact that her contributions to the publication were related to writing is confirmed by a caption accompanying the report of a fashion show in the spring of 1964, where Abellanos was described as "*redactora de moda*," which highlights the definition of a profession still associated with writing.⁵¹

The appointment of Sofía Torga as editorial staff of *Telva* was a turning point that marked a conceptual change in fashion reporting, until then constructed by photographers working mostly on their own. Born in Seville on 9 April 1932, Torga (1932–2016) grew up in the context of well-to-do Andalusian family, the second of three children of a local perfumer. She and her siblings Luis and Ana María spent their childhood in the intellectual circles of the city of Ronda and received a private home education⁵² Torga's first contact with the fashion industry came with her marriage to Enrique Caruncho Amat, owner of *Caruncho Ellas*,⁵³ a store located in Madrid's elegant Salamanca district which had its own sewing workshop, seamstresses and even an Austrian tailor. Later on, he was a buyer at the *Galerías Preciados* department store. Her contact with department stores and with the Spanish retail market

46. Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963–1975*, 99.

47. María Ganzabal, "Nacimiento, evolución y crisis de la prensa femenina contemporánea en España," *Ámbitos*, Vol. 15 (2006): 406, <https://doi.org/10.12795/Ambitos.2006.i15.21>.

48. Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963–1975*, 69–74.

49. Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963–1975*, 126.

50. Covadonga O'Shea, director of *Telva* from 1970 to 1997, confirmed that she did not remember Abellanos, who may have been an acquaintance of the previous director, Pilar Salcedo. Covadonga O'Shea, interview by Author, November 26, 2021.

51. Covadonga O'Shea, "Periodistas en la Alhambra," *Telva*, April 15, 1964, 19.

52. Enrique Caruncho, interview by Author, January 3, 2022.

53. This name refers to its founders: Flori Amat, paternal grandmother of Enrique and Fernando Caruncho, and Eulalia Boado, wife of Admiral Pedro Nieto Antúnez. Fernando Caruncho, interview by Author, January 5, 2022.

with frequent business trips both in Europe and the United States (Caruncho, 2022), probably laid the foundation for her future work at *Telva*, where, taking advantage of her knowledge of the tastes of her target audience, she would present those trends that might be of interest to the magazine readership. Recommended to the magazine of the Sarpe group by the playwright Buero Vallejo,⁵⁴ Torga was hired in the mid-1960s.⁵⁵ She signed her first report as “Sofía Caruncho” in May 1966 and was officially in the editorial credits of the publication in November 1968, when her name appeared in the “*Modas*” section. The captions of her first photography sessions, in addition to listing the credits for photographer, hair styling and make-up with a level of detail that was unusual for the publication’s canons, used terms such as “*dirigir*”⁵⁶ and “*dirección*”⁵⁷ to describe Torga’s work, which implied a curatorial attitude previously unseen in these reports.

In its first issue of June 1970, *Telva* paid an important tribute to Sofía Torga by publishing a brief biographical profile of the fashion editor as part of a broader report titled *Mujeres en la Moda*, in which readers were introduced to six professionals in the field of textiles, famous in their sector but relatively unknown to the general public. In addition to Torga, this group included Michele Loyer, fashion advisor at the Wool Secretariat, Charo Palacios, director of the *haute couture* house Elio Berhanyer, Dioni Pertegaz de Bañeras, director Pertegaz, Elizabeth Howell Buckley, and Aline Romanones, Madrid editor for *Harper’s Bazaar* and American *Vogue* in the periods 1963–1972 and 1964–1982,⁵⁸ respectively. As Roberta Bueso and Mónica Codina explain, the article allows us to identify three main functions that Torga carried out as “*directora de moda*” at the time: attending national and international presentations, coordinating fashion reports, and carrying out photoshoots.⁵⁹ Apart from recognising the importance of Torga’s work, the report established a formal link with the job of fashion editor that both Buckley and Romanones were carrying out at the same time. Despite their respective specificities, both shared common guidelines in their professional activity. On behalf of the magazine they forged a solid promotional relationship with the Ministry of Information and Tourism, maintained relations with *haute couture* houses, planned the stays in Madrid of New York editors during the Spanish presentations and coordinated all the photoshoots that took place in Spain managing a logistics chain that included: the selection of locations⁶⁰ for the reports, communication with Spanish designers and the administration of the necessary authorisations with the government.⁶¹

From the early 1960s the process of modernisation of Spanish publications was influenced by direct contact with the representatives of the American publications *Harper’s Bazaar*,⁶² *Vogue* and *Women’s Wear Daily* established in Spain — it should be remembered that the latter magazine, a pioneer in introducing the idea of fashion as news, signed Trinidad Aboitiz as a correspondent in Madrid in 1960⁶³ — and the exchange of photographers such as Gianni Ruggiero who, during the three-year period 1970–1972, worked with both the American edition of *Bazaar* and *Telva*.

54. Federico Baixeras, “Michael Wray y la fotografía de moda en la España de la transición (1975–1985)” (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2019), 141.

55. Although both Fernando Caruncho and Bueso and Codina ascribe her entry into the magazine as having occurred in 1963, an article from October 1964 identified Julia Abellanos as head of fashion within the publication. “*Telva* entre bastidores,” *Telva*, October 1, 1964, 8.

56. “Luna nueva,” *Telva*, May 15, 1966, 19.

57. “4 Maletas para el verano,” *Telva*, July 1, 1969, 33.

58. See Gennaioli, “Madrid editor.”

59. Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963–1975*, 82.

60. Although they provided information about Spanish current affairs or locations for reports, Buckley and Romanones’ notes were considered mere suggestions; the final decision was up to White and Vreeland. Gennaioli, “Madrid editor,” 174, 207, 361.

61. Gennaioli, “Madrid editor,” 361–362.

62. In its international expansion project, *Harper’s Bazaar* even considered a Spanish-language version of the publication, which in the end did not materialise. However, in May 1967, a single pilot issue of *Harper’s Bazaar* was published in Spanish. Gennaioli, “Madrid editor,” 225–230.

63. Gennaioli, “Madrid editor,” 308–309.

Torga's appointment as fashion director for *Telva* coincided with the defining of a professional figure so far unheard of in the Spanish editorial context, whose functions covered organisational aspects and the effective execution of photo reports. In her memoirs, Grace Mirabella summarised the work of fashion editor at *Vogue* by listing a series of activities that were periodically repeated: tracking the market, finding the best pieces of the season, taking the garments to the magazine's headquarters, passing them to the editor-in-chief's office and, finally, presenting them at a meeting called a "run-through", and suggesting the allocation of the number of pages considered necessary to showcase these designs.⁶⁴ Torga and later María Aburto, who would officially enter the fashion department in March 1973, would be in charge of all these dynamics related to the production process of the fashion section, with full control over the selection of the photographers "chosen and trained by her" to work in *Telva*,⁶⁵ the models and the garments. As Nieves Fontana recalls: "They [Torga and Aburto] selected the clothes according to their criteria and then the magazine editor, Covadonga O'Shea, reviewed them, and the journalists simply wrote the texts for publication in the magazine, with the indications they gave us of what the clothes were like, who they belonged to, who the designer was, etc."⁶⁶

A review of the issues of *Telva* from 1963 to 1974, when Torga and Aburto received the Loewe Prize for "best fashion support" and saw their profession as fashion editor institutionalised,⁶⁷ provides an insight into the hybrid nature of the profession of "*directora de moda*". In addition to the tasks listed above, during her first years as head of the fashion section of the publication, Torga occasionally carried out writing work. Although she was neither a journalist nor an editor, she covered brief business news,⁶⁸ short reviews of Paris presentations⁶⁹ and even interviews with foreign designers.⁷⁰ From 1970 onwards, however, her work's focus shifted to the visual aspect and the production process of photoshoots, as reflected in the reports called *Moda en el rastro* (1970) and *Chanel pase de colección en Madrid* (1971), with Mercedes García Picazo and Emma Clares credited as authors of the texts, together with Sofía Torga as fashion editor.

Conclusions

In May 1988, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the magazine, *Telva* published an extensive editorial titled *Así visten... las periodistas de moda*. Conceived as a gallery of well-known faces in the publishing industry, the article brought together a group of ten professionals, five of them described as "*estilistas*,"⁷¹ which reveals the institutionalisation of both this term and this new profession. The author of the report was Sofía Torga de Caruncho, a woman who critics and historians have often called "the first Spanish fashion stylist."⁷² According to Clarke who identifies *Harper's Bazaar* editor China Machado as one of the first to be recognised as a stylist by the mainstream print press,⁷³ the job of stylist was consolidated

64. Mirabella and Warner, *In and out*, 107.

65. Baixeras, "Michael Wray," 142.

66. Fontana, interview.

67. Covadonga O'Shea, "Telva recibe cuatro Premios Loewe de prensa," *Telva*, December 15, 1974, 16.

68. Sofía Torga, "La moda nace todos los días en el Corte Inglés," *Telva*, May 1, 1967, 34.

69. Sofía Torga, "Ya no hay secretos: Avances de las colecciones," *Telva*, August 15, 1967, 8–11.

70. Sofía Torga, "Charla en Roma con Mila Schön," *Telva*, September 1, 1969. This is very unusual since interviews with the protagonists of the Spanish and international fashion industry were usually conducted by journalists Mercedes García Picazo and Josefina Figueras.

71. The article featured profiles of: Mercedes Clapes (journalist and stylist for *Telva*), Renée López de Haro (fashion editor and stylist for *El País*), María Luis Linares (fashion and beauty editor for *Semana*), Lola Gavarrón (fashion columnist for *Grupo 16*), Cristina Vera (stylist for *Ama*), María Carretero (stylist for *Telva*), Elvira Rigal (fashion coordinator for *Elle*), María Trujillo (fashion editor for *Vogue España*), Ana Busto (stylist for *Dunia*) and Marina Ruíz (fashion editor for the Efe agency).

72. Nieves Fontana, "Homenaje a Sofía Torga... y toda una artista," *Telva*, May, 2016, 162; Lorenzo Caprile, "Flora Villarreal y Sofía Torga: españolas en la moda," YouTube Video, September 18, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdoFp9eWLaY>; Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963-1975*, 149.

73. Clarke, "Stylist," 25.

in the 1980s in the publishing industry, its most direct precedent being the work of fashion editors from the mid-1960s.

In this regard, Torga, a pioneer in inaugurating the position of “*directora de moda*” in the pages of *Telva*,⁷⁴ acted as an intermediary between designers, photographers, and the magazine’s readership, and created a professional figure similar to that of the fashion editor in the American context which had been unheard of up to that point in Spain, where fashion journalism had not yet been professionalised into such specialised roles. Since the beginning of the 20th century, women’s high-end periodicals had focused on writing, first through the columnists/writers of the illustrated press and later with the journalists affiliated with CEM, who analysed the collections and the season previews captured by photographers.

Applying a comparative perspective to our research with other publications active during the Francoist period, it is worth noting that the idea of providing women’s magazines with a section to review foreign trends and season advances was not the exclusive prerogative of *Telva*. *La Moda en España*, for example, was one of the first publications to appoint a “*Modas*” section head, whose name appeared on the masthead of the publication systematically from the 1960s onwards. First assigned to the photographers Romano Ferrari and Lloyd, this position was eventually taken by Pilar de Abia. Unlike Torga, who was aware of the democratisation process that was affecting society in the mid-1960s — *Telva* would be one of the first Spanish publications to cover local and foreign *prêt-à-porter* trends⁷⁵ — De Abia had a professional background as a journalist affiliated with CEM and still had an elitist approach to fashion, based on the narrative and expository dynamics of haute couture, as revealed by the practice of employing society ladies from the most select Spanish circles as the protagonists of hybrid reports, halfway between fashion photography and society chronicles.

Telva, which in its early years had haute couture as one of its central themes, initially had a female editor (Julia Abellanosa) in charge of the fashion section, in keeping with the practice of considering writing as the main aspect in women’s magazines. However, Torga’s appointment in mid-1966 brought with it a transformation of fashion reports, which shifted from being a merely descriptive version of the garments covered to adding narrative value by increasing the importance of the visual aspect in relation to written text. It is worth noting that from 1968 onwards Torga’s name was mentioned in the masthead of the ultimate women’s magazine, a section which until then had only included the credits for the editors and photographers.

As well as inaugurating a dynamic professional profile, with tasks focused on the selection of the most appropriate designs and contexts for photo sessions, Torga institutionalised her role, promoting the transition of this profession from writing into the photographed image. Although she cannot yet be described as a stylist in the strict sense of the term — this term was coined to define a specific freelance role within a new genre of publications, the “style press”, which operated outside the trends set by the fashion authorities through an “anti-fashion attitude”⁷⁶ — Torga, a cultural mediator in charge of the image of fashion and involved in the production of photographic imagery, can be rightly considered to be the first Spanish fashion editor.

74. Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963-1975*, 81–82.

75. Bueso and Codina, *Telva 1963-1975*, 175–200.

76. Clarke, “Stylist,” 28.

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