The Audrey Hepburn Image: Stardom, Gendered Authorship, and Creative Agency

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The Audrey Hepburn Image: Stardom, Gendered

Authorship, and Creative Agency

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ABSTRACT

The Audrey Hepburn Image: Stardom, Gendered Authorship, and Creative Agency

by Livi Edmonson

Female stardom was an essential component to the star system and film industry in Hollywood’s Golden Age. During the postwar era, one of the most influential female stars was Academy award winning actress, Audrey Hepburn. Hepburn’s emergence in the industry, as well as her branding as a “postwar Cinderella,” was representative of the emerging intersection between fashion and film. The association of Hepburn’s stardom with the two mediums — especially to that of haute couture — was solidified through her association with French couturier and close friend, Hubert de Givenchy. However, Hepburn’s agency becomes subverted in scholarship and popular culture by her established label of “Givenchy’s muse” which was originally instigated by the couturier himself. Though the Hepburn-Givenchy collaboration pioneered a new mode of female stardom through the relationship between stars and fashion, Hepburn’s efforts are too often dismissed when archival evidence from the special collections of distinguished directors who worked with Hepburn exposes traces of her star labor. Using primary sources such as production files, correspondence, and contracts from these male collections, this thesis aims to reframe Audrey Hepburn through a methodological approach that has yet to be considered in existing scholarship when analyzing Hepburn’s agency and image as a star. The collections act as evidence of Hepburn’s collaboration, yet her stardom becomes even more complex when it must be traced through this gendered lens as her name becomes tethered to not only the directors and the studio system, but also to Hubert de Givenchy.
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Introduction

In 1954, Paramount released what would soon become one of the most iconic films of actress Audrey Hepburn’s career -- *Sabrina* (Wilder, 1954). The film was directed by celebrated émigré auteur, Billy Wilder, and was only the second film in which Hepburn played a title role. The film also starred Humphrey Bogart, who had just won an Oscar for his performance in *The African Queen* (Huston, 1952) a year earlier, and William Holden who had worked on one of Wilder’s most critically acclaimed films, *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1950). Distinguished names aside, the film’s legacy can be most prominently attributed to Hepburn’s timeless wardrobe that her character, Sabrina, is dependent on. However, what is overlooked in examining the significance of fashion in *Sabrina* and only discoverable through archival evidence is the collaborative input from the actress herself.

For example, production correspondence memos from the Billy Wilder Papers and Paramount Production Records collections expose the elaborate acquisition process of Hepburn’s *Sabrina* wardrobe. Even more significantly, one brief memo written by producer Hugh Brown for the Paramount night wire reveals that the final selections were made by Hepburn. The memo also specifically says that “Billy Wilder and Edith Head agree with Hepburn” on her final decision.¹ This memo makes clear that negotiations between Hepburn and the studio, director, and costume designer were already taking place during the preproduction stages of *Sabrina*, following up on her Oscar-winning role in *Roman Holiday* (Wyler, 1953). Hepburn’s active decisions on *Sabrina*’s wardrobe as a young female star exhibit a significant amount of agency for a star who at this stage, was hardly a “name” in Hollywood at all. *Sabrina* helped to establish Hepburn’s reputation as a Cinderella figure and influenced how she would exist as a star moving forward.
The anecdote above flies in the face of longstanding cultural assumptions about Hepburn’s star image being constructed through couture designer Hubert de Givenchy. The collaboration is not what created the actress’s image, nor should it define her stardom. When examining the relationship between stars and fashion it becomes clear that the iconography of Hepburn’s fashionable brand exemplified the pivotal integration of two different mediums --- fashion and film --- in the postwar Hollywood era. The star’s collaboration with courtier Givenchy pioneered a new mode of female stardom as a brand formed and represented by the relationship between female stars and fashion. Hepburn’s name remains associated with the designer across all mediums, but it is the consistent branding of Hepburn as Givenchy’s “muse” that unintentionally strips away any notion of collaborative effort and authorship from the star herself. Although the label is not necessarily negative and is used in a complimentary way to address Hepburn’s success as a fashion icon, it is complicated by the evidence found in archival research showing that Hepburn’s labor and influence in constructing her onscreen looks was just as much hers as it was Givenchy’s, if not more. In this thesis, I introduce additional new insights into Hepburn’s star labor to reframe the actress in this archivally grounded approach to studying the star through primary evidence that has not yet been investigated within the field.

This thesis closely examines Hepburn’s stardom through the creative agency she had in acquiring her own onscreen wardrobe and shaping her image as one of Hollywood’s most celebrated postwar stars. While a fair amount of scholarship does exist on Hepburn and acknowledges her star image à la fashion through combined film-fashion discourse, this research examines the star’s agency off-screen through various archival production and legal sources from the films she has worked on. These areas of her stardom are overlooked by other scholars, who tend to use textual analyses of Hepburn’s characters and the archetypes they consistently
portrayed. Many fashion-focused scholars in cultural studies such as Stella Bruzzi, Gaylyn Studlar, Adrienne Munich, and Rachel Moseley recognize the impact that Hepburn left on both film and fashion histories, yet never fully explore how the actress’s impactful image was achieved beyond that of Givenchy, and/or Edith Head’s efforts, nor do they acknowledge Hepburn’s image beyond the screen.²

How this research diverges from existing Hepburn-focused discourse is within the methodology, as a variety of primary sources are being consulted to support a reframing of Hepburn through star agency and labor. While Rachel Moseley is a scholar who uses primary sources in an analysis of Hepburn’s stardom via her book, *Growing up with Audrey Hepburn: Text, Audience, Resonance*, her sources are in the form of oral histories of British women who grew up watching Hepburn as fans during the 1950s and 1960s. Though the concept Moseley uses as a basis for her research is fascinating and a notable contribution to fashion, film, and gender studies, Moseley’s interviewee sources only represent a very niche audience and discuss Hepburn’s star image exclusively through her characters on-screen, neglecting the production of her image off-screen.³ What my research aims to supply to this realm of scholarship is a reframing of Hepburn as a star off-screen in highlighting her contributions to a film’s production process.

Although an archivally grounded approach has been applied to recent scholarly explorations of other female stars of the Classical Hollywood era in the field. Lisa Stead’s impactful study of actress Vivien Leigh uses primary sources through an array of mediums such as photography, costumes, script notes, and correspondence to reframe Leigh and her stardom through the creative process of star labor.⁴ Although Stead’s work is inversely related to this study as Vivien Leigh has a personal archive whereas Hepburn does not, she uses archival
evidence to support her argument of Leigh as an “archival” star to analyze the historically significant complexity of the actress’s stardom. Stead’s insights can only be traced precisely through these primary sources, thus going beyond the scope of textual analysis.

Another recent star studies contribution that has invited newer deliberations of star images and subjectivities is Will Scheibel’s *Gene Tierney*. Scheibel analyzes a variety of evidence rooted within components related to the star’s publicity and reception that framed Tierney’s “image” as a product of the star system in the 1940s. More, Scheibel emphasizes the significance of Tierney’s “ordinariness” at the time and how her stardom remains understudied by scholars when the evidence at hand such as fan magazine discourse and studio promotion correspondence. This evidence shows that there are even greater complexities to Tierney’s star image and the construction of it. As Stead has shown through her fascinating work on Leigh and along with Scheibel’s insightful interrogation of Tierney’s star reception, there remains a place for archival, primary evidence in new interpretations of historical Hollywood stars and films.

In this vein, the primary evidence used for this project emerges in the form of studio contracts, production materials such as script notes and wardrobe notes, and various correspondence via memos, cables, and even personal letters to illustrate Hepburn’s creative agency. A few of these archived sources have been used autobiographically in different published memoirs throughout the years but have not yet been utilized in contemporary scholarship. The primary evidence has been collected from research conducted at the Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills and selected from the special collections of Hepburn’s many collaborators such as Stanley Donen, Billy Wilder, George Cukor, and William Wyler as well as from the Paramount Production Files collection and the Paramount Contract Summaries collection. Although there are remaining primary sources to look at in USC’s Warner Bros.
archive from collections revolving around significant filmography of Hepburn’s in the 1960s, the archive was inaccessible at the time of this research due to Covid-19 restrictions. Thus, it is important to note that this thesis highlights only the primary sources from the few special collections at hand due to these accessibility issues.

The special collections being utilized here are essential to this specific case study because they allow for Hepburn’s agency to be examined from a production point of view through her work behind the screen as this assortment of historical evidence entices a deeper consideration of what and who determines the authorship of Hepburn’s stardom. What is also fundamental to emphasize when using these collections is how Hepburn’s underexplored authorship is only discoverable through male directors and mainly, male correspondence. The collections act as evidence of Hepburn’s collaboration, yet her stardom becomes even more complex when it must be traced through this gendered lens as her name becomes tethered to the directors and the studio system. More, aside from a few handwritten letters from Cukor’s My Fair Lady (1964) collection, the evidence does display an absence of Hepburn’s own voice, supporting the notion of a gendered archive even further.

In addition to tracing Hepburn’s star agency and labor through male ownership of evidence, it is relevant to underline again how easily her labor and influence are dismissed when Hubert de Givenchy’s name and brand are attached. Examining female star agency can be complicated by an established association with any powerful male name, as Adrienne McLean illuminates in her monograph, Being Rita Hayworth, which is focused on the construction of Hayworth’s star image and public reception. Much like Stead and Scheibel, McLean explores Hayworth’s stardom by questioning the scholarship surrounding her star persona, finding that what did exist was quite dismissive of Hayworth and framed her as more of a passive female
actress, especially to that of cinematic genius husband, Orson Welles. McLean’s reframing of Hayworth’s star image and her reception is important to compare with that of Hepburn’s, whose agency also becomes misunderstood and even misplaced in scholarship underneath the championing of male labor and authorship as seen through the names of both Givenchy and Welles. My work will build on the preexisting studies of these scholars by continuing to interrogate gender through the archive in disassociating Hepburn’s agency from that of the male authorship that overshadows her own.

**Early evidence: the Cinderella archetype and *Sabrina* (1954)**

Because the creation of Audrey Hepburn’s stardom is often entangled with her association with Givenchy and misinterpreted through her constant association with the couturier, this study acknowledges the construction of her star image that was created before her work with Givenchy on *Sabrina*. Further, both her breakout role as Princess Ann in *Roman Holiday* and Paramount Studios’ marketing of this role purposely was fundamental in establishing her princess image. Although Hepburn does play a princess in the film, she is only in her princess form in the film’s opening and final scenes, as most of the film resides in the streets of Rome through her rebellious attempt to disguise herself as a “normal” girl by chopping off her long locks of hair and trading in her white satin gloves for a chic Italian neck scarf. Only despite the short amount of time that Hepburn is in princess form, Paramount still uses the princess label as branding for Hepburn, with one of the first trailers for the film opening with the text, “Paramount Pictures presents…a screen test for Cinderella,” displaying clips of Hepburn from her original wardrobe screen tests for the film.
In considering the Cinderella archetype as one that becomes closely linked with Hepburn in many of her films featuring narratives of transformation but especially within the branding of *Sabrina*, the title takes on an additional significance when it is the studio promoting this image through wardrobe prior to the film’s release. Early on, Hepburn’s on-screen wardrobe defines her image, as *Roman Holiday* is the starting point of her career and thus, the foundation of her stardom.

The collections of papers from both Paramount Studios and *Roman Holiday*’s director, William Wyler, contains a fair amount of primary evidence for the film from production memos to first previews to letter documentations of correspondence. The correspondence between Wyler and Don Hartman --- an executive producer at Paramount --- in the form of carbon letters offers further insights into the director’s advocating for Hepburn as a new star persona. When Hartman wrote his letter to Wyler, he had only seen early edits of the opening scenes in *Roman Holiday*, before Princess Ann’s big escape into the streets of Rome. Hartman admits his hesitancy at the beginning of the film’s pre-production.

The principal fear I had for this story has already, I believe, been beautifully met and overcome. I was always concerned about how you could make an audience, especially the average girl, believe that a Princess, surrounded by attention, luxuries, and so forth, could actually be miserable and long to get away from it all. This you have accomplished --- with the help of a girl named Audrey Hepburn, who I believe is going to be a great, exciting new star. She is absolutely wonderful!

Yet this was the only positive commentary from Hartman, as the original motive for this letter was to complain about how long the film’s production process was becoming, writing “As an executive, I naturally wish you would not shoot so damn much and would make me the hero you promised to make me by speeding up some.” Hartman then goes on to express his concern that Wyler would be stuck in Italy still shooting come Christmas.
In the carbon letter response to Hartman from Wyler, the director furiously exposes the frequency of difficulties that the production had been facing already shooting on location in Rome such as the lack of air conditioning, an interference with the Italian government, and even the inconvenience of fans gathering at nearly every corner of Rome in hopes of seeing Gregory Peck --- which Wyler claimed to be the greatest difficulty of all. Wyler’s grievances aside, his optimistic commentary also revolves around Hepburn, with Wyler mentioning how delighted he is with the actress five different times in one relatively short letter. One of the statements regarding the star is what he calls an “essential fact”: “I’m positive that Audrey Hepburn will be a big and important star of great value to Paramount.”¹³ Still, Wyler blames both Hartman and Paramount for the lack of publicity surrounding Hepburn, as many industry insiders think she was discovered after her Broadway debut in *Gigi* which Wyler claims is not true, as he and MCA associate, Herman Citron, “discovered” her long before.

More, Wyler reminds Hartman that he himself was the one who insisted on a screen test from Paramount just for her. Considering that Paramount does use her screen test in one of the film’s trailers in their “Cinderella” marketing of Hepburn as a new star, this letter could have very well been a catalyst in the studio deciding on this marketing strategy. Regardless, Wyler’s diligent championing of Hepburn both at the start of her career and throughout her career as she goes on to star in two of his later films, *The Children’s Hour* (1961) and *How to Steal a Million* (1966), illustrates the importance of considering Wyler’s archival contributions in discussion with both the construction of Hepburn’s stardom and the legacy of it. Wyler’s papers prove to be a valuable source to trace Hepburn’s stardom through a historical methodology.
Because *Roman Holiday* was the first time an audience saw Hepburn in a film with what would soon become her Academy Award-winning performance, assessing the initial reception of Hepburn’s performance and up-and-coming stardom is imperative when reflecting upon all factors in the formation of her image. The Wyler papers contained a collection of first preview responses to an advanced screening of *Roman Holiday* curated by Paramount. The twelve-page file consists of hundreds of anonymous preview comments from advanced screenings hosted on three different dates at three different theaters --- The Crown Theatre, The Paradise Theatre, and Lowe’s 83rd Street. Many comments in the file targeted Hepburn specifically, but not one single comment about her was negative nor destructive, in divergence from a couple of comments regarding co-star Gregory Peck and “hating” him or his performance. Whether the comments were about her performance which was called “magnificent” and “terrific” countless times, or about her unique look, with many asking for more of the star and marking her persona as “different” and “refreshing,” the reception of Hepburn’s Hollywood debut was undeniably favorable. Equally, one viewer from the first set of comments stated, “Give Hepburn a good buildup & it should gross at b.o. (box office). Let’s have more of Hepburn.” This specific comment is especially poignant because it echoes Wyler’s earlier concerns about Hepburn’s requisite publicity. Further, Paramount likely indulged in the three rounds of screening commentary due to her being a new star and perhaps, wanting to see if her performance could sell her as a star to a variety of consumers. As evidenced by the many comments given, the studio’s soft launch of Hepburn proved to be a major success. Hepburn’s performance in *Roman Holiday* has always been regarded as charming and momentous but the revelation the primary sources portray is how this performance was measured before Hepburn became an established name and one that is associated with all her performances.
Although Hepburn’s Cinderella transformation dates to Paramount’s pre-release marketing of her in *Roman Holiday*, the archetype is solidified by her next film, *Sabrina*, as the narrative not only displays a Cinderella story but reinforces it through her character’s dependency on wardrobe transformation. In popular scholarship surrounding Hepburn, the Cinderella archetype is largely discussed as a key interpretation in understanding Hepburn’s stardom and mainly, her star persona. As Rachel Moseley meticulously contends, this generic identity plays a key role in the construction of Hepburn as a star ‘for women’ through her engagement with conventionally feminine discourses such as the fashion iconography where her image is so frequently inserted.\(^\_1\)\(^\_6\) It is additionally important to note that Hepburn’s elfinly feminine look is what set her apart from other female stars in this blonde bombshell era of postwar Hollywood. The embodiment of this image of femininity throughout her career is how Hepburn’s star persona became deeply engrained within her appearance and perhaps, why many scholars do not look beyond the glamorous image she presented.

Historicizing the archetype and Hepburn’s image on a larger scale, both *Sabrina* and the Hepburn-Givenchy collaboration portrayed a key relationship that additionally epitomized a union of nations between America and Europe postwar. Furthermore, William Brown describes Hepburn’s emergence as a Hollywood star within the early 1950s postwar era as being perfectly timed, seeing that this period crystallized the bond between fashion and film.\(^\_1\)\(^\_7\) Harmonizing scholarship that surrounds both Hepburn’s stardom and *Sabrina* draws upon this postwar internationalism and the significance of it within her “Cinderella story” roles. This is particularly notable in her filmography with director Billy Wilder which also happens to include *Love in the Afternoon* (1957), a film merely skimmed over by most scholars. Dina Smith claims that most of Wilder’s films portray Europe, and specifically Paris in his work with Hepburn, as a “postcard
The European romanticism unveiled by *Sabrina* through both narrative and dress is perhaps why it is the most comprehensively discussed film of Hepburn’s scholarly and is often analyzed through both fashion and film studies discourses as representative of the shift within the industry, purposely signifying the new relationship between high fashion (haute couture) and cinematic stardom.¹⁹

Yet, as an abundance of primary correspondence for *Sabrina* suggests, the significance of her wardrobe and fashionable image goes beyond that of her looks onscreen, as well as that of the postwar Cinderella story, and instead lies within Hepburn’s agency in constructing the renowned image herself. As Edith Head recalls in her memoir, she had an initial costume meeting with Hepburn in San Francisco prior to the production of *Sabrina* to discuss potential designs, to which Head brought her a sketch pad of “little Audrey” figures for Hepburn to doodle her designs on with Head claiming that she “loved to design.”²⁰ Hepburn herself also confirms her passion for costume design in a fan magazine interview during *Sabrina* production, stating, “She (Head) lets me design too and we have worked out a few little numbers.”²¹ What these two accounts illustrate is not only how passionate Hepburn has always been about fashion and costume design, but also how proactive she was from the start of her career when it came down to her onscreen wardrobe, initiating a deliberate collaboration on her end that is too often disregarded by her mantling as a designer’s muse.

Per Billy Wilder’s later suggestion that Hepburn go to Paris to buy a real couture wardrobe --- much like her character of Sabrina --- Paramount associates and producers began to plan her trip and expenses, much to Edith Head’s dismay.²² On June 5th, 1953, Paramount producer, Frank Caffey, wrote a letter to home office head producer, Russel Holman, outlining
the initial instructions for her wardrobe and wardrobe purchases. Many instructions were discussed between a drafted list of instructions and the finalized letter such as:

Above (the wardrobe items) must be bought as Hepburn’s private wardrobe and in no way should Paramount’s name be used as it might involve screen credit, duty coming into the country, possible hold up of getting it into the country. It should be worn by Hepburn before she leaves Europe and brought in as her own wardrobe. We would need to have sent ahead of time complete description of sketches of the various items, color, and fabric. Hepburn has been cautioned not to use dead black or dead white. We are not planning that she purchase any accessories such as bags, gloves, shoes, etc. If she does buy any accessories, they should be for only the two outfits indicated.

The instructions from Edith Head that remained firm in both variations was that Hepburn should stay away from the colors dead black and dead white, specifically.

Nevertheless, as evidenced by the official costumes that were used for the film, not only did Hepburn disobey this order, but her wardrobe ended up being predominantly black and white, including the renowned Givenchy haute couture gown that maintains a legacy of its own in film and fashion studies alike. Thirteen days later, Holman writes a letter to Caffey outlining additional plans from former Paramount production chief Dick Mealand’s cable response, stating that Gladys de Segonzac --- who formerly worked in Parisian couture --- would accompany Audrey in Paris to help make selections. Segonzac was a costume designer and supervisor at Paramount during the 1950s but is best known for being the person to introduce Hepburn to Givenchy. In the collections pertaining to both Sabrina and Funny Face, Segonzac’s name appears frequently through correspondence regarding Hepburn’s wardrobe and ultimately, more than that of Givenchy’s and Head’s names. Though her name may remain uncredited within the films that she worked on with Hepburn, the primary evidence from the two films proves that Segonzac played a key part in the Givenchy wardrobe acquisition and design process. Still, much like Hepburn, Segonzac’s collaborative work is only discoverable through studio correspondence in the archives.
Nonetheless, DeSegonzac may have been instructed to help Hepburn in Paris, but she was to “let Audrey approve them” before any selections or purchases were set in stone. At this point, Hepburn’s star power shifts through small acts of agency, as the studio, although cautiously at first, allows her to make decisions, let alone go all the way to Paris to do so. On June 27th, Caffey sets even more plans and expenses for the infamous trip, after speaking with Don Hartman, Wilder, and Head, and confirming that, regarding his letter from June 5th, “tentative selections” should be made by DeSegonzac:

The selections should be made at Balenciaga’s. When Hepburn goes through on July 13th, she should complete the selections or choose new clothes from the same place. Edith Head and Hepburn discussed the fact that after Hepburn had tried on the model or type of clothes that will be selected for the picture, she will on the spot, with Mrs. DeSegonzac’s help, change the color of the model and possibly the material, as well as perhaps altering collars and cuffs, all to the end that we do not wind up with clothes that would be exactly like the model as the model itself could very easily be turned over to an American manufacturer for making and distribution of reproductions in America. In other words, we do not want to select clothes from the latest Paris collections to use as is. Obviously, we cannot afford to give any screen credit and the clothes as selected and modified by Hepburn should be under the guise of her own wardrobe without reference to Paramount.

The studio’s authorization for Hepburn to select and approve her wardrobe but also the power to modify it, encourages greater consideration of her creative agency at this preproduction stage of Sabrina, as she demonstrates a significant engagement with the design process of her own look.

On July 7th, 1953, after Hepburn finally arrives in Paris, Mealand cables Jacob Karp, another Paramount head producer, to reveal that first fashion house and courtier choice, Balenciaga, cannot provide the Sabrina wardrobe in time and thus, “best alternative is top couturier Givenchy.” The Givenchy collaboration is perhaps, the most deliberated facet of this wardrobe acquisition when the acquisition is discussed at all in other scholarship, seeing that there seems to be an ambiguous debate amongst scholars over who designed what in the Sabrina wardrobe.
between Head and Givenchy.\textsuperscript{30} An analysis of the memos in the Wilder papers settles this debate as the same memo referenced above discloses quite clearly that Givenchy would arrange and complete the wardrobe by August 10\textsuperscript{th} and airmail the sketches and samples to Head directly. Debates aside, the remaining wardrobe correspondence memos provide supplementary insights into Hepburn’s participation and agency within the acquisition. Ultimately, Wilder and Head “agreed” with Hepburn on her final Givenchy selections as illuminated in the opening anecdote of the thesis.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, Dick Mealand – another Paramount official -- emphasizes in another memo of correspondence to Karp that “Hepburn says wardrobe is what she wants.”\textsuperscript{32}

For a film reputed for its timeless fashion, the various production memos highlight new evidence in understanding the wardrobe selection process and how Hepburn used this new star agency to control and construct her “look.” While the relationships between fashion and stardom and fashion and film are essentially key relationships embedded within Hepburn’s star image, the \textit{Sabrina} wardrobe acquisition process as validated through primary evidence adds additional complexity to the already multifaceted discourse of Hepburn’s stardom. The significance of the film and Hepburn’s stardom within it becomes overshadowed by the continuous examinations of couturier versus costume designer, ultimately resulting in a trivialization of Hepburn’s name, omitting any discussion of star power all together. Hepburn’s opinion outweighing Edith Head’s opinion who had been contracted with Paramount and many other big studios before \textit{Sabrina}, additionally illustrates a level of star agency that Hepburn was able to achieve with the confidence from Billy Wilder. Nonetheless this primary evidence regarding \textit{Sabrina} makes clear Hepburn’s notable contributions and confirms her evident presence within the acquisition process. These early contributions would start a foundation for Hepburn’s star brand rooted in her agency through fashion presentation.
While King Vidor’s grand yet flawed attempt at a lavish period epic through an adaptation of *War and Peace* (1956) was the next big film of Hepburn’s to be released after the success of *Sabrina*, her fourth film *Funny Face* (1957), was even more of a fashion spectacle. The film is directed by musical auteur Stanley Donen who would go on to make two more significant films with Hepburn in the 1960s – Hitchcock-like film noir, *Charade* (1963), and fashionable road-trip dramedy, *Two for the Road* (1967). Much like her multiple collaborations with William Wyler and Billy Wilder, Hepburn’s continuous work with Donen --- especially later in her career --- makes his archival collections meaningful to consider when looking at her stardom through this new lens. The irony of *Funny Face* falls within its construction of Hepburn’s character as a “muse” for fashion photographer Dick Avery (Fred Astaire) and fictional fashion magazine, *Quality*, editor Maggie Prescott (Kay Thompson). Hepburn plays Jo Stockton, a poorly dressed philosopher whose idealistic femininity is attained by another Cinderella transformation through wardrobe and specifically, a wardrobe of French couture.

The other irony of the film is within its depiction of the American fashion industry as one that is dependent upon French influence, further situating Hepburn’s stardom as an image of postwar internationalism achieved through fashion, like with *Sabrina*. In agreement, Moseley labels *Funny Face* as a film that is “highly reflexive” of Hepburn’s star brand as her character is once again establishing a greater agency once a new wardrobe is acquired. Because of these elaborate exhibitions of couture and transformations through dress, the film remains a pertinent fashion film of Hepburn’s in scholarship today, with roughly over eighteen outfits for the film.
designed by Givenchy.\textsuperscript{35} To further emphasize the elaborateness of the \textit{Funny Face} wardrobe, a set of ten random Givenchy pieces -- mostly accessories -- cost Paramount $8,891 to acquire as evidenced by an archived correspondence cable.\textsuperscript{36} Though not one of her ornate, post-transformation couture looks, the skinny black capris that Jo wears in the iconic dance scene at the Paris nightclub inspired a legacy of their own, with Hepburn starring posthumously in a campaign for GAP in 2006. The campaign features an edited reel of moments from the dance/scene itself to promote the style of skinny black pants through their own products.\textsuperscript{37} Hilary Radner in agreement with other scholarship claims that the trousers along with the matching black turtleneck resonated more in fashion culture throughout the years than the many Givenchy couture numbers, which the campaign proves to be emblematic of.\textsuperscript{38}

Nonetheless much like \textit{Sabrina}, primary evidence reveals that Hepburn’s star agency off-screen must be considered to fully appreciate her contribution to this timeless onscreen wardrobe. What is often “said” but not “cited” amongst Hepburn biographers and authors is that \textit{Funny Face} was the first film in which Hepburn implemented “a clause specifying that he (Givenchy) designs her clothes had been written into all her film contracts.”\textsuperscript{39} While the alleged \textit{Funny Face} contract with the clause was not present within the film’s production files or Stanley Donen’s papers at the time of this research, what was present in the Paramount Production Records Collection was the legal file for a later film in Hepburn’s career, \textit{Paris When It Sizzles} (Quine, 1964). The film’s memorandum of agreement states that Paramount indicates the right to hire another designer for her wardrobe if Givenchy decides not to design for this film, insinuating what could be a later version of the alleged \textit{Funny Face} clause.\textsuperscript{40} Which as the \textit{Paris When It Sizzle}’s release reveals in 1964, Givenchy did design for the film and was credited for both Hepburn’s wardrobe and more frivolously, her perfume too. It is also worth noting that this was
one of Hepburn’s only terms within the contract whereas co-star William Holden’s terms and requests were quite lengthier. Given that Hepburn’s stardom had significantly risen from where it was when she signed her first contract at Paramount for Roman Holiday with a meager salary of $583 a week, one might expect an increase within her contractual power after an Oscar win. It was additionally not uncommon for powerful female stars in the 1950s, like Marilyn Monroe or Elizabeth Taylor for example, to have authoritative control over certain aspects of a film’s production. As Amanda Konkle exemplifies with Monroe, the actress used her star power to successfully negotiate with Twentieth Century Fox on certain demands such as creative approval and salary raises in the early 1950s. Therefore, it is not the demands within the contract itself that is the most significant facet to Hepburn’s exhibition of star agency, but rather the lack of acknowledgment for her efforts as a part of the Givenchy collaboration. Hepburn’s requirement for Givenchy to design her wardrobe(s) in later films displays a dedication to her fashionable image and illustrates more control leveraged on Hepburn’s end than she has received recognition for both in pop culture and in film studies.

The infamous “contract” aside, the Paramount Production Records Collection held a variety of other primary sources for Funny Face that elaborated on the significance of Hepburn’s wardrobe to the film. Out of hundreds of pages of documented evidence from the film’s production, nearly all correspondence concerning Hepburn pertained to her wardrobe and the acquisition of it, much like the Sabrina evidence earlier. Even more suggestively, the file of script supervisor notes written by script supervisor, Dorothy Yutsi, displayed that every note revolving around a scene with Hepburn was in relation to her wardrobe and the details of it that could be used to enhance a scene. Archived script notes and annotations --- even from a script supervisor versus a star --- are always important to consider when analyzing the historical
significance of a star, film, or role, as Stead has shown, for example, in using script notes as primary evidence in her reframing of Vivien Leigh. The *Funny Face* script notes may seem insignificant in comparison to that of Leigh’s detailed personal notes for *Ship of Fools* (Kramer, 1965) for example, but in continuing to situate Hepburn’s star agency within her wardrobe, seeing how much her “look” affected the script proves to be noteworthy in understanding Hepburn’s role in the process. Hepburn’s signature look which was both gamine and hyperfeminine further situates the star into these transformation roles. It can be considered with the evidence at hand that the final product of the *Funny Face* wardrobe and its legacy were a product of a fair amount of Hepburn’s input and star labor.

Wardrobe aside, Hepburn also had final approval, along with Fred Astaire, of the *Funny Face* choreographer, which was chosen to be Gene Loring. For a star who, unlike Astaire, was not a prominent figure in Hollywood musicals, Hepburn’s approval in this regard is a smaller yet still significant example of her growing star power and agency at this point. *My Fair Lady* (1964) is a later film of Hepburn’s with an abundance of primary evidence located in USC’s Warner Bros. Archive, an archive unavailable during the time of this research. However, what was included of *My Fair Lady* in the George Cukor papers at the Herrick illuminated a few examples of Audrey’s labor within the pre-production process. Although limited, there are indications of Hepburn working closely with costume designer for the film Cecil Beaton, especially with her requests for specific items such as shoes to be purchased through her “favorite” shoemaker. Hepburn’s creative agency within the production correspondence went beyond her wardrobe inquiries for this production and emerged in the form of suggestions for script revisions and casting. Paradoxically to *Funny Face*, Hepburn also proposes choreographer Gene Loring to Cukor and asks Cukor to view the choreography in *Funny Face* for reference. Aside from the
occasional biographer or dramatized popular texts, these acts of agency are never considered in discussions of Hepburn’s stardom. The Cukor collection was rare in that out of all the primary sources used, it was the only one that featured correspondence from Hepburn personally. While Hepburn’s agency can still be seen through studio correspondence as examined with her earlier filmography, studying it through archived evidence in the form of her own writing illustrates a more direct insertion of star power.

Agency and advocacy beyond Givenchy and couture

As crystalized by the scholars who have studied her, Hepburn's star persona is deeply engrained within her onscreen persona, and how this persona becomes synonymous with her off-screen one. The 1960s presented Hepburn as characters that were not entirely different from those of her films in the 1950s, but rather riskier and more mature in terms of her characters, who were womanlier than girl-like. Apart from a few films such as The Children’s Hour and A Nun’s Story (Zinnermann, 1959), her glamorous couture reminds the audience that she is still Audrey Hepburn. Although Breakfast at Tiffany’s (Edwards, 1961) and My Fair Lady are analyzed abundantly in scholarship in terms of their Hepburn-esque themes of social mobility achieved through wardrobe and/or Cinderella transformations, the star’s 1960s filmography contains a plethora of complex roles that are undertheorized.51 For this thesis, Hepburn’s final collaboration with director Stanley Donen for Two for the Road (1967) was the first film to truly separate her from her established persona. As the role, the archived script, and historical newspapers solidify, the film – especially in discussing Hepburn’s star image and fashion iconography -- proves to be extremely important to Hepburn’s career and worthy of being explored through this reframing of her stardom.
The film follows the tumultuous couple Joanna (Hepburn) and Mark Wallace (played by Albert Finney) through different stages of their relationship from the first time they meet to the current state of their disintegrating, unfaithful marriage. The film and Hepburn’s casting are supposed to represent a modernization of both her career and style. Released a year before the end of the Production Code, the film pushes the limits of Hollywood’s restraint — especially to that of Hepburn’s work — and embodies an extra-stylized model like many other films of late 1960s Hollywood. Charade (1963), a stylish and witty comedy-thriller illustrated that Donen could accomplish more than the typical Hollywood musical from which he built his career and directing brand. The equally stylized nature of Two for the Road reaffirmed Donen’s filmmaking success beyond the musical genre, especially through his structuring of the film as a metaphorical “road map.” This new character archetype for Hepburn is supposed to be framed as relatively unlikable in a refreshingly vulnerable way for the star, seeing as it was rare for Hepburn to play a woman who is never satisfied nor completely happy. But as top critics at the time such as Bosley Crowther from The New York Times suggest, Finney’s choice to play his character Mark rather repulsively and misogynistically only makes the audience like Hepburn’s Joanna more.52 Crowther more harshly addresses his character as a “stinker” adding that the actor “is compelled to play the husband role as though he were a hater of women. He is constantly needling poor Miss Hepburn…”53

While the role itself supported the proposed “new image” of Hepburn, the recognizable rebranding is accomplished through wardrobe. The film is not only one of the final, most memorably fashionable films of her career, but also the first film where Hepburn does not use a studio costume designer nor Givenchy himself. First and foremost, Hepburn’s wardrobe is used as a mode of storytelling. Specifically, Donen refrains from using time stamps and instead uses
Hepburn’s wardrobe to convey the stage of Mark and Joanna’s relationship the audience is in. The trendier and more luxurious Joanna’s outfits become, the further along the couple is to the disintegration of their marriage. Mark’s cars help to identify the stages as well as the couple goes from hitchhiking upon their first trip together to eventually driving a Mercedes 230 by the final stage. In a way, much like Hepburn’s other filmography, Two for the Road portrays an achievement of social mobility through the consumption of luxury, even though the consumption is more plaguing to the couple than rewarding.

However, the wardrobe doesn’t only drive the narrative but is also used deliberately in the early marketing for the film. The news of Hepburn not using Givenchy and his designs for the film is ultimately what fueled any premature discussion or advertisement. Instead of using Givenchy, Hepburn acquires an “off the racks” wardrobe of twenty-nine different outfits from an abundance of designers, suggesting a rise in conspicuous consumption which in the case of both Hepburn’s fashion history and this film explicitly, is symbolic of a sign of the times and perhaps, the death of traditional costume design. Accordingly, what must be accentuated in this study of Hepburn is the absence of a costume designer and couturier for the film. This absence validates that her fashionable image can exist without the aid of expert costume supervisors and couturiers. This example also disputes existing scholarly claims about Hepburn’s image being constructed by Givenchy and couture as opposed to an authentic contribution by the actress herself.54 In considering the relationship between stars and fashion and particularly, ready-to-wear fashion at this point in the 1960s, Albert Finney’s wardrobe for the film was also considered “off the racks” trendy and provided by an up-and-coming designer, Hardy Amies.55

In an article for the New York Times released in 1966 about three months before the film’s theatrical release, Angela Taylor promotes the film solely around Hepburn’s new
“swinging” image and her separation from Givenchy on the film as this was bigger news than the film itself. 56 Correspondingly, looking at the first archived script for the film, screenwriter Frederic Raphael writes a preface to the script before the film’s release, mainly in a discussion of the film’s marital themes and how the story came to be. 57 Nonetheless, when Raphael mentions Hepburn in the preface, he recalls a “pretty” reporter who recently interviewed him in promotion of the film. Raphael states that the reporter only wanted the gossip on “the new image of Audrey Hepburn” for the article she was writing, assuming, like most journalists, that the film was supposed to “refashion Miss Hepburn” which Raphael calls, “a definitive act of gilding the lily, if there ever was one.” 58 Thomas Harris emphasizes in his study on the star images of Grace Kelly and Marilyn Monroe, if an actress has established recognition through roles as a certain archetype, “it is important that her publicity reinforce this image.” 59 Thus, the breaking of Hepburn’s deeply engrained star image nearly fourteen years after her debut, fuels this instantiable interest from the press, audiences, and fans, and arguably, motivated audiences to go see it.

When Two for the Road is mentioned in scholarship, it is usually without much weight. However, Stella Bruzzi’s exact labeling of the film as a “final Hepburn-Givenchy collaboration” is not only incorrect in that it was not their final collaboration nor did Hepburn use his services, but also illustrates an example of the fallacies about Hepburn’s film-fashion history that evolve when primary sources are not examined. 60 The available primary sources on the film show that the film must be examined through an archival lens to fully articulate its resonance. Much like the film itself, Hepburn’s disassociation with Givenchy for a film driven by fashion was symbolic of a new era for the star and elucidated her agency beyond the couturier.
After *Two for the Road*, a few other film releases, and a long break from Hollywood and fame, Hepburn returned to the public eye in 1988 to call attention to the efforts of the United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in which she had become a Goodwill Ambassador. While the relationship between Hollywood stardom and global social welfare may seem relatively common in today’s star and industry discourse, Julia Wilson attests that Hepburn’s work with UNICEF created and popularized a model for star activism. Recognizing the expansion of media and its outlets that had developed profusely since her Hollywood heyday, Hepburn used her immense star power to draw in an audience, whether that be on highly-promoted talk show specials or congressional hearings on behalf of the UN, and use her voice “for the good of the children.” Hepburn’s activism was supported through the venerability of her image and fame, as she had already established herself as an icon and a role model amongst her female audiences and counterparts, making her crusade feel more authentic than pedagogical, despite being both concurrently. Aside from Julie Wilson who offers an illuminating, in-depth analysis of Hepburn’s stardom through her final fleeting yet impactful career as a UNICEF ambassador, there is a void within scholarship in discussing this modality of Hepburn’s star agency. The work Hepburn did as an activist is crucial to consider when analyzing the legacy of the star, as it presents a multifaceted contemporary reading of her stardom.

As the increasing number of star studies in the field of feminist film historiography elucidate, primary research within the archives allows for gender to be explored and female stardom to be reshaped. In going back to Stead’s study of Vivien Leigh, Leigh was a star whose agency was minimized by the actress championing her then-husband Lawrence Olivier and thus, subjugating her career for his. Yet her archive and the evidence within it demonstrate how much agency Leigh *did* have in her career, reframing her star legacy years later. Likewise, Sara
Bakerman’s recent work with the archive of actress Lauren Bacall is also an example of how stardom can be analyzed differently from existing scholarship through an archival scope. Bakerman cross-examines the skeptical reception of Bacall’s return to public stardom in Broadway show, Applause, from Bacall’s own experience within the production process. Bacall’s successful feat with the show and her star agency defied the agist criticism she was facing at the time of her Broadway debut. Bakerman’s work emphasizes the importance of utilizing primary sources to comprehensively explore star reception, specifically, the reception of female stardom.

Unlike Bacall and Leigh however, Hepburn does not have a personal archive that allows for evidence from her point of view. This reflexive practice in historiography of tracing Hepburn’s agency through male director collections inevitably replaces Hepburn’s voice with the patriarchal voices of those who were positioned above her. The gendered archive reflects Hollywood’s nature or status quo at the time of Hepburn’s career, but this investigation of her labor illuminates the complex layers of her stardom that do exist.

Similarly, to the gendered cases of Stead’s and McLean’s work, Mirasol Enriquez interrogates authorship and female labor through Chicana filmmaker Josey Faz. Much like that of Leigh with Olivier and Hayworth with Welles, one of the ways in which Faz’s name and labor were marginalized was by her romantic relationship with Efrain Gutierrez. Gutierrez was the director of the three independent feature films Faz also worked on, with one of the films, Please, Don’t Bury Me Alive! (Gutierrez, 1976), notably being the first Chicano feature film. Enriquez’s work provides another telling example of the destabilization of female agency when a female is associated with a male of an auteurist lens, much like Hepburn’s relationship with Givenchy and perhaps even with her fourteen-year marriage to actor-producer, Mel Ferrer even though
Hepburn was the bigger star. What is additionally clarified within Enriquez’s study on Faz that can be applied to Hepburn is the obscurity of authorship as a collaborative effort. Enriquez highlights Faz’s contributions to her films’ production process even though she remains uncredited for her creative work since most of the contributions are considered inferior to director-writers’ roles. Likewise, the evidence offered throughout this thesis also calls into question the notion of authorship when it comes to Hepburn’s image and the legacy she left. Hepburn’s authorship within the acquisition of her wardrobe specifically becomes undermined since she does not possess the superior title of “designer” that Givenchy has. Title aside, this labor investigates how valued an actress was against a male auteur of any industry at the time. While proof of her authorship may warrant more evidence than is accessible at this time, the star’s collaborative efforts demonstrated by the sources provided still interrogate the notion of a singular auteur, like many other authorship case studies.

These acts of agency revealed through primary evidence allow for reconsideration of Hepburn’s legacy which is too often taken at face value. For a star whose stardom is embedded within a fashionable image, Hepburn’s creative power has been largely marginalized and overlooked in both critical and scholarly discussions of her wardrobe, films, and characters. This aspect of her stardom merits further scholarly attention as there is a dissonance between the star image onscreen and the star labor achieving this off-screen. More significantly, one cannot reflect on Hepburn’s fashionable legacy without discussing the significance of her image and her agency beyond the screen.
1 Givenchy dress memo from Hugh Brown for *Sabrina*, Dated 08-14-1953, Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.


9 See Paramount Studios Official trailer for *Roman Holiday* (1953) directed by William Wyler.


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 *Roman Holiday* previews file of invitations and breakdowns of preview comments, dated March 30th – April 9th, 1953, William Wyler Papers Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

15 Ibid.


27


23 Sabrina wardrobe purchase notes – instructions regarding wardrobe purchase – letter from Frank Caffey to Russel Holman, Dated June 5th, 1953, Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

24 Sabrina wardrobe purchase notes – instructions regarding wardrobe purchase – potential list of instructions for Dick Mealand from Frank Caffey, Dated June 5th, 1953, Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

25 Ibid.


27 Ibid

28 Sabrina production file 68F --- telegram correspondence regarding Audrey Hepburn’s wardrobe, Balenciaga, and Givenchy, Dated June 27th, 1953, Billy Wilder Papers Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

29 Sabrina production file 68F of telegram correspondence regarding Audrey Hepburn’s wardrobe, Balenciaga, and Givenchy – Holman, Mealand to Karp (1), Dated July 7th, 1953, Billy Wilder Papers Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.


31 Givenchy dress memo for Sabrina, Dated 08-14-1953, Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

32 Sabrina production file 68F of telegram correspondence regarding Audrey Hepburn’s wardrobe, Balenciaga, and Givenchy – Holman, Mealand to Karp (2), Dated July 7th, 1953, Billy Wilder Papers Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

34 Rachel Moseley, “Dress, Class, and Audrey Hepburn: The Significance of the Cinderella Story” in *Fashioning Film Stars*, 112.

35 *Wardrobe pricing lists are split up into separate memos in folders with documentation of some key wardrobe pieces missing. The exact amount of clothes made and acquired remains unclear except for this estimate gathered from the sources that were present.

36 “Funny Face” Production File 1649 – Correspondence Cable from Frank Caffey regarding Givenchy wardrobe for “Funny Face” on February 29, 1956, Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.


41 For full details on Holden’s terms, see *Paris When It Sizzles* legal file – William Holden Terms Applicable to “Together in Paris,” dated April 9, 1962, page 1-4, Paramount Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA. Many of Holden’s terms were concerned with the maximum number of weeks he could offer his services, as well as specific days or times that he personally would not offer his services for production. One of his lengthiest terms (9) was an agreement that Paramount would announce Holden’s name as a star in “first position on the film and in all paid advertising” as well as “above the title of the picture.” The same term requested that “the photograph or likeness of no member of the cast may appear more prominently or in larger size than that of Holden in any such ad.”

42 See Audrey Hepburn – Actress, Contractual Agreement for “Roman Holiday” dated March 20th, 1952 - File #1129 in Paramount Contract Summaries Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.


44 *Funny Face* Production File #1653 – Script Supervisor Notes by script supervisor Dorothy Yutsi, dated 1956. Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.


46 Copy of cable to Roger Edens from Karp, *Funny Face* Production File #1649, dated February 7, 1956. Paramount Pictures Production Records Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

47 The Warner Bros. Archive located at USC was inaccessible due to Covid-19 restrictions when this thesis research took place.

48 Folder #197 - *My Fair Lady* Correspondence dated 1962 - 1964, George Cukor Papers Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.
49 Letter to Cukor from Hepburn dated April 6th, 1963, Folder #197 - My Fair Lady Correspondence, George Cukor Papers Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Beverly Hills, CA.

50 Ibid.


53 Ibid.

54 Stella Bruzzi, “Grace Kelly” in Fashion Cultures: Theories, Explorations, and Analysis, ed. Stella Bruzzi and Pamela Church Gibson, 207.


56 Ibid.


58 Ibid, 19.


60 Stella Bruzzi, Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies, 7.

61 See Hepburn’s later filmography: Wait Until Dark (Young, 1967), Robin and Marian (Lester, 1976), Bloodline (Young, 1979), They All Laughed (Bogdanovich, 1981), Always (Spielberg, 1989).


63 Ibid, 62.

64 Ibid, 56 - 68.