



Activity – The Birth of a Myth

It soon became clear that Vespa was also offering the chance to be more independent not only at work, but also in spare time, enabling people to enjoy their freedom and transforming the life of many.

In many ways Vespa's birth and success over time mirrored the economic rebirth of Italy after WWII. Like Italian fashion, Vespa accompanied with its various models, the development of Italian society, with a success that has been transformed into a "myth" also through its numerous appearances in film and television.

Translate and comment the following quote:

*"Moto è una bella parola. C'è dentro musica scoppiettante e aria di libertà. L'emozione di cavalcare entrambe. Moto è una bella parola, **ma Vespa è mito. Mito di fedeltà e tradimento.** E se il mito è uno, mille sono i modi di prenderlo a prestito. Una Vespa infatti non si possiede mai. Come una relazione amorosa è bene prenderla per quello che è. C'è un momento, quando si sale sulla Vespa, in cui si stacca il piede da terra. La strada si mette a correre e i piedi si posano come su un tappeto di novità. Si sta in una posizione composta, di spettatori fidenti..."¹*

The Vespa scooter established itself as one of the most sought-after design objects, which fully represented not only the new generations, but also the new Italy and the new economy in first decades after WWII. Visually this is perfectly captured by the iconic images of Vespa in innovative advertising campaigns such as the following one:



¹ Lucia Vianello from Masiero (2005:2)



By the 1960s, the iconic nature of Vespa was completely established.

Look for 1960s advertising campaigns and spots on the Internet (and YouTube). You can find many that perfectly capture the nature, the spirit, and the perception of Vespa as an object representing freedom and youth.

Then answer the following questions, in Italian if you can:

1. What do you find most striking about the two advertising campaigns? And what do you think they have in common?
2. In the advertising poster above, what do you think that the main aim of the message "*Con Vespa si può*" was?
3. What role does the music play in a 1960s Vespa spot?
4. Do you know if the advertising campaigns for Vespa changed radically or essentially continued to be built around the same message?