ADORNING THE STORY: COSTUME AS A STORYTELLING TOOL IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S *STAGE FRIGHT* AND *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*

by

BRIDGET ALANA SHIELDS

(Under the Direction of José Blanco F.)

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research study was to examine Alfred Hitchcock's use of costuming as a storytelling tool in his films. Two of his films of the 1950's were selected, *Stage Fright* (1950) and *Strangers on a Train* (1951). Instances of costuming related to the story in each film were recorded chronologically, decoded, and various types of usage were assessed. The study found the same types of usages in both films, primarily the use of costume to aide in plot advancement, to describe, conceal, or reveal information about a character, and to create contrast. All of these usages contribute to the world created in the films. The primary difference between the two films lies in the use of costuming primarily to conceal characters' motives and identities in *Stage Fright,* while in *Strangers,* costume is used to reveal the motives and identities of the characters. The study found that costuming was an essential aspect of the storytelling in the two films.

INDEX WORDS: Alfred Hitchcock, film costume, 1950's film, dress in the 1950's.

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BRIDGET ALANA SHIELDS

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BRIDGET ALANA SHIELDS

Major Professor: José Blanco F.

Committee: Patricia Hunt-Hurst
Ivan Ingermann

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> *A film has got to be ocularly interesting and above all it is the picture which is the thing. I try to tell my story so much in pictures that if by any chance the sound apparatus broke down in the cinema, the audience would not fret and get restless because the pictorial action would still hold them!* – Alfred Hitchcock, July 1936 in *Stage*[1]

Alfred Hitchcock was a director who believed visual style to be paramount in filmmaking. More so than plot or exposition, he desired to reach his audience through their eyes, to evoke emotion and tell a story predominantly through images. This is part of what has distinguished Hitchcock from other fine filmmakers. He is an icon of cinema who created a body of work ripe with stunning visuals, lurking suspense, and sly wit. Within Hitchcock's masterful visual storytelling, there is substantial usage of costume as a key element of the mise en scéne.

Hitchcock was known for being exceptionally particular and in control of all aspects of his films: a true auteur. This term is used not to belittle the role of the other people who had a hand in the making of the film, but to emphasize the overwhelming influence of the director on his films, 'auteur' meaning 'author' in French. Hitchcock was very involved in the costuming of his films. When legendary costume designer Edith Head questioned him about costuming in a scene, he said "There it is, my dear

[1] as published in Gottlieb, 1995, p.297.

Edith- in the script."[2] Head once said, "He's a super-perfectionist… He always gets what he wants."[3]

Statement of Purpose

In this study, I looked at the significance of costume in two of Hitchcock's films. I assessed key costuming choices in two of his films of the 1950's: *Stage Fright* (1950) and *Strangers on a Train* (1951). I focused on any costume items that were used as a storytelling tool. I also took into consideration dialogue relating to dress, as well as the act of dressing, as relevant to the study.

The purpose of the study was to look at significant costume and dress-related instances within the films in order to investigate and illustrate the idea which this research is based upon: that Hitchcock's use of costume has a significant impact on storytelling in his films. I assessed why certain costume items were likely used in a scene; for their role in plot advancement, to describe, conceal, or reveal information about a character, to create contrast between characters, or their influence on the tone of the scene or the film as a whole. All of these usages contribute to the world created in the film.

Objectives

The objectives for this study were as follows:

1. To explore and record instances of costuming used as a storytelling tool in *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train,* identifying instances in which costumes are used to

[2] Donald Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), 171.
[3] Ibid.

shape the audience's perception of a character, to create contrast in order to clarify or enhance the story, or as a tool for the advancement of plot.

2. To analyze each film in order to examine and demonstrate the impact of costume on the storytelling in each film.
3. To compare and contrast the findings of the individual film analyses against one another.

Justification

Certain aspects of Hitchcock's costuming have previously been explored by researchers. Some have focused on his leading ladies' clothing. Films such as *Rear Window* (1954) and *Vertigo* (1958) in particular have been primarily assessed in terms of the costume of the female leads.[4] Hitchcock's use of color has also been analyzed by researchers discussing his films.[5] Color of clothing is certainly a significant element to the overall visual effect of his films, particularly those filmed in color. He often used color to signify the mood of the scene and to convey emotion to the audience.

There is much less written on his costuming in terms of storytelling significance. Certain objects that were recurring motifs, such as handbags and eyeglasses, have been researched by some.[6] There are certainly mentions within film analyses of specific costume pieces and their significance, which have been acknowledged in my own analysis. Up to this point, I have not come across any works that take a comprehensive look at all the various pieces used throughout a film. My hope is that my study will

[4] John Fawell, "Fashion Dreams: Hitchcock, Women, and Lisa Fremont", in *Literature Film Quarterly,* 28, no. 4 (Boston University, 2000)
[5] see Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock.*
[6] Michael Walker, *Hitchcock's Motifs*; Sarah Street, "Hitchcockian Haberdashery"

produce an interesting, informative, and illuminating look at the visual storytelling capabilities of costume in film.

Limitations

1. This study focused on two of Hitchcock thrillers made in the 1950's: *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train.*
2. The genre of films selected was limited to two of his thrillers. Not only was that his forte as the "master of suspense", but it also increased continuity of content/focus among the film analyses.
3. Costumes were assessed specifically in terms of storytelling significance. This included any item of dress that was used as a significant prop (has a identifiable usage or function within a scene), to inform or manipulate the audience's perception of a character, to create contrast in order to clarify or enhance the story, or as a tool for the advancement of plot.
4. The assumption was made that Hitchcock had total control of costume decisions, as we do not know much about the interaction between the director and his costume designers and actors.

Definition of Terms

auteur- A person, usually a director, who is credited with being responsible for the thematic and stylistic characteristics of a range of films.[7]

character- the persona whom an actor portrays on screen or on stage.

clothes- term for all items of apparel worn on the body.

[7] Nathan Abrams, Ian Bell, and Jan Udris, *Studying Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 296.

composition- the arrangements of elements within a shot.[8]

costume (in film)- helps to create an actor's character. Can place the actor within a particular historical period, indicate social class or lifestyle, and can help define the genre of a film[9] This may refer to clothing or accessories of a character.

dress- any object worn on the body.

editing- selecting the required takes from the filmed shots, arranging them in the required order and joining them together.[10]

mood- the intended feel of a film or scene, can be described as the emotions meant to be taken from the work.

mise en scéne- the visual organization or composition of what is in front of the camera. Includes location, props, costumes, make up, acting, lighting, color, and positioning of figures.[11]

plot- everything that is directly presented to us in a film.[12]

prop- inanimate objects placed within the setting. They may remain static or may be used by characters in the film.[13]

setting- the space in which all elements of the mise en scéne are positioned.[14]

story- a chronological account of all events in a narrative, including the plot plus events that are inferred, hinted at, or assumed.[15]

tone- similar to mood, the general feel of a film.

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[8] Ibid., 298.
[9] Ibid., 94.
[10] Ibid., 300.
[11] Pamela Church Gibson, "Film Costume", in *Film Studies* (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 35.
[12] Abrams, Bell and Udris, *Studying,* 303.
[13] Ibid., 94.
[14] Ibid., 93.
[15] Ibid., 306.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following subjects were selected for research prior to the execution of the study: society, dress and fashion in the fifties, film in the fifties, costume in film, and background and filmmaking style of Alfred Hitchcock. These subjects provide context and background knowledge, and were key in properly assessing the costuming observed in the films to be studied.

Society, Dress and Fashion in the 1950's

In 1947, after the end of World War II, America was almost immediately faced with the Cold War, a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union over their possession of nuclear weapons. In reaction, President Truman ordered the development of the hydrogen bomb.[16] There was a feeling of dread and paranoia amongst the nation over the impending threat of nuclear war and the invasion of communism into a democratic society.[17] Early in 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy exacerbated this fear when he accused a group of State Department members of belonging to the Communist Party.[18] It was not until 1954 that his influence on American life ceased, when he appeared in a series of television debates with the United States Army and through his actions and

[16] Carol Berkin, et al. *Making America: A History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995) , 849.
[17] Phyllis Tortora and Keith Eubank. *Survey of Historic Costume* (New York: Fairchild, 2005) ,429.
[18] Blanco F., et al. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing Through American History: 1900 to Present* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008), 20.

demeanor showed America that he was untrustworthy.[19] The damage had been done, however, and the lives of those accused would be forever affected.

There was an increase in prosperity in America during the fifties; soldiers had taken advantage of the GI Bill to get a college education that prepared them for emerging fields such as advertising and electronics engineering, while others became executives at growing corporations.[20] Symbols of wealth and status began to emerge. The gray flannel suit became representative of the decade as it was the most favored suit among men and signified wealth.[21] This also showed the predominance of conformity at that time.

The ensuing exodus from cities and farms found families settling in suburbs, creating the American middle class.[22] Lifestyles changed considerably, and a strong family- oriented daily routine emerged, taking familial responsibility very seriously.[23] Individualism was rare; most people prescribed to the norm of the nuclear family, two parents and children. Women were back in the home after having entered the workforce during WWII. Families also began to travel more frequently thanks to their newfound wealth and an increase in free time. With better cars and safer roads available, families set out to explore the country. The development of air travel encouraged international travel as well. This new lifestyle led to a more casual style of clothing.[24] Styles in the fifties were also impacted by travel due to tourists returning home with items from other countries.[25] It is notable that it was around this time that high fashion began to be more international; Paris was no longer the only center for couture. America, Britain, and Italy were also producing high fashion.

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[19] Berkin, *Making America*, 861.
[20] Tortora and Eubank, *Survey*, 429.
[21] Tortora and Eubank, *Survey*, ___.
[22] Douglas Brode, *The Films of the Fifties: Sunset Boulevard to On the Beach* (Secaucus: Citadel Press, 1976), 12.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid, 430
[25] Ibid, 432.

In 1947, Parisian designer Christian Dior premiered the New Look. This look was quickly adopted by many women as it symbolized hope for a better future and was the antithesis of wartime style, which made it very desirable.[26] It also signified a nostalgia for the past that indicated the fearful social climate.[27] The New Look was in actuality not new at all, but an exaggeration of styles from the 1850's and late 1930's.[28] The major style elements of the New Look were: long, very full skirts that previously fell just below the knee; round, soft shoulders replacing the square, padded shoulder; and a nipped, corseted waist, highlighting the curve of the hip.

There were some women, particularly in the United States, who believed the New Look to be regressive and restrictive, and therefore hurtful to the newfound position of women in society since joining the workforce during the war.[29] The resistance was futile, as the New Look dominated women's fashion through 1954. Women of the fifties desired to appear sophisticated and elegant and the New Look represented just that. Daywear consisted of tailored suits, twinsets and shirtwaist dresses. Eveningwear remained very formal and consisted of opulent cocktail dresses and evening gowns, usually very low cut, with necklines ranging from halter, to v, to strait across the bust. Meticulous grooming was considered a requirement for women during this time.

Although the New Look was still represented in magazines until the early 1960's, a new silhouette did appear in 1955 when Cristobal Balenciaga introduced the tunic silhouette. Later, for his spring 1958 collection, Yves Saint Laurent created the trapeze silhouette after taking over the House of Dior following Christian Dior's death. This began a very slow shift toward the more unfitted look which predominated the sixties.

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[26] James Laver, *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) , 256.
[27] Brode, *Films of the Fifties,* 7.
[28] Laver, *Costume and Fashion,* 256.
[29] Ibid.

The 1950's were marked by conformity, even in men's clothing. The decade was nicknamed the "era of the grey flannel suit", as it was by far the most popular suit worn by American men of the middle class.[30] The grey flannel suit consisted of a jacket with narrow lapels, natural shoulders, and tapered trousers with no pleats, worn with a blue or white button-down shirt, a striped tie, and brown or black wingtip shoes. Menswear in the early 1950's was also dominated by the Ivy League look. This type of suit was characterized by natural shoulders and a straight, sack-like cut, and narrow lapels. By the late 1950's, the Continental look emerged; the jackets were shorter than the Ivy League, featured a cut away front, and a more slim cut.

The 1950's mark the first time that youth had spending power. They had the resources of their parents, who had become more affluent since the war.[31] The teen market grew a great deal and in turn influenced the clothing industry for the first time in history.[32] There began a more relaxed dress code for young people. Popular among the youth was a "clean-cut" look. Boys wore crew cuts, sweaters and sport jackets, and girls wore high ponytails, cardigans, pedal pushers, circle skirts, and sneakers.

Youth of the fifties were characterized as alienated and rebellious, likely due to the morally complex, paranoid state of society. Some young people's dress came to reflect this rebellion in the emergence of the "greaser" look: leather motorcycle jacket, T-shirt with rolled sleeve to accommodate a cigarette pack, and slick hair. The birth of rock 'n roll occurred during this time. Rock 'n' roll was spawned from the rebellious attitudes taken on by the youth of the fifties.[33] Stars like Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly set trends

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[30] Tortora and Eubank, *Survey,* 447.
[31] Brode, *Films of the Fifties,* 11.
[32] Tortora and Eubank, *Survey,* 431.
[33] Brode, *Films of the Fifties,* 11.

with their slick pompadour hair style and thick-framed glasses, respectively. Not all youth took on this rebellious attitude, however.

In the mid fifties the Beat generation emerged as a group disillusioned with cultural repression in society.[34] They rejected the mainstream and placed importance on personal satisfaction.[35] The beatniks had their own distinct fashion that made only a very small impact on mainstream fashion, although it was considered a fascinating fad.[36] Beatnik men wore beards and ponytails, as well as black clothing, often a turtleneck, and beret. The women wore black leotards, tights, and ballet slippers.

Film in the 1950's

The film industry in America took several hits in the 1950's, with television being among the primary reasons. Due to city-dwellers moving to the suburbs, movie attendance in the 50's decreased by fifty percent from the all-time high set in 1946.[37] Families were farther away from theaters and were also spending more time travelling and shopping. They were also spending more time at home, due in part to the emergence of television in the homes of American families.[38] During this time film production began to move away from studios and more toward location filming, as they no longer had the budget to build elaborate sets.[39] Hollywood films in the fifties were often filmed abroad to eliminate the cost of building a set, but also to increase authenticity of the setting.[40]

Hollywood studios were still operating under the Motion Picture Production Code throughout the 1950's. The Production Code, also known as Hays Code, had been in

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[34] Murray Pomerance, *American Cinema of the 1950's: Themes and Variations* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 3.
[35] Brode, *Films of the Fifties,* 13.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Pomerance, *American Cinema,* 1.
[38] Ibid, 6.
[39] *American Life: A Social History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 149.
[40] Gordon Gow, *Hollywood in the Fifties* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1997), 8.

effect since the 1930's. Consisting of eight pages of rules and guidelines for American films, the Code mandated that pictures must live up to the moral standards of its audience. The sympathy of the audience must never be swayed toward crime, wrong-doing, sin or things otherwise 'evil'. It also required that pictures portray "correct standards of life," and that no Law shall be ridiculed (divine, natural, human), nor may sympathy be created for its violation.[41] The Production Code was established due in part to fear of Hollywood's reputation of causing the moral regression of 'innocents', but also due to the diverse and sizeable audience for these films.[42] They had to protect the moral codes as well as maintain the interest of the mass audience.

Commerce was the predominant focus of filmmaking in the fifties; actors were even referred to as 'property', owned by the studios with whom they were under contract.[43] In 1950, the Defense Department declared the movies as "essential industry," meaning that the revenue from film production was important to the United States economy.[44] The emergence of television, suburban development, the Paramount Consent Decree: all of these things meant that the studios had to work harder for their revenue. Studios had to compete with television for entertainment budgets.[45] A greater importance was placed on the appeal of the films through stars, visual effects, and plot.[46] They began filming more frequently in color, usually Technicolor, even though it was expensive to produce.[47] In addition to color, theater screens became larger in order to further compete

[41] as summarized by Pomerance, *American Cinema,* 9.
[42] Pomerance, *American Cinema,* 9.
[43] Gow, *Hollywood,* 7.
[44] Pomerance, *American Cinema,* xi.
[45] Blanco, et al, *American History*, 55.
[46] Pomerance, *American Cinema,* 8.
[47] Ibid, 2.

with television.[48] Filmmakers began utilizing new technologies such as wide-screen, 3-D picture, and stereophonic sound.[49]

One of the results of the budget cuts in film during World War II was the creative usage of lighting and camera angles to increase visual interest. The techniques were taken from German Expressionism. The shadowy, oblique angles created an ominous, uneasy feeling which reflected the state of society at the time due to the war.[50] This style became known as *film noir*, and continued to be popular in the 1950's. As with *film noir*, suspense thrillers such as Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959) and *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) also played on the nation's fears, government secrecy and the destruction of America.[51] The 'epic' film was also quite popular in the 1950's; films such as *Ben Hur* (1959) and *200,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1954) were big hits for the studios. Space explorations sparked a surge in science fiction films.[52]

In contrast to these darker types of stories, a trend towards light-hearted musicals such as *Singing in the Rain* (1952) emerged. MGM began making musicals after they conducted a survey finding that audiences desired musical comedy more than any other genre.[53] The comic farces starring Marilyn Monroe were also popular as they were ripe with sexual innuendo and depicted a luxurious, highly desirable lifestyle,[54] for example *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) and *The Seven Year Itch* (1955).

Now that the youth were being considered as a significant audience, studios began producing more films with youth in mind. Drive-in movies, which showed mostly low

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[48] Gow, *Hollywood,* 11.
[49] *American Life*, 151.
[50] Ibid, 149.
[51] Blanco et al, *American History*, 56.
[52] Ibid.
[53] *American Life*, 151.
[54] Blanco et al, *American History*, 57.

budget "B movies", became popular among youth and couples with young children.[55] Horror and sci-fi films attracted young viewers with special effects tricks, while the popularity of television westerns also caused a resurgence of film westerns aimed primarily at young boys.[56]

Costuming in Film

Costume design is an integral part of the storytelling in a film. Costume is key in defining a character: their personality, ethnicity, mood, situation, etc. It can be used to show harmony or contrast between characters, or convey a change in a character. In *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design,* Deborah Nadoolman Landis states that a successful costume is a combination of the intent of the script, the vision of the director, and the intuition of the designer.[57] Landis says a costume must not be " the superficial shell of a character, but the outward expression of inner experience, the concrete manifestation of the character's self-image."[58] The costume designer's job is to bring the script, the stories, the characters, the mood and the emotions to life.

Both fashion and costume design communicate the identity of the wearer, and both evoke emotional responses from the viewer. As with fashion design, a costume designer operates under the basic design principles of harmony, contrast, balance and emphasis, as well as the basic elements of composition: line, shape, color, texture.[59] Costume design does not, however, aim solely to make the person in the clothes look good; that is only an objective if the script calls for it. The costume designer must

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[55] *American Life*, 151.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Deborah Nadoolman Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), xxi.
[58] Landis, *Dressed*, xv.
[59] Holly Cole and Kristin Burke, *Costuming for Film: The Art and the Craft* (Beverly Hills: Silman-James Press, 2005), 62.

consider many factors not relevant in fashion. They must understand how the image will appear in two-dimensional form, as images will be distorted and flattened, and color and detail will appear differently on film.[60] How the costumes work with the set design and mood of each scene is also an important matter.

In the earliest days of American film, European haute couture was looked to for fashion templates, but by the mid-to-late 1910's America began to develop its own costume design. Clare West emerged at this time as the first great costume designer, known for her historical accuracy and impeccable styling.[61] She spent two years researching for the film *Intolerance* (1916), a film whose story spanned centuries. This film is a landmark of costuming as it is the first time the costume department was recognized and West was given the title of "Studio Designer", prior to this the department was only know as "Wardrobe".[62] *Intolerance* is also known for influencing fashion as well as being the first film to dress extras, as opposed to them wearing their own clothes.[63] In the era of the silent film, costume was highly stylized in order to enhance and assist the narrative.[64]

The 1930's and 40's were Hollywood's glamorous era; the peak of film costume. During this time, Hollywood costume departments began recruiting up-and-coming designers such as Gilbert Adrian and Howard Greer.[65] The United States began to take over control of the garment trade from Parisian fashion houses, and costume design became closely connected with American fashion houses. In the era of Hollywood glamour, costume designers were given extraordinarily high budgets in order to design

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[60] Landis, *Dressed*, xxi.
[61] Drake Stutesman, "Costume Design, or, What is Fashion in Film*?,"* in *Fashion in Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 29.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Stutesman, *What is?,* 29.
[64] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: Virago, 1985), 169.
[65] Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (New York: Routeledge, 2010), 4.

extravagant costumes for their female leads, while costumers were in charge of dressing the males and other cast members.[66] Since films were still in black and white at this time, luxurious materials that depicted texture and movement were favored, such as sequins, lace, lamé, and feathers.[67]

From the early 1930's through the 1950's, women quickly adopted styles seen in film. The dress that Adrian designed for Joan Crawford in *Letty Lynton* (1932) marks the first and most significant instance of this. A ruffled, white organdy gown with very large sleeves became an instant infatuation for women. It was mass-produced for department stores and flew off the shelves. In the 1930's, while many costume designers were working closely with retailers and advertisers to create accessible film fashion, Adrian was doing the opposite, creating modern looks that could be adapted to wear in life.[68] However, he still became known as the costume designer to inspire "more fashion firsts than any other US designer in fashion or in film."[69] Adrian said of the famous *Letty Lynton* dress, " I put those huge sleeves on Miss Crawford in [the film] because she was playing an extreme person, and it suited her to have extreme clothes. They just happened to click with the rest of the world."[70]

Legendary costume designer Edith Head, who worked heavily from the 1930's through the 1960's and continued to work until her death in 1981, said that movie costumes should be "middle of the road" due to fashion trends changing quickly and the necessary lag time between filming and release of films at that time.[71] Head understood the difference between fashion and costume design, she is quoted as saying, "My job is to

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[66] Cole and Burke, *Costuming,* 30.
[67] Wilson, *Adorned,* 170-171.
[68] Jane Gaines, "Wanting to Wear Seeing: Gilbert Adrian at MGM*",* in *Fashion in Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011)*,* 143.
[69] Stutesman, *What is?,*33.
[70] Landis, *Dressed, xxii.*
[71] Bruzzi, *Fashion and Film,* 502.

help the girl who wears the dress become the person she is playing on screen".[72] In the 30's and 40's, since the studios' timetables made it impossible to anticipate trends, wise designers chose familiar silhouettes and created something exciting around it.[73]

Hubert de Givenchy designing for Audrey Hepburn in *Sabrina* (1954), then *Funny Face* (1957) marks the beginning of a trend of fashion designers working in film that still occurs today. He was not the first, however, just a notable case that sparked the change. Chanel tried her hand at costume design in the 1930's, but was largely unsuccessful because her designs were too understated for the screen.[74] Christian Dior also lent his designs to a few films, including Hitchcock's *Stage Fright* (1950). Givenchy's work for Audrey Hepburn marks an increased freedom for screen designs to stand out as opposed to functioning solely to serve the narrative.[75]

Throughout the 1950's through the 1970's, film costume and fashion had a mutual relationship, with film costumes generally reflecting the styles of the time.[76] In the mid 1960's, due largely to the *cinema verité* movement, which promoted realism in film, the emergence of shopping off-the-rack caused a huge change in film costuming.[77] Shopping ready-to-wear designer items is now a common practice in film costuming, as made to order garments are more expensive and costumers must keep costs down for producers.

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[72] Landis, *Dressed,* xxii.
[73] Gaines, *Wanting to Wear Seeing,* 145.
[74] Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams,* 169.
[75] Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema,* 6.
[76] Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema,* 7.
[77] Ibid.

Alfred Hitchcock

Alfred Hitchcock is one of the most written about and analyzed directors in history, his work usually highly touted but sometimes criticized. When researching the legendary director, there is a plethora of information to peruse. There are numerous biographies, collections of interviews with and writings by Hitchcock, and an incredible amount of analyses of his films and filmmaking style and techniques.[78] Scholars have created works on his visual style, subjects, his relationship with his actors, and myriad other topics.[79]

Hitchcock was born in London in 1899. He was born to a middle-class merchant family.[80] Although Hitchcock did not come from an artistic background he, as a young man, began reading movie magazines and film industry journals.[81] He also enjoyed going to plays.[82] In 1920, at the age of 21, Hitchcock got his first industry job writing and illustrating title cards for the Famous Players-Lasky.[83] He worked his way up to art director and production manager before his first directorial effort, *The Pleasure Garden*, in 1927.[84] This film as well as *The Mountain Eagle* were produced in German studios.[85] In 1939 he went to Hollywood to work with David O. Selznick. They had a mostly successful partnership and worked together until 1947.[86] He then made several film independently before going back to the studio system. Hitchcock was always working on a project; one would finish and he was on to the next. He directed 53 feature films and

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[78] see Bibliography.
[79] see Bibliography.
[80] David Sterrit, *The Films of Alfred Hitchcock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3.
[81] Richard Allen and Ishii-Gonzales, eds. *Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays* (London: BFI Publishing, 1999), vi.
[82] Dan Aulier, ed. *Hitchcock's Notebooks: An Authorized and Illustrated look Inside the Creative Mind of Alfred Hitchcock* (New York: Spike, 1999), 2.
[83] Allen and Ishii-Gonzales, *Centenary,* vi.
[84] Sterritt, *The Films of,* 3.
[85] Robin Wood, "Retrospective," in *Hitchcock Reader,* Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland Poague, eds. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1986), 27.
[86] Aulier, *Notebooks*, 19.

produced ten years of the television show *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* before his death at the age of 80.

Hitchcock's style developed out of a mixture of several important influences, primarily German Expressionism (dramatic lighting and camera angles) and Soviet Montage (use of editing for cinematic effect).[87] He had both artistic and box office ambition, though he valued the unconventional styles he saw coming from film society showings and from his time at the German studio UFA, more than what he saw on commercial screens.[88] Other influences that continued to be evident throughout his career included classical American film, documentary filming and popular culture, as well as Victorian novels and detective fiction.[89]

Hitchcock strongly believed that cinema should rely on visual images rather than dialogue. He felt that British directors of the time failed to be able to "think pictorially" and that ideally, a film in its entirety would exist pictorially in the mind of the director.[90] His aim as a director was to have a complete vision of the film before shooting began.[91] He also felt that cinematic style was paramount to the content of the film.[92] He earned the title of "The Master of Suspense" through his incomparable visual storytelling. His use of contrast and perspective were key in creating the feeling of suspense that permeated his films.

One of his great strengths was his ability to understand and manipulate his audience. He claimed not even he knew who was flying the plane that chases Cary Grant

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[87] Wood, "Retrospective", 27.
[88] Sterritt, *The Films of,* 4.
[89] Sterritt, *The Films of,* 6; Allen and Ishii-Gonzales, *Centenary*, vi.
[90] Alfred Hitchcock, "If I Were Head of a Production Company", in *Hitchcock on Hitchcock,* Sidney Gottleib, ed. (California: University of California Press, 1995) , 174.
[91] Alfred Hitchcock, "Directors Problems", in *Hitchcock on Hitchcock,* Sidney Gottleib, ed. (California: University of California Press, 1995), 186.
[92] Alfred Hitchcock, "On Style", in *Hitchcock on Hitchcock,* Sidney Gottleib, ed. (California: University of California Press, 1995), 292.

in *North by Northwest*, he just wanted the audience to feel that emotion.[93] He understood that audiences see films with the desire to see life depicted on screen, but a different version from their own, one more thrilling and emotionally tumultuous.[94] As suspense was a key element in Hitchcock's films, he felt that suspense was achieved "when you let that audience play God."[95] This is accomplished by making the audience privy to information that the characters do not have. He did not believe in puzzling the audience, he felt that suspense was about making the audience fully invested in the story.

Hitchcock is known for a very exacting and controlling directorial style. In an interview Suzanne Pleshette (*The Birds*) and Janet Leigh (*Psycho*) both state that Hitchcock had his films already shot and cut in his head before the actors arrive on set.[96] He would obsess over details in his films. He paid particular attention to costuming; he once sent an entire room full of extras home because their shift dresses with no waistline were too "in" and he knew it would date the picture.[97] Although it is impossible for a film to show no mark of its time, it may be of benefit to keep the costuming from being distracting to modern audiences by having it composed of a more classic style. For Eva Marie Saint in *North by Northwest*, he was unhappy with what the costume designer had selected for her so he took Saint to Bergdorf Goodman's and had her choose items that she fancied, which were then used in the film.[98] In *Rear Window*, all of Grace Kelly's costumes were detailed in the script, with particular reasons for each color and style.[99]

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Alfred Hitchcock, "Why Thrillers Thrive", in *Hitchcock on Hitchcock,* Sidney Gottleib, ed. (California: University of California Press, 1995), 109.
[95] Alfred Hitchcok, "Let 'Em Play God", in *Hitchcock on Hitchcock,* Sidney Gottleib, ed. (California: University of California Press, 1995), 113.
[96] Greg Garrett, "Hitchcock's Women on Hitchcock: A Panel Discussion with Janet Leigh, Tippi Hedren, Karen Black, Suzanne Pleshette, and Eva Marie Saint," in Literature Film Quarterly, Vol.27 Is.2, 1999, 81.
[97] Ibid, 83
[98] Ibid. 84
[99] Donald Spoto, *Spellbound by Beauty: Alfred Hitchcock and his Leading Ladies*
(New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 2008), 210.

From the very beginning of his career, before the notion was considered, Hitchcock insisted upon the creative importance of a director.[100] He worked consistently toward developing his style, which he said must be the result of experimentation and growth and not consciously injected into a work.[101] As he became more successful, he gained the power to control every step of the process of making his films, from preproduction planning to publicity.[102] Hitchcock was a true auteur, fashioning every aspect of his films to match his vision. Wisely, costume is one of many visual elements Hitchcock used to inform as well as manipulate his audience, as the audience tends to focus on actors in a scene and will inevitably process and assess, either consciously or subconsciously, the costume presented.

The films selected for this study, *Stage Fright and Strangers on a Train*, were produced in 1949 and 1950, respectively. The late 1940's were a low point in Hitchcock's career, due in large part to the lack of film attendance following the war. Producing films independently was a move made by many directors in the post-war years, and Hitchcock followed suit, partnering with Sidney Bernstein to form Transatlantic Pictures in 1946. After a brief stint making films under his own independent production company, Hitchcock began a four picture deal with Warner Brothers, the first of these being *Stage Fright*. The film was poorly received by both critics and audiences, and is still known as a lesser Hitchcock work. *Strangers on a Train*, though, marks the beginning of Hitchcock's Golden Age, where he produced a steady string of highly lauded masterpieces such as *Dial M For Murder* (1954), *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958)*, North by Northwest* (1959), and *Psycho* (1960).

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[100] Allen and Ishii-Gonzales, *Centenary*, vi.
[101] Hitchcock, "Play God", 115.
[102] Sterritt, *The Films of,* 2.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this study I examined the costume choices of Alfred Hitchcock in a selection of his films from the 1950's, *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train*. My goal was to produce a comprehensive look at Hitchcock's use of costume as a storytelling tool within each film. I expected my research to reveal him as very savvy about how to communicate the feel and content of the story through the use of costume.

Objectives

The objectives for this study were as follows:

1. To explore and record instances of costuming used as a storytelling tool in *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train,* identifying instances in which costumes were used to inform or manipulate the audience's perception of a character, to create contrast in order to clarify or enhance the story, or as a tool for the advancement of plot.
2. To analyze each film in order to examine and demonstrate the impact of costume on the storytelling in each film.
3. To compare and contrast the findings of the individual film analyses against one another.

Sample

I chose to focus my study on two of Hitchcock's films of the 1950's, *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train,* because it is a time where his style was fully realized and his work was distinctly Hitchcock. This is also recognized as a very inspired time for him, making such classics as *Rear Window*, *Strangers on a Train, Dial M for Murder*, and *North by Northwest*, among others. Choosing to limit my research to a particular decade also created a cohesiveness in the research in terms of notable social significances, fashions, and the specifics of where Hitchcock was in his career at the time of the films' production.

I also chose to examine two thrillers of the era for two reasons: Primarily because it is the genre he most commonly worked within, and a great deal of his stylistic touchstones relate to the creation of suspense. Furthermore, it strengthened the common thread amongst the film analyses. Nine of the 11 films Hitchcock released in the 1950's can be categorized as thrillers. I selected two of these films with consideration of interesting and diverse subject matter for the study, including various types of costume usage.

A conscious decision was made to select films in which Hitchcock employed lesser known costume designers, specifically not Edith Head. Although Head stated herself that Hitchcock controlled costume choices, her influence would likely be greater than any other designer.

Framework

I took a hermeneutic approach to this research. Hermeneutics is simply defined as the interpretation of texts.[103] The term text refers not just to words, but also to two and three dimensional images. Hermeneutics comes from the Greek word *hermeneutikos*, which is the process of explaining and clarifying in the interest of making obvious that which is obscure.[104] As summarized by Elizabeth Kinsella, there are five basic characteristics of hermeneutics:

1. seeks understanding as opposed to explanation.
2. operates on the idea that all knowledge is a view from somewhere and therefore not objective. All meaning is subject to the viewer's perspective.
3. human understanding is necessarily influenced by the viewer's historical and linguistic frameworks.
4. interpretation of text as a conversation.
5. recognizes the complexity of interpretation and embraces ambiguity.[105]

All information is received through some kind of mediation.[106] The means by which we get information are what John A. Weaver calls "re-representations" of reality. Weaver explains what it means to re-represent reality in these terms:

1. Information cannot be filtered in an unbiased way.
2. Re-representation implies meaning is constructed, these constructions exist within a historical context shaped by those who control the medium.

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[103] Pushkala Prasad, *Crafting Qualitative Research: Working in the Postpositivist Traditions* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 2005), 30.
[104] Ibid, 31.
[105] interpreted and summarized from the characteristics detailed in Elizabeth A. Kinsella, "Hermeneutics and Critical Hermeneutics: Exploring Possibilities within the Art of Interpretation", in *Forum: Qualitative Social Research.*
[106] John A. Weaver, *Popular Culture primer* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 51.

3. All images (including text) must be interpreted, making the viewer an "active meaning maker."
4. The re-representing process applies not just to text, but images, as they are all material forms of information and potential meaning.[107]

Interpreting images is an act of decoding. All images are encoded by their producers and context, and decoded by the viewer.[108] Stuart Hall deciphered three positions one may take as a decoder of cultural images:

1. *Dominant-hegemonic reading*- the viewer decodes the image in a passive manner, accepting fully the dominantly accepted meaning of the object. (It can be argued that it is rarely truly accomplished because all viewers will have culturally specific experiences and memories.)
2. *Negotiated reading*- the viewer, either subconsciously or consciously, "negotiates" the meaning of the image between the dominant meaning, the context, and the viewer's own knowledge, experience and cultural frameworks.
3. *Oppositional reading*- the viewer either rejects or opposes the dominant meaning.[109]

Based on a hermeneutic approach to research, along with the understanding of re-representation, this study entailed a *negotiated reading* of the film images. As a viewer, I considered the images within the context of the film during my decoding process. I brought my existing knowledge of the subjects of film, costume, dress, and society into the interpretation, therefore not "passively" decoding the images.

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[107] Ibid. 52-53.
[108] Marita Sturken and Linda Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (New York: Fairchild, 2001), 56.
[109] Ibid, 56-57.

Procedure

My plan for this research began with building a comprehensive knowledge of the career and style of Alfred Hitchcock. I built a thorough understanding of the significance of costume in film. I also looked at the 1950's with a focus on fashion, film, and society. To help inform my analysis I utilized primary sources such as interviews from Hitchcock himself and those who worked closely with him, as well as secondary sources in the form of books and essays written about the filmmaker, particularly regarding his style, themes, and tendencies. There is a great deal of information available on Hitchcock's filmmaking, through interviews and secondary sources. This was key in allowing me to more accurately assess the costuming in later steps.

Once the supplementary information was gathered, I viewed each of the selected films several times to insure a thorough analysis. I decoded and recorded instances of costuming in the films that play a role in plot advancement; act to describe, conceal, or reveal information about a character; create contrast between characters; or their influence on the tone of the scene or the film as a whole

The next step was to analyze and discuss the findings. I primarily relied on the source material- the films, keeping context a necessary consideration. I employed the knowledge gathered in the preliminary stages of the research in order to inform my study. I then discussed each film with the intent of drawing focus to the storytelling power of costume. The discussion included my analysis of the observations and included pertinent and revealing information which provided context and background.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stage Fright

The 1950 film *Stage Fright* was adapted from a novel by Selwyn Jepson, called *Man Running.* Hitchcock was interested in undertaking the film adaptation because he was fascinated by theater, and specifically because it was about a young actress who winds up playing a real-life role.[110] *Stage Fright* is a film about the theater, and about the roles we all play in life, as well as on the stage. The story revolves around Eve Gill (Jane Wyman), an amateur actress who becomes involved in a plot to clear her love, Jonathan Cooper (Richard Todd), of a murder she believes he did not commit. The husband of star performer Charlotte Inwood (Marlene Dietrich) has been murdered and Jonathan claims that Charlotte has done it and enlisted his help after the fact. In reality, as we eventually find out, Jonathan has committed this murder himself, as he was conned into it by Charlotte.

Eve brings her father the Commodore (Alastair Sim) into the action, and he helps her throughout the film. In order to get information, Eve disguises herself as Doris Tynsdale, imaginary cousin of Nellie Goode (Kay Walsh), who is Charlotte's dresser. Also in her sleuthing she meets a detective who is working the case, Wilfred Smith (Michael Wilding), and she ends up transferring her affections to him. She initially stages their meeting in order to get information, but she truly falls for Smith's sweet and

[110] Truffaut, *Hitchcock/Truffaut*, 189.

witty nature. The ensuing events feature the characters playing a variety of off-stage roles.

The film opens with what could be called a false flashback. Jonathan tells Eve a tale of Charlotte coming to him for help after she murders her husband, though it is eventually revealed that it was Jonathan all along who committed the murder. Throughout Jonathan's tale the film cuts to scenes depicting the events he describes, all of which proves to be untrue. In the novel Jonathan was indeed innocent, but Hitchcock decided to go a different route against the wishes of his wife, Alma, and screenwriter Whitfield Cook.[111] They felt the false flashback cheated the audience. The audience agreed. The film did not go over well with critics or audiences, primarily for this reason. Hitchcock did concede in his interview with Francois Truffaut that he did regret using the false flashback.[112]

Hitchcock, however, blamed the movie's failure on the actors.[113] He criticized Richard Todd's performance, but was more vocal about how displeased he was with Wyman's unwillingness to make herself look homely when she was disguised as Charlotte's dresser. He said she cried whenever she saw herself as Doris and that she couldn't stand for her face to be in character.[114] She was insecure about working next to Dietrich in such a state that she refused to commit to a transformation. Hitchcock said the half-hearted physical performance hurt the film; that "She should have been a pimply faced girl. Wyman just refused to be that and I was stuck with her."[115]

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[111] McGilligan, *Darkness and Light*, 431
[112] Truffaut, *Hitchcock/Truffaut*, 189.
[113] Spoto, *Spellbound,* 188.
[114] Truffaut, *Hitchcock/Truffaut*, 191.
[115] McGilligan, *Darkness and Light,* 436.

Marlene Dietrich was known to be manipulative and controlling on set. Hitchcock was fully aware of this and saw that it made her perfect for the part, as it called for a true diva.[116] One would not think this would make for a good collaboration since Hitchcock was notoriously controlling of his films, but he knew what the role called for and even allowed Dietrich creative freedom with her appearance in the film- the only time he ever did so.[117] He said of Dietrich, "She was a professional star- she was also a professional cameraman, art director, editor, costume designer, hairdresser, makeup woman, composer, producer, and director."[118]

Hitchcock considered the role of Charlotte the most important in the film. This may explain his willingness to relinquish some of his control to the star. In her contract she insisted that wardrobe for the film must consist of Dior dresses and that she may keep them after shooting.[119] Hitchcock agreed under the stipulation that he have final approval.[120] It was quite rare for Hitchcock to allow his female stars control of their own wardrobes, but he did allow Grace Kelly and Edith Head to collaborate for Kelly's costumes in the films she made with Hitchcock, *Dial M for Murder* (1954)*, Rear Window* (1954)*,* and *To Catch a Thief* (1955); he only stipulated the colors he wanted used.[121]

Stage Fright was adapted for the screen by Alma Reville, and the screenplay written by Whitfield Cook. Hitchcock produced the film. Wilke Cooper was the director of photography. Milo Anderson was the costume designer, with Christian Dior designing Dietrich's costumes. Anderson was a costumer at Universal from 1933-1952. He worked

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[116] McGilligan, *Darkness and Light,* 434.
[117] Spoto, *Dark Side,* 316.
[118] Ibid.
[119] McGilligan, *Darkness and Light,* 434.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Sarah Street, "Hitchcockian Haberdashery", in *Framing Hitchcock*, ed. Sidney Gottlieb and Christopher Brookhouse (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 148.

on such classic films as *Robin Hood* (1938), and *To Have an Have Not* (1944), with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall.

Film Analysis

Stage Fright's opening credits immediately establish the film as a theatrical endeavor; the first thing we see is a theater "Safety Curtain," as it is marked for the audience. As the curtain raises we are not looking upon a literal stage, but bustling London, the metaphorical stage wherein the characters in the film play out their schemes and assume their disguises. It is a nice bit of surrealism, and also foreshadows Jonathan's eventual demise. The entire film is a comment on the theater, as well as the roles we all tend to play in life. The storyline of the film is continuously referred to by the characters as a play, the characters playing roles. Appropriately, costume will certainly play a significant role in this picture, as costume plays a significant role in theater.

The film opens with the notorious and controversial false flashback. Jonathan tells Eve the tale of how Charlotte Inwood convinced him to cover up the murder of her husband, when in reality it was Jonathan who committed the crime. In this flashback, Charlotte arrives at Jonathan's home frantic and pleading for his help. She is wearing a light colored, pleated chiffon dress with a large, dark stain covering the front of the skirt. She wears a dark overcoat. As she sheds her coat, she begins to confess to the murder of her husband. It seems symbolic that as she is shedding her coat she is revealing the blood-stained dress, while also revealing her involvement in a murder. The blood-stained dress will be a significant prop/piece of evidence, a sort of bargaining chip throughout the film. *Stage Fright* is not the only Hitchcock film that heavily involves an item of dress as a significant prop. In *Dial M For Murder* several costume accessories are actively

involved in various scenes. The murder weapon is a neck scarf and the decoy murder weapon is a pair of stockings. The film also makes effective use of ominous gloves and a menacing umbrella.

Still within the false flashback, Jonathan goes to Charlotte's home to retrieve a clean dress for her as she instructed him. When he returns to her we have a close shot of Charlotte's face as she changes into the clean dress. It is exactly the same as the stained dress, but in a dark color. This may symbolize a transition of the character to a darker, somewhat sinister state. Hitchcock is known to have used transition in the color of his heroine's wardrobe to reflect changes in the character. For example, early in *Dial M For Murder* Grace Kelly's adulterous character wears first a bold red dress, then a deeper red dress. Once she becomes the victim of attempted murder, however, she wears colorless attire, grey and finally black clothing for the remainder of the film.

Dripping with diamonds and a fur fascinator atop her perfectly arranged coif, Charlotte applies make up. She is seen applying make up often throughout the film. She is building her façade. Excluding her performances, Charlotte is changing clothes and jewelry and applying make up in every scene in which she appears. It seems a significant and calculated decision on Hitchcock's part. It gives the audience the idea that we do not really know this woman or what she is really thinking. She is mysterious, always shrouded in glamour.

In this particular scene, as they part ways, Charlotte tells Jonathan that she will worry about him and his response is, "You mustn't. You're an actress, you're playing a part. Who knows when you're on?" Her clever response: "*I* try." A humorous bit of dialogue that makes it quite clear that we are dealing with a cipher. Charlotte puts on her

dark overcoat and heads out the door, momentarily fretting about the stained dress. Jonathan promises to "get rid of it". He begins to throw it in the fire but does not and we finally transition into reality from Jonathan's fictitious account of events.

Charlotte Inwood is the embodiment of glamour, as is Marlene Dietrich, which is why Hitchcock wanted Dietrich for the part. Under normal circumstances, however, Hitchcock loathed the idea of glamour. He felt that glamorous women had no place in film. He said, "Glamour has nothing to do with reality, and I maintain that reality is the most important factor in the making of a successful film. The very attractive woman who just walks around avoiding the furniture, wearing fluffy negligees and looking very seductive, may be an attractive ornament, but she doesn't help the film any."[122] *Stage Fright* provides a clear exception to his rule because the woman he describes here fits the character of Charlotte perfectly.

Jonathan tries to phone Eve but she is not home. The police arrive at his flat for questioning and he flees to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, where Eve is a student. He arrives, police on his tail, to find Eve on stage rehearsing a scene. She wears a cage crinoline over her clothes. He interrupts her rehearsal, much to the director's dismay, wearing a costume hat as though he were a character in the play. The perturbed director instructs Eve to leave the stage and send out the next set of actors. Eve drops the petticoat where she stands, leaving it for the next actor.

Actors are able to utilize their costumes to help themselves get into character, just as in life people may choose to wear a certain piece or outfit in order to help them not only convey a certain message, but genuinely feel the mood they wish to express. Here we see Eve practicing this method to little effect. This scene works as foreshadowing of

[122] "Women are a Nuisance"

the other less than stellar attempts Eve makes at assuming characters yet to come in the film.

We cut back to the pair in the car as Jonathan asks Eve if she hates him for his involvement with Charlotte. She says she could never, and he clutches her hand which rests atop the blood-stained dress. The dress serves as a visual reminder of the murder that has taken place and the juxtaposition of their hands and the crumpled dress serves to show that Jonathan is using and manipulating Eve. Even before we know that he is the actual murderer, we are subtly warned of his deception; his ostensible tenderness is covering a more menacing truth. While the film's detractors complain about the false flashback, it can be argued that this moment is actually a fairly clear indicator of Jonathan's deception. Not to mention, the film itself is all about deception and façade, so it may actually be quite an appropriate cinematic tool in this case.

Eve and Jonathan arrive at her father's home. Her father, the Commodore, is immediately distinguished as an eccentric by the accordion he is toting around, and a fisherman by his heavy, cowl neck cable knit sweater. She informs her father of the situation. He is quite skeptical of Jonathan, but reluctantly offers to help by taking Jonathan across the English Channel. The Commodore jokes about his daughter being so eager to get involved in the fiasco. He finds her "stage struck." As he holds the bloody dress up to himself he says, "Here you have a plot, an interesting cast, and even a costume." He reminds her that this is real life, not the stage, and you must see the whole picture.

The Commodore has noticed something that Eve did not: the blood stain on the dress was smeared on deliberately. He believes that Charlotte has mislead Jonathan by

using that "sanguinary garment." He sees the dress as a very important clue. The dress is, in fact, an important clue for the characters as well as the audience. Jonathan is very upset by their thoughts, seemingly because he does not want to believe that Charlotte would deceive him, but actually because he realized it may be evidence against him instead of against Charlotte, as he intended.

The following morning Eve sets out to help Jonathan. She goes out hoping to gather information. She is wearing an oversized, heavy wool wrap coat. After having no luck at Charlotte's home, she follows a handsome detective into a local bar, hoping to get information from him. As she crosses the street we see that Eve is the only person around wearing a coat. Everyone around the street reveals their clothing, while Eve's attire is concealed by her bulky coat, as her intentions and motives are concealed.

Eve uses her acting skills to get the detective's attention. Before Eve enters that bar we see her actively attempt to get into character by putting a dramatic, emotional look upon her face. She enters the bar looking nervous and unsettled. The detective joins Eve at a table and they strike up a conversation. She tells him that she is an actress and when he tells her that she does not look like one, she sadly says "No? I thought I did." The two hit it off and he escorts her back to her home, where he introduces himself as Smith, or "Ordinary Smith," as Eve playfully calls him when he simply introduces himself by last name only.

Charlotte's dresser, Nellie, walks into the bar for a drink and to complain about the police inundating her with questions. She draws a great deal of attention to herself, as if she is enjoying the spotlight. Nellie is acting here, pretending to be annoyed, but actually basking in the attention the murder has brought upon her. Nellie is dressed in a

thick knit cardigan and tweed jacket with glasses and unkempt hair. Eve decides to approach Nellie with a scheme involving Eve posing as Nellie's cousin and filling in for her in order to get close to Charlotte. She claims to be a reporter and offers Nellie money. Hitchcock shoots this scene with focus on Eve's handbag first and then Nellie's.

Hitchcock used handbags as symbolic props in many of his films, sometimes as an assertion of female power and other times as a metaphor for female sexuality. In the essay "Hitchcockian Haberdashery", Sarah Street examined his use of handbags in several of his films, noting the various uses previously mentioned.[123] In *Stage Fright,* it seems that the handbags are utilized to emphasize the secrecy or concealment of the money being exchanged by the two women, and on a broader level, the secrets and hidden agendas which permeate the entire film. Handbags are often considered a very private space for a woman, sometimes concealing their deepest secrets. This is also seen in *Dial M For Murder*, where one of the multiple significances of Grace Kelly's handbag in the film is that it is the place where she keeps her secret love letters between she and her lover.

Nellie thinks it will be impossible for Eve to replace her at her job, that being a dresser is highly skilled work. Eve asserts that she can do it, and mentions that she has done some acting. Nellie responds, "Oh, I see. All you've got to do is put on some of your old clothes and make yourself look common like me." Nellie is clearly offended, but to a certain extent this is true. Similarly, if Nellie were to fix her hair, put on make up, and dress in fashionable clothing, she would not look quite so common and observers would assess her differently. While there is truth to the idea that costume sells the role, there is much more to it, which Eve is soon to discover.

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[123] Street, "Haberdashery".

Next we see Eve at home dressing as her "character," Nellie's cousin Doris. She is mimicking Nellie's dress: mussed hair, glasses, cigarette, a tweed jacket and skirt. She has taken her mother's reading glasses, but even without them her mother recognizes her instantly, despite her disguise. Eve is her daughter after all, so it should not be quite as discouraging as Eve seems to take it.

When we next see Eve, she has abandoned the glasses and cigarette and fixed her hair. Her 'disguise' now consists solely of dowdy clothes, minimal make up, and an inconsistent cockney accent. The fact that for the rest of the film Eve's disguise is so minimal is explained in part by the documented discontent of Jane Wyman with having to make herself appear less than attractive. Wyman probably should have done her Hitchcock homework. He was very clear about his expectations of his actresses: "if they are going to appear in one of my pictures, they are not going to look too beautiful or too glamorous."[124] Within the context of the film, however, it sends the message that Eve is not very confident in herself. She was very easily discouraged by her mother recognizing her. The logical reaction would be to increase the severity of the costume, but Eve has instead abandoned most of her original effort.

Eve heads to Charlotte's home to begin playing the role of Doris Tynsdale, Nellie's cousin and temporary replacement dresser for Charlotte. Eve enters Charlotte's room to find her being fitted in mourning clothes for her late husband. Charlotte is smoking a cigarette through her veil. The veil and the smoke conceal Charlotte, creating a great visual metaphor demonstrating that she is hiding something- many things,

[124] Hitchcock, "Close Your Eyes and Visualize," in Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews, ed. Sidney Gottlieb (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 248.

perhaps. With the make up, jewels, and elaborate costumes Hitchcock makes certain that Charlotte Inwood is a façade, no one knows the person that lies behind the glamour.

Charlotte is complaining about the mourning dress. She slyly says, "This is very nice- if you can call mourning nice- but isn't there some way we could let it plunge a little in front? I suppose not.... If we could only work in a little color somewhere. Oh well." She is completely focused on how she looks and is not interested in so much as pretending to be saddened by her husband's death. She cannot wait to get out of the garment: "Get me out of these weeds, I'm beginning to feel sad and I shouldn't feel sad, its so depressing." She asks for a negligee; Eve brings her a black one and Charlotte calls her clever for remembering, as if the thought never crossed Charlotte's mind.

This scene establishes Charlotte as a selfish, unconcerned woman and does so by demonstrating her preoccupation with her clothing and appearance. The façade is more important to her than anything else, even more than creating the appearance that she is actually affected by the death of her husband. She is interested in making herself appear to be in mourning by wearing the customary black clothing with a veil, but she is not willing to behave as though she is sad. Because clothes are the first thing we see when we view a person, people will view her as a mourning woman, regardless of whether she is actually mourning. Clothing has the power to deceive. As she dismisses her dressers, she playfully but seriously insists that they lower the neckline "just a trifle." Charlotte has effectively been established as cold and possibly heartless. She is shrouded in black and smoke, which creates a picture of darkness. Dietrich is playing another femme fatale, an archetype she was known for.

The detectives enter to speak with Charlotte while Eve waits in the next room with Freddie Williams, Charlotte's right-hand man. He says she is not bad looking, but she does not care for her face properly and she should fix her hair and put on some make up. This is another reiteration of her disguise failing. She looks exactly like herself, but slightly unkempt. This comment from Freddie seems like it was included by Hitchcock as an acknowledgement that he was aware that Eve's disguise was quite poor. He knew she should look worse, but was not able to get Wyman to fully commit.

Meanwhile, Charlotte is putting on quite the show for the detectives. She claims to have shunned Jonathan, and that must be why he committed the murder of her husband. She is being very dramatic, laid out on her chaise dressed in a black ruffle-sleeved negligee, clutching a sheer white handkerchief. The handkerchief creates a stark contrast with the black gown. She uses the kerchief as a prop in this scene, clutching it to her chest as she feigns distress and coughs into it as if she were ill. Its only real purpose, however, is to help Charlotte get rid of the detectives, and it works.

Eve rushes to her home to meet Ordinary Smith for tea. So as not to reveal her duplicity to Smith, she quickly changes into a more fashionable outfit: a white, collared blouse with billowy sleeves and a polka dotted scarf tied around the neck, worn with a long black cummerbund skirt. She has barely changed her hair or added make up, but the simple wardrobe change makes her appear younger and of a higher class. Eve's father informs her that when he took Jonathan across the water, he ran as soon as they docked. Eve's mom inquires about whom is he speaking. The Commodore's response is "Who's Johnny? I wish I knew. He's about 57 different varieties. I'd say roughly speaking he

was a dog of some sort that strayed in a couple of nights ago." Johnny, just as many of the other characters in this film, has been acting a part- or several.

Eve has to rush yet again to change back into her 'costume' and get to the theater to dress Charlotte for her show. Charlotte is already amidst her first performance. She is wearing a strapless, sparkling white gown luscious with ruffles. The gown is belted with a narrow waist and the skirt flows out wide, looking very much a Dior gown. The bright, shining white radiates the opposite of what we have previously seen of Charlotte. The gown makes her appear pure and lovely, no trace of the femme fatale.

She changes into a white, Grecian gown with a silk a marabou feather robe for her performance of "Laziest Girl in Town". The look is meant to evoke sleepwear, as Charlotte starts the song laying down and slowly, lazily makes her way down the stage, periodically laying on the chaise lounges that progress down the stage. Toward the end of her performance she spots Jonathan watching her from the side of the stage and appears startled. She finishes the number but quickly rushes away.

Charlotte arrives at her dressing room to find Jonathan waiting for her. They have a conversation while Charlotte changes into a black gown. Charlotte sits at her dressing table and begins to add even more diamonds than before. She is putting on multiple large diamond pieces, including a broach clipped onto the diamond necklace she was already wearing, and an enormous diamond bracelet. These new additions appear to consist also of black diamonds.

This transition into a dark performance gown may symbolize Charlotte's real life problem bleeding into her professional life. Her previous performance gowns were light and bright, and now even her diamonds are turning dark. At this point her performances,

which function for Charlotte as an escape from her real life, cease to distinguish themselves from her real life. Jonathan has entered her dressing room, which functions as a sanctuary for the star, but has now been compromised.

Charlotte has suggested that Jonathan leave town and she will meet him shortly to visit for a week or two. He is offended and thinks she should give up everything just as he has. This is the moment, in her reluctance to run away with him, Jonathan realizes she has played him. When Charlotte mentions the blood stained dress, he tells her that he did not destroy it like he promised. He decides to use the threat of the dress (which has actually been burned), to blackmail Charlotte. Their conversation is interrupted by the stage manager because she must perform her next number. She blames the delay on a broken hook on her dress and heads to the stage.

Eve and her father arrive back at her home to find Jonathan there chatting up Eve's mother. Eve has to quickly mask her disguise, so she throws on a bulky wrap coat over her 'Doris' look. For the second time, she must scramble to get back to being Eve. It is of note that only in the homes of her parents is Eve not playing a role. Even before she took on the role of Doris she was putting on a damsel in distress act for Smith. And here again, the coat again symbolizes the secretiveness of Eve's actions.

Eve must attend a garden party she must attend to pass out flyers for her theater school, where Charlotte also happens to be performing. She has invited Smith to come, hoping to turn him on to the prospect of Charlotte as the murderer. This presents a problem that Eve proves unprepared to face: she is to hand out flyers as Eve, but must present herself as Doris for Charlotte. It seems that Eve did not anticipate this potential problem.

While en route we see that Eve and Smith are very smitten with each other. He compliments her on looking lovely. She is wearing a light colored dress with buttons up the front, contrasting piping, a peter pan collar, and a large flat-brimmed hat. There is no mistaking her for a lowly dresser. Eve tries to ask Smith questions about the murder investigation, but they both keep getting distracted by one another and they eventually kiss.

Eve tries to plant a seed in Smith's head with a casual, innocent-sounding comment: "Maybe she had something to do with her husband's death... After all, there must be a lot that does not appear on the surface. I mean, like wheels within wheels. Who knows what goes on in a woman's mind." Eve makes a good point, the key words here being "beneath the surface." The whole film is centered around this idea that everyone is hiding something and the person they are presenting to the world is not who they may be on the inside. Charlotte Inwood is all surface; just a façade, or a character, masking a very damaged and cruel woman.

When they arrive at the garden party, it is raining and the camera frames a sea of umbrellas moving as one. Then we see just one umbrella, and the camera pans down to reveal Nellie underneath, smoking a cigarette. The umbrella and the smoke act as a sort of disguise, surprising Eve when Nellie reveals herself. Eve and Smith share an umbrella, symbolizing their status as a pair, newly in love and teamed up to solve a murder, even though Smith is not yet aware of the latter fact. Umbrellas function as shade or cover, and the item is seemingly used symbolically in these scenes to emphasize the fact that the characters are hiding some or all of their true agenda, not being honest or forthcoming.

Eve is spotted by Freddie and summoned to Charlotte's dressing tent. Charlotte is in front of a mirror wearing loads of diamonds (Earrings, two rings, bracelet, necklace) and fiddling with a diamond bracelet in her hands. She is trying to fix the clasp. Charlotte is a major star with a team of people at her beck and call. It is strange that she would fix her own jewelry. It is possible that Charlotte is trying to take control where she can while her grand murder plan is falling apart. Another possibility here is that they hold such value to her that she does not trust anyone else to handle them.

Jewelry often has connotations that are either romantic or a denotation of status or wealth. In his films, Hitchcock's use of jewelry carried illicit or sinister undertones, usually representing greed, status, female desire, female beauty/male power, or male murderousness.[125] In *Stage Fright,* it seems that Charlotte's excessive diamonds to not fit neatly into any of the main categories listed here. She is obviously very wealthy and has great power over men, but her diamonds seem to represent something more than that. They are a part of her façade, reflecting so much light away from Charlotte while making her appear bright. Hitchcock often used jewelry to demonstrate a selfish, materialist, greedy trait in the women who covet it. It is possible that her protectiveness of her jewels represents her strong desire to remain rich and loved, and her fear that it may all be lost if she is implicated in her husband's murder.

When Charlotte finally turns around to address Eve, she is stunned by Eve's put together appearance:

> CHARLOTTE: Darling! Whatever happened to that peculiar figure of yours?
> EVE: It's a new dress, Madame.
> Charlotte: Keep it up dear, what it does for you is worth thousands.
> EVE: I bought it at a sale.

[125] Walker, *Motifs,* 262.

CHARLOTTE: Don't confide in me, dear. Just pour some tea, would you?

Eve looks saddened and dejected by Charlotte's last comment, whereas she had seemed genuinely flattered by Charlotte's initial compliment. This demonstrates how a young, insecure woman like Eve still seeks the approval of Charlotte the Star even though she believes her a murderer. Meanwhile, Smith is sitting with Eve's classmates and he discovers through their conversation that Eve has not been attending rehearsals like she has been claiming to when she runs off so quickly every time they meet.

The next shot begins with the camera on Nellie's black umbrella once again, this time the rain has ceased and she lowers and closes the umbrella. Up walks the Commodore, using his umbrella as a sort of walking cane. Eve has called him to the party to supply further monetary compensation for Nellie, so that she will keep up the ruse. It is probably no coincidence that as soon as Smith is given a clue to Eve's deception, the rain stops and the umbrellas close. Umbrellas in *Stage Fright* seemed to represent hiding and concealment. Eve has now been found out by Smith, and has begun to make Charlotte and her lover Freddie suspicious, and her cover is effectively blown, symbolized by the closing of the umbrellas.

Back in Charlotte's tent, she is making Eve hold a hand mirror up so she can primp and perfect her look, even though there is a full length mirror directly behind her. Charlotte lives to control others, as we have seen in her interactions with everyone she encounters during the film. She asks for everything to be done for her, but she always gives herself a final check. She is not trusting of others, which may also be why she takes care of her own jewels.

The Commodore and Nellie meet outside of Charlotte's tent and the shot of the two of them shows a stark contrast. Nellie is dressed in a light colored coat and dark hat, while the Commodore is dressed in a dark coat and a light hat. They are the visual inverse of each other, which helps to highlight the fact that while they have different motives, they both need something from each other.

The Commodore, who has been very eager to help his daughter with her act, comes up with an idea when he glances at a woman's dress and envisions a large stain, like that from Charlotte's blood-stained dress. The Commodore has been almost like a director throughout the film. He has provided both criticism and support of his lead actress and he has been an active participant in the plot to uncover the truth of the murder. He does not have to do any acting himself, but he orchestrates the things going on around him.

In a hilarious scene, the Commodore buys a baby doll from a duck shooting booth, after failing to win one fairly. He cuts his own hand and smears blood all over the front of the doll's dress to resemble the original. Once again, we see a black umbrella, this time held by a young boy scout. He sends the innocent young boy scout into the tent where Charlotte is performing to deliver the doll to her on stage. As planned, the sight of the doll greatly upsets Charlotte. Just as Hitchcock does in his films, the Commodore uses costume to advance the plot of his and Eve's theatrical endeavor.

Eve's cover has now been inadvertently blown completely by her father's plan. Freddie calls 'Doris' to the stage to assist Charlotte, as she is very upset. This scene gives Smith all the clues he needs to put the pieces together; he now knows for sure that Eve and Doris are one in the same. Back at Eve's home, Smith confronts her and she

confesses all to her new love. He is clearly very hurt by Eve's deception, but nonetheless allows Eve to continue her ruse as Charlotte's dresser. He calls the police and has them come to the theater and prepare to capture the murderer. The police plant a microphone in a room by the stage with the intention of broadcasting Charlotte's conversation with Eve, as Eve uses the threat of the blood-stained dress to blackmail Charlotte. They conceal the microphone behind a few dresses which hang on the back of a closet door.

As Eve helps Charlotte into her personal clothes, Charlotte compliments Eve on her kindness and patience, acknowledging that it must be difficult to have done this without any dressing experience. Eve manages to get Charlotte into the room where the microphone is planted. As they enter the room, the stage curtain is raising: It is the big moment and Eve is on! This will be the grand finale of her performance. She claims to be in possession of the dress, but does not know what to do with it; she is afraid to go to the police. Charlotte realizes she is being blackmailed and is very upset. The police step in and Eve is torn up about what she has done. But now the whole truth has been uncovered. Charlotte coerced Johnny into murdering her husband and was there for the act. They are both caught.

Conclusion

The costuming in *Stage Fright* is of consistent relevance because the film itself is essentially about theater and costuming is an integral part of theatrical performances. In *Stage Fright,* we see costuming used as a descriptor of character, but more often as a tool for concealment of the characters' true identity and motives. There are also many costume props utilized throughout the film in various ways, particularly the blood-stained dress.

In *Stage Fright* there are many characters playing roles. Jonathan is a murderous psychopath pretending to be an innocent man. Charlotte, whom no one knows the real persona behind her expertly crafted façade, is constantly putting on an act, both on and off the stage. Eve is a young woman pretending to be, at various times, a damsel in distress, a newspaper reporter, and a lowly servant in order to help her lover. Nellie feigns illness in order for Doris to take her place. Of the cast, only the Commodore and Smith remain themselves.

In the case of Charlotte, her glamorous façade is constructed of excessive diamonds, elaborate dresses, and expertly executed hair and make up. Charlotte uses costumes to create an impenetrable façade. She is the embodiment of glamour, something Hitchcock abhorred in film, but in this case it served a purpose. The audience cannot get a read on Charlotte and they are left guessing what her true motives and role in the murder may be.

Costume props are also used throughout the film to serve various purposes. The blood-stained dress is the most important, appearing in material and in conversation from beginning to end. The dress is used to convey the thematic idea of the film, its existence moves the plot forward by providing a crucial clue for Eve and her father, and when it is used in the blackmail and faux blackmail attempts of Jonathan and Eve. Hitchcock also uses one of his go-to costume props, a woman's handbag, in one scene to symbolize secrecy, furthering the theme of concealment. In another scene, Charlotte uses a handkerchief to great effect, distracting and fooling detectives. There is also heavy symbolism connected to umbrellas at the garden party, reminding the audience of the hidden identities and motives of the characters.

From beginning to end, costume proves a key element of *Stage Fright.* Much of the plot development stems from one very important dress. Meanwhile, the theme of concealment is underlined again and again through Hitchcock's use of costuming.

Strangers on a Train

The 1951 film *Strangers on a Train* is based on a novel by Patricia Highsmith. Hitchcock read the novel while traveling and was so intrigued he decided to make it into a film, with a few key changes. *Strangers on a Train* is a film centering around two men, Guy Haines (Farley Granger) and Bruno Antony (Robert Walker). Guy is an amateur tennis player and aspiring politician, but in the novel he was an architect. Hitchcock wanted to emphasize the theme of doubles and crisscrossing in the film.[126] Bruno is a sociopathic mama's boy with an idea for the perfect crime. Bruno approaches Guy with his plan to exchange murders, so as to not implicate themselves in the murders of the people they want dead.

Bruno offers to kill Guy's wife Miriam (Laura Elliot), because Bruno is aware from reading the papers that Guy is in love with Ann Morton (Ruth Roman), a Senator's daughter, and that Miriam has had an affair. It is Bruno's idea that he should kill Miriam in exchange for Guy murdering Bruno's father, whom he despises. When Bruno completes his end of the bargain, which was never made or even implied by Guy, he decides to frame Guy for Miriam's murder. Guy and Ann try to race against time to stop Bruno from successfully planting Guy's lighter at the murder scene.

Strangers was a success for Hitchcock, and is considered one of his classics. He was happy with the film but, as with many of his films, he managed to take issue with

[126] *Hitchcock/Truffaut*, 193.

some of the actors. He complained that Farley Granger wasn't manly enough in his role.[127] Granger's demeanor served Hitchcock better for his character in *Rope*, where he was meant to seem more meek.

Granger's performance in *Strangers* is ultimately overshadowed by Robert Walker as Bruno. Hitchcock wanted Walker for Bruno because Hitchcock was aware of Walker's tumultuous personal life and alcoholism.[128] In his previous film career, however, Walker was cast as the boy next door type. In *Strangers* he proves himself dynamic and truly, yet subtly, unhinged in the role of Bruno.

Hitchcock was also vocal about his disappointment with Ruth Roman, who played Ann Morton. She was a studio actor; he felt stuck with her, and believed she lacked sex appeal.[129] Her role in the film is never made to seem as significant as it actually was; she figures out Bruno's plot on her own and is instrumental in his downfall. It is likely that Hitchcock downplayed Roman's role because he was not happy with her performance.

Strangers on a Train was adapted for the screen by Whitfield Cook, and the screenplay written by Raymond Chandler and Czenzi Ormonde. Hitchcock produced the film. Robert Burks was the director of photography. Leah Rhodes was the costume designer. Rhodes was an apprentice of Orry-Kelly, and took over when he was drafted for military service in 1939. She was a costume designer for Warner Brothers from 1939-1950, and later did work for Universal and Paramount. Rhodes also designed costumes for television, Broadway, and Las Vegas revues. Rhodes worked on many classic films including *Strangers on a Train* and *The Big Sleep* (1946). She won an Oscar for Best Costume Design, Color in 1950 for *Adventures of Don Juan* (1948).

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[127] McGilligan, *Darkness and Light,* 451.
[128] McGilliagan, *Darkness and Light*, 450.
[129] Ibid.

Film Analysis

From the very first scene of *Strangers on a Train* we see instances of costume being used as a storytelling tool. The camera observes a man exiting a car with focus on his shoes, which are black and white two-toned semi-brogues. We next see another man exiting a car in a similar fashion. He is wearing simple brown wing-tip brogues, considerably more conservative than the first man's. The two men, walking from opposite directions, enter the train car. Bruno sits first, crosses his legs, and when Guy takes a seat across the aisle, their shoes collide, signifying the repeated collision of the two men throughout the film.

At this point we see a bit more of their outfits: Bruno is wearing a pinstripe suit, white dress shirt, and a lobster print tie with a monogrammed tie pin. Guy, on the other hand, is wearing a plain wool suit and vest with a subdued gingham tie. There is an immediate contrast defined between the two men. Bruno is loud, confident and tacky, while Guy is understated, meek, and a bit plain. Summed up this way, it is counterintuitive considering that Guy is the rich, successful one and Bruno is an emotionally stunted man who lives with his mom. It serves a point about the image one chooses to project to the world surrounding them. Bruno desperately craves recognition and success, and Guy is more focused on creating an image of a low-key, together man. Neither of whom actually match the image they project.

As Bruno introduces himself he shows off his tie pin then says, "Well, I suppose you think its corny, but my mother gave it to me". Here Hitchcock uses a costume accessory to define a character. We learn by the item and Bruno's statement regarding it

that he is a child-like man who is still under the wing of his mother. This character trait plays a major part in understanding Bruno and his motivations.

Bruno recognizes Guy as a famous tennis player. He shows his adoration for Guy immediately. Bruno makes himself very comfortable next to Guy and gradually drops more and more information that he has heard about him through the news. He is aware that Guy is unhappy with his wife and in love with another woman, Ann Morton, a senator's daughter. Bruno is even aware that Guy's wife, Miriam, has had affairs outside of their marriage. Bruno then begins talking of his hatred for his father. Bruno is laying the groundwork for his proposition: the two men should swap murders, Bruno will kill Miriam and Guy will kill Bruno's father in return. Guy doesn't seem to take Bruno very seriously, and sort of laughs it off. Bruno takes Guy's disregard as a sign of affirmation, since Guy did not strongly state that he was against the plan. Bruno is not a sane man, and Guy's minimal protestation was not enough to drown Bruno's delusion.

Guys exits the train in his hometown, where he must stop to attend a meeting with Miriam and their divorce lawyers before going to compete in a tennis tournament. He arrives at the record store where Miriam works. The only item of her dress that stands out are her clunky eyeglasses with very thick lenses. She wears a simple white blouse and dark skirt; very unremarkable, most likely to ensure focus on the important eyeglasses. Eyeglasses are often used in films to conceal beauty. The frames that Laura Elliot wears are so thick that she could not see through them, but despite this Hitchcock made her wear them in every scene, even long shots.[130] He wanted to make her eyes look very small and "pig eyed".[131]

[130] McGilliagan, *Darkness and Light,* 452.
[131] Ibid.

Miriam is a feisty character, tough-talking Guy and teasing him about his money and success. She has openly cheated on him and is now pregnant with another man's child. As soon as Guy hands Miriam money for her lawyer fees, she cruelly admits she has no intention of divorcing him. Now that he is successful, and also probably due to jealousy over his love of Ann, she will stay with him and raise the child as his. This enrages Guy and they get into an altercation in the middle of the record store.

In his fury, Guy goes to a phone booth to relay the bad news to Ann. Here we see her for the first time; a lovely brunette with large, dark eyes. All we see of her clothing is her white top with all-over accordion pleating. Although we have only seen Ann's top, the costuming of Ann and Miriam demonstrates a stark contrast between the two women. They both wear short sleeved white tops with collars and a button front, yet they are very different. Miriam's top is starchy, stiff, and unflattering, with a large pointed collar. Ann's blouse is soft and sweet, with a small collar and decorative pearlescent buttons. The costuming underlines what the audience is meant to feel about each woman: Miriam is unlikeable and also rather plain, while Ann is a likeable woman who is clearly beautiful.

Ann seems to be a bit concerned by Guy's demeanor, even before he yells about wanting to strangle Miriam. Immediately after Guy's bold and violent statement, the film cuts to a pair of hands simulating a strangling motion. As the camera pans back we see Bruno, sitting at home admiring the manicure he just received from his mother. A grown man being groomed by his mother is disturbing in and of itself, but her genuine concern over whether she cut the length of his nails to his liking cements Bruno's status as a true mama's boy.

Bruno is wearing black silk pajamas with white piping underneath an incredibly loud silk robe bearing a graphic print of circles and lines. Through his costume and grooming it is clear that Bruno is a vain, narcissistic mama's boy. Even without the dialogue, which consists of his mother doting on him as though he were a young child, this is apparent. The luxurious silk of his pajamas and robe suggest his need to feel rich and pampered, further proved by the actions of his personal manicurist/mother. The busy, graphic print on his robe may indicate the impending chaos Bruno will soon cause, and is also representative of his desire to be noticed, as well as his mental unrest.

We next see Bruno as he is departing a train, dressed in a noticeably more understated look that we have previously seen from him. This is most likely a calculated move on his part. He is en route to stalk and murder Miriam and it would be in his best interest to be nondescript. He is dressed in all solid colors, which is very uncharacteristic. He is wearing a simple dark suit and tie with a white shirt.

He waits outside Miriam's house until she leaves, flanked by two male companions. She wears her defining eyeglasses and a floral dress. The soft, floral patterned dress and her hair worn loose shows Miriam in a softer light than we saw before. Humanizing her a bit after her harsh introduction, softening the audience's impression of her, is an intelligent move. The audience should dislike Miriam, but not want to see her die. She also wears a thick, heavy looking gold necklace which tightly hugs her neck. It is likely meant to draw the eye of the audience to Miriam's neck, and to suggest the idea of strangulation yet again.

They all arrive at the fair and Miriam and her companions go straight for ice cream. She turns around and notices Bruno staring at her and instead of being startled,

she seductively licks her ice cream cone. She continues to flirt with him as they arrive at a strength game, where the person uses a mallet to send a piece of metal as far up the gauge as possible, striking the bell at the top to win. Bruno impresses Miriam by winning the game and she continues to entice him and he continues to follow her.

Bruno follows Miriam and her companions through the "Tunnel of Love" to an island on the fairgrounds. As soon as Miriam steps away from her friends, Bruno finally commits the murder, despite there being people nearby. Bruno puts his hands around Miriam's neck and her glasses fall to the ground. For Hitchcock, the removal of eyeglasses often symbolized vulnerability.[132] In this case, a forcible removal of the glasses indicates an extreme state of vulnerability, utter hopelessness, and violence. The rest of the murder is seen through a reflection in the eyeglass lens. Miriam's glasses represented her; now they have shattered, symbolizing Miriam's death.

In his book, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, Donald Spoto discusses the importance and innovation of the murder scene. He says, "The aestheticizing of the horror somehow enables the audience to contemplate more fully its reality; instead of turning away from the image, repulsed, we gaze, and so are forced to assess feelings, reactions and moral judgments about the very acts perceived (196)." Hitchcock was not very much interested in showing violent acts, but conveying the implication of the act. He felt that doing the minimum onscreen, allowed the audience to do the work, therefore affecting the audience more thoroughly.[133]

Bruno very calmly leaves the scene of the crime, only drawing one suspicious look from a man as he passes through the crowd. Bruno helps a blind man cross the

[132] Spoto, *Spellbound,* 110.
[133] "A Redbook Dialogue", 146.

street, presumably to blend in and appear normal, and almost definitely not for the purpose of good will. As he looks at his watch the film cuts to Guy checking his watch at the exact same time. The connection between Guy and Bruno is underlined by these companion shots of the men checking their watches. At times its seems as though they are portraying two sides of one man. This is probably due to the depiction of the two men as polar opposites. Traditionally, light colors are associated with good while dark colors are associated with evil. In *Strangers*, Guy is generally associated with light colors (good), while Bruno is associated primarily with dark colors (evil). One of the most noticeable ways the film does this is through the men's wardrobe. Guy is always featured in light colored suits and bright backdrops, while Bruno wears dark colors and is often shot in shadows.

The next scene opens with Bruno waiting in the shadows across the street from Guy's home. Guy comes across and frantically inquires as to why Bruno is there. Bruno informs him that he has murdered Miriam. He hands Guy Miriam's broken glasses, which symbolize the violent act. The scene is shot in such a way that Guy, on the right, is shown with light beaming down on him. He also wears a light colored suit. Bruno, on the left, is wearing a dark suit and is hidden in shadows and behind iron bars.

Following the confrontation between Guy and Bruno, Guy receives a phone call from Ann and then goes to her house where he encounters Ann, her father, and her sister Barbara (Patricia Hitchcock). They are all in their pajamas and robes. Ann's father, a Senator, wears a dark printed robe with a white cravat. Barbara wears pant pajamas, a floral robe with a tie at the collar, and glasses with very similar frames to Miriam's. Ann wears a light colored silk robe with a detailed, scalloped collar. As with Bruno's robe

earlier, much about each character is revealed through the style of robe/pajamas they choose: the father is aristocratic, Ann is classical and poised, and Barbara is independent and progressive. The clothes these characters wear here in their private space are more telling of their personalities than the clothes they might be seen wearing in public spaces. In a public space one would likely be conscious of how others might assess one's appearance, and may dress according to how they want to be perceived. It can be assumed that the costuming in the film is meant to reflect this same distinction which occurs in life.

Guy arrives in Washington with his police escort, the two men wearing contrasting suits. Guy wears a very light, almost white, monochrome look while his escort wears a black suit and dark grey fedora. In his hotel room we see him in his pajamas and robe. He wears a simple striped set with a dark cotton robe. He dresses simply and not flashy at all, despite being established in the film as quite rich. Bruno has delivered a note through the door, continuing to harass Guy about meeting with him. He is intent on Guy holding up his end of the bargain (that was never made) and kill Bruno's father.

Without any response from Guy, Bruno tracks him down while he and Ann are out together. He calls Guy over and, as Ann looks on, she and the camera zero in on Bruno's eponymous tie pin. The clip shines a bright gold against Bruno's dark suit and tie. Once again, Guy is in a contrasting light-colored suit. Guy insists that Bruno leave him alone.

Bruno follows Guy to his tennis match the following day- a doubles match, in accordance with the theme of the film. Guy spots Bruno in the stands and then later

schmoozing with Ann and two of her acquaintances. It is not until Guy arrives at the table that Ann notices the tie pin on Bruno. We get yet another close up on the pin bearing Bruno's name. She now remembers Bruno from the previous day's encounter.

Hitchcock seems to be using the tie pin, which directly gives away Bruno's identity, as a demonstration of how clothing and accessories can give away a great deal about the person wearing them. Hitchcock also used a tie pin in a similar way in *Frenzy* (1972). The murderer in the film, Robert Rusk, wears a jeweled 'R' tie pin. It is ripped off by one of his victims during the murder, and he must scramble to recover it before he is caught. Rusk is similar to Bruno in that he is a flamboyant mama's boy and also a murderer. Interestingly, Rusk happens to murder his victims using neckties.

Barbara comes over to the table where Ann, Bruno, and the others sit to introduce herself. Bruno sees her- and her eyeglasses- and his expression immediately shows a small hint of rage. He stares intently at her as her expression goes from polite smile to slight terror. He sees a reflection in her glasses, a flashback to Miriam's murder. Here we see another example of someone's choice of dress, in this case eyeglasses, as significant to the storytelling in the film. Barbara's eyeglasses help to define her as a character, but they also have the power to associate her with another person who chose to wear a similar item.

Continuing to stalk Guy, Bruno shows up at the gala that Guy is attending with Ann and her family. Both men wear black tuxedos, but while Guy has a black bow-tie, Bruno's is white, which is a bit of a role reversal. It is possible that this is an intentional costuming choice that would cause the audience to be more willing to accept the possibility that Guy will go through with the murder of Bruno's father. In the scene

before the gala, we see Guy unwrap a gun and store it at his apartment, raising the first questions as to whether Guy is actually considering reciprocating Bruno's 'favor', or possibly intending to murder Bruno instead.

Bruno approaches a pair of women at the gala, one in black and the other in white. He begins having a very disturbing yet ostensibly playful conversation with them about how, hypothetically, they would kill their husbands. Bruno asks if he can demonstrate his strangling technique on the woman in black, who is wearing a thick choker-length necklace similar to the one Miriam wore when Bruno murdered her. Although this item may have subconsciously drawn his attention to her, it isn't until he sees Barbara, wearing her eyeglasses as well as a short necklace, that he snaps and begins to strangle the woman until he passes out on the floor (or feigns to). Here again, the glasses have served as a trigger for Bruno's character and, in turn, a reminder for the audience as well.

Barbara, who is rightly shaken, goes to Ann and tells her what she has seen. She feels that in his mind Bruno was strangling her. She is crying, takes off her glasses and holds them at her waist, and asks Ann "Why me?" At that moment, Ann continues connecting the dots and figuring out the situation at hand. Both this and the conspicuous tie pin happen to be items of costume. It makes a good deal of sense to use costume items to one's advantage while making a film. The audience spends a large potion of a film looking at the actors, as opposed to their surroundings. An item of dress, then, is an ideal prop to utilize as the audience will almost surely recall it.

Following Bruno's scene at the party, Guy confronts him and gingerly tries to coax him into leaving. He tells Bruno to pull himself together and begrudgingly but gently helps him fix his bowtie. The act of tying the tie creates a feeling of affection for

Bruno that is left up to the audience to debate the nature of. It seems that Bruno may represent the suppressed aspects of Guy's personality. They are portrayed as opposites but also connected to one another. Bruno committed an act that Guy may have fantasized about, but would probably never attempt. When Guy is complaining to Ann that Miriam will not divorce him, he says that he wants to strangle her. Bruno later kills Miriam by strangulation. Also, on multiple occasions in the film we see the men engaging in the same activities separately at the same time, such as the men checking their watches simultaneously and Bruno and Guy both observing the same sunset from two different locations.

When next we see Guy, he is headed to Bruno's home in the middle of the night, wearing a dark grey suit and a light and dark striped tie; the dark suit and two-toned tie suggesting his possible transition to the 'dark' side. The audience is made to wonder here if Guy is going to go commit murder upon Bruno's father, or possibly Bruno. When Guy enters Mr. Antony's room, instead of using his gun, Guy politely wakes up the man in the bed by saying that he needs to talk to him about his son. A figure rises in the bed, but it turns out to be Bruno himself, who did not fall for Guy's plan. It is a striking image, Bruno propped up in his full tuxedo, tie fastened and all. Hitchcock paid particular attention to the execution of this scene. He ordered satin bed sheets so that there would not be lint on Robert Walker's dinner jacket.[134]

This point in the film begins the first time we see scenes where a pair of characters in a scene wear complementing colors. Prior to this point the costumes of every pair were contrasting light and dark colors. Both of Guy's police escorts wear a dark grey suit. When Ann goes to Bruno's home, she and Bruno's mother both wear light

[134] Spoto, *Dark Side,* 326.

colored skirts and tops. During Guy's tennis match he and his opponent both wear white while Ann and Barbara look on, both wearing light colored dresses with bows at the collar and buttons on the bodice. Meanwhile, Bruno and the man next to him on the train both wear dark grey. It is possible that this is a calculated costuming decision designed to signify the end of the connection between Guy and Bruno. They are no longer two sides of the same coin. Guy has made a decision to expose Bruno, and for the first time in the film it is clear that Guy will not be committing the murder of Bruno's father.

Bruno is in possession of Guy's lighter, which is engraved with the initials of Guy and Ann, and he intends to plant it at the murder scene in order to frame Guy. Before Guy can depart to catch Bruno, he must play in a tennis match. In a tense scene, Guy races to win his match while Bruno frantically tries to retrieve the lighter from a sewer drain where he accidentally dropped it into. Guy is able to make it to the fairgrounds just in time to confront Bruno. The scene is incredibly tense, as it takes place aboard a carousel that is spinning out of control. When the carousel finally crashes, Bruno is crushed beneath one of the horses and slowly dies, exposing upon death Guy's lighter, thus freeing Guy from accusation.

Guy immediately calls Ann and tells her the news. She tells her father and sister and says she is going to meet Guy somewhere and that he asked her to bring him some--and she gets cut off by her sister. We can assume she was going to say 'clothes,' as when we see them on the train following their reunion he is in a new suit. This is a good example of the necessity of clothes. Changing clothes is a way for Guy to feel better instantly, as he desires to have a new beginning after a bad experience. Putting on a fresh suit made Guy feel as though his nightmare was over and he can now move on with his

love, Ann. As they joyfully ride together on the train, a priest, recognized by the clerical collar peeking out from his suit jacket, asks "Are you Guy Haines?"- an exact quote of Bruno's initial encounter with Guy. Guy and Ann look at each other and, without a word, exit the train car.

Conclusion

Strangers on a Train utilizes costuming as a descriptor of character, to provide contrast, and to advance the plot. All of these things are integral elements to the storytelling in the film, and the film would not function without them. While costuming is always in some way descriptive of the character wearing it, in *Strangers*, as well as many other Hitchcock films, it has an added significance. Throughout the film Hitchcock also creates contrast between characters using their costuming. The plot of the film is also dependent upon particular items of costuming used as significant props.

The film begins with an introduction of the two main characters via their footwear. The audience has an instant impression of the men before they speak, even before we have seen their faces. There is also an immediate contrast set up between the two women in Guy's life in the form of their plain white blouses that happen to send completely different messages. We learn a lot about Miriam and Bruno through their accessories, eyeglasses and tie pin, respectively. We also see all of the characters in their pajamas at some point throughout the film. Clothing worn by the characters in their private space may reveal more intimate details about the characters and provide a window to their true personalities.

Hitchcock also uses costume to create contrast throughout the film. In every scene that Guy and Bruno share, the two men wear contrasting clothing. This is also the

case for all of the other pairs we see throughout the film. It is not until the last portion of the film that the costumes of the pairs begin to coordinate with one another. It is almost certainly a calculated move by Hitchcock, as was most every aspect of his films. It is not until it is clear that Guy will not be completing his part of Bruno's plan that we see coordination between any two characters' costumes. This possibly represents the dissolution of any connection between the two men.

Finally, Hitchcock used particular costume props as tools for advancing the plot. The eyeglasses belonging to both Miriam and Barbara are significant to the plot of the film. Barbara's glasses are the catalyst for Bruno's post-murder fits of rage; the minor internal one at the country club and the major life-threatening one at the gala. Bruno's tie pin is the other major costume prop in the film. It becomes a significant piece of the puzzle for Ann in discovering what is happening to Guy.

Comparative Analysis of *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train*

While both *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train* are ripe with effective usage of costume as a storytelling tool, there is one noticeably different goal at hand for the costuming in each film. *Stage Fright* tends to use costuming as a means of concealing the true motives and characteristics of the characters, while *Strangers* uses costuming primarily to reveal information about the characters. The two films feature many of the same types of usage of costume as a storytelling tool. They both feature significant usage of costume to conceal and reveal aspects of the characters, to provide contrast within a scene, and for advancement of plot.

Throughout *Stage Fright,* the main characters of Eve and Charlotte are rarely revealing their true self or motives. Eve must embody the character of Doris in order to spy on Charlotte, hoping to acquire proof that it was Charlotte who committed the murder, not Jonathan, whom she initially believes to be innocent. Additionally, upon her first meeting with Ordinary Smith, she must portray a damsel in distress in order to get his attention in hopes of gathering information on the murder case. When she meets with Nellie for the first time, she creates the persona of a newspaper reporter investigating the murder.

Eve is assuming these roles with the intention of helping a friend, and probably somewhat to gain experience, as she is an aspiring actress. Charlotte, on the other hand, is a cold-hearted woman who constantly maintains a façade in order to mask her true identity and motives. Charlotte uses glamour to create her persona and she uses the power that her strong image creates to control everyone around her, particularly men. As opposed to young Eve, Charlotte is an established star, and the gulf between their respective acting abilities is apparent.

In *Strangers on a Train*, Hitchcock uses costuming as a means of providing descriptive contrast between pairs of characters. He uses companion shots of Guy and Bruno's shoes to set up an immediate contrast between his leading men. Similarly, but to a more subtle extent, a contrast between Ann and Miriam is exhibited through their similar yet very different blouses. Ann is characterized as soft, kind and classy, while Miriam seems to be abrasive and harsh. Contrast is a notable element in both films, but primarily in *Strangers*, where most every scene exhibits contrast between pairs of characters through their oppositely colored costumes.

Costuming is also an important part of the characterization of all the players in the film. We are able to tell a great deal about the two leading men by their clothes; Bruno's loud attire and monogrammed tie pin establish him as a flamboyant mama's boy, while Guy's understated, muted costumes peg him a serious man. Each of the characters, at some point during *Strangers* is seen in their pajamas, letting the audience in on their choice in dress in their private space.

Hitchcock used costume props as a tool for advancement of plot in both *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train.* In *Stage Fright*, the primary example of this is the blood-stained dress, which is a significant costume item whose effect permeates the entire film. In the beginning of the film, immediately following the conclusion of Jonathan's version of events as told to Eve, the dress is used to provide the audience with a clue to Jonathan's true character. When the dress is juxtaposed with his hand clasping Eve's somewhat menacingly, it is likely that the audience is meant to infer that Jonathan is actually a manipulative psychopath. The dress is used as a tool for manipulation and blackmail by Jonathan. He hopes that the dress will help to implicate Charlotte for the murder of her husband, but holding on to the 'evidence' proves to be a mistake when the Commodore notices upon examination that the blood has been smeared on deliberately.

Elsewhere in *Stage Fright*, several other costume props are utilized for the advancement of plot. When Eve bribes Nellie with cash to allow her to pose as her cousin to spy on Charlotte, the camera focuses on the transfer of money from one woman's handbag to the other, the handbags representing the secretive nature of the exchange, and more generally the hidden agendas permeating the entire film. Also, when Charlotte is being questioned by detectives in her home, she is continuously fiddling with

a handkerchief in an alluring manner, then uses it while pretending to be sick in order to cut the questioning short. Finally, Hitchcock relies heavily on umbrellas during the portion of the film that takes place at the garden party. The umbrellas seemingly represent the concealment of the characters' true selves and motives. Once Eve begins to be discovered, the umbrellas close, representing her cover being blown.

In *Strangers on a Train,* there are two major costume items used to advance the plot of the film: Bruno's tie pin and Barbara's eyeglasses. Bruno's tie pin is not only a character defining costume piece, but it serves as a clue for Ann in discovering what is happening to Guy as well as Bruno's role in the situation. Later, Barbara's eyeglasses provide the other puzzle piece that Ann needs to unravel the situation. Barbara's eyeglasses are significant as they provide a call-back for Bruno to Miriam's murder. The first time he sees Barbara, Bruno internally flashes back to the scene of the crime, but later when he sees Barbara again, the sight of her eyeglasses sends him into a full rage, almost killing another innocent woman.

Overall, the use of costuming in both *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train* proves to be a significant and useful element to the narrative of each film. Hitchcock's reliance on the visual is certainly represented in part by the costuming in the films. Without it, neither *Stage Fright* or *Strangers on a Train* would function as effectively, if at all, as there are key costuming elements in each film that directly affect the plot. Similarly, the characters in each film would be far less defined, resulting in a less compelling story.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore and analyze the costumes in two Hitchcock films, *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train*, in order to investigate the significance of costuming to the storytelling in Hitchcock's films. The study focused on costume items that were used as a storytelling tool to conceal or reveal information about the characters, to create contrast in order to clarify or enhance the story, or as a tool for the advancement of plot.

Prior to analysis of the chosen films, secondary sources were gathered relating to subjects relevant to the topic of the research. These topics were society, dress, and fashion in the fifties, film in the fifties, costume in film, and an examination of the filmmaking style and background of Alfred Hitchcock. The information gathered was used to supplement and inform the analysis and discussion completed within the study.

Objectives Examined

Objective 1: To explore and record instances of costuming used as a storytelling tool in Stage Fright *and* Strangers on a Train*, identifying instances in which costumes are used to shape the audience's perception of a character, to create contrast in order to clarify or enhance the story, or as a tool for the advancement of plot.*

Each film was viewed multiple times with particular attention paid to the costumes in the films. All instances of costuming used as a storytelling tool were noted.

Objective 2: To analyze each film in order to examine and demonstrate the impact of costume on the storytelling in each film.

The notes were examined and used to create a sequential analysis of each film. Each usage was decoded based on the context with which it was presented within the film. A conclusion was then constructed for each film, noting primary types of costuming usage present.

Objective 3: To compare and contrast the findings of the individual film analyses against one another.

The two films were then compared and contrasted in terms of the ways in which costuming was used within each film. There were many similarities present, but also a distinct difference in terms of how costuming was used to either conceal or reveal information about a character.

Major Findings

1. Scene by scene within each film, costume was consistently used to maximum effect on the storytelling in the films.
2. Costumes in *Stage Fright* are used primarily to conceal characters' identities and motives: Examples include Charlotte's total effect of glamour made up of elaborate dresses, diamonds, make-up and hair styles; Eve's weak efforts to become Doris, her dowdy clothes and lack of make up; and the use of umbrellas to conceal and later reveal characters.

3. Costumes in *Strangers on a Train* are used primarily to reveal information about the characters. Examples include the introduction of Guy and Bruno through their shoes, the use of Bruno's tie pin to identify essential characteristics of his personality, and Miriam's glasses used as a tool to narrate the crime.
4. Costume was used throughout both films, but more prominently in *Strangers*, as a means of providing visual contrast between characters and between a character and the background of the scene: In *Strangers,* Hitchcock uses the contrast of light and dark in the characters' costumes throughout the majority of the film for thematic effect.
5. Costume props were used in both films for the advancement of plot: In *Stage Fright* a large part of the movie's plot revolves around the blood-stained dress while in *Strangers* Bruno's tie pin and Barbara's eyeglasses both help to move the story along at crucial points.
6. Costume props were used in both films to provide a symbolic representation of the themes and story of the film. In *Stage Fright* costume pieces and costume props fulfilling this mission include the blood-stained dress, handbags, and the umbrellas used in the garden party scene. In *Strangers* Miriam's eyeglasses and Bruno's tie pin also fulfill that role.

Implications

While there has been extensive research conducted on Alfred Hitchcock's films over the years, to my knowledge, there has been no study which focuses solely on the use of costuming as a storytelling tool within the films. Costuming in general has been

largely overlooked in the past, and though that is no longer the case, there is much to be explored on the subject. The present study will hopefully provide some use for future film costuming research. The framework for analysis may be utilized for any film or other visual medium.

Furthermore, the research presented here elaborates upon the existing body of knowledge of Hitchcock's films and style. Hitchcock is a legendary filmmaker and scholars and fans will continue to seek new information and analysis of his films for many years to come. The researcher conducted this study with the hopes of it being accessible and interesting to a variety of readers. The study may be of interest to film enthusiasts, dress historians, sociologists, and many others.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Continue the research by examining other films in Hitchcock's filmography using the same objectives and methodology utilized in the present study in order to further expand the body of knowledge on Hitchcock and costuming. Both *Dial M for Murder* (1954) and *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) offer the added costuming factor of color to the films. *Dial M* contains a color progression of the heroine's costume throughout the film, reflecting the horrors that she faces. The color scheme in *The Man Who Knew* shifts from cool to warm as the story progresses.
2. Have other researchers repeat the methodology utilized in this study to evaluate the same films, in order to ensure that the initial researcher properly and comprehensively assessed the films and to strengthen the validity of this research.

3. View the films in terms of the fashion and styles of the period and the seemingly classic looks employed by Hitchcock. Drawing from information about Hitchcock choosing to stay away from current fashions in his films due to his fear that they would date the film, the films could be analyzed in terms of how successful Hitchcock was in depicting classic looks that do not appear dated with time.
4. Expand the scope of the research to include genres other than thrillers in order to compare the types of usage between genres. For example, Hitchcock's comedy, *The Trouble with Harry* (1955). An investigation of the significance of the bright red-tipped socks that are prominently featured on Harry's corpse, which contrast the other characters' costumes and may also provide a clue to discovering his murderer.
5. To expand the scope of the research to span his entire career in order to examine any changes in Hitchcock's usage of costuming throughout the years, particularly from the silent era, to black and white, to color.

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