

THE WARDROBE OF WORKING WOMEN IN THE 1940S: HOLLYWOOD MOVIES,
NEWSPAPERS, AND MAGAZINES

by

April Nicole Keefe

(Under the Direction of Patricia Hunt-Hurst)

ABSTRACT

Women in the 1940s came into the workforce in large numbers, taking over jobs in both factories and the white-collar sector. This study's goal was to learn what professional dress advice white-collar women were given, and compare it to what professional women wore in the movies made in and set in the same decade. In order to accomplish this, the decade was split into two "half-decades;" one from 1941 to 1946, and the other from 1947 to 1949. Various magazines and newspapers were reviewed for professional advice, and nine movies were viewed. The conclusion was that the advice and movies from 1941 to 1946 had a relationship, and those from 1947 to 1949 did not.

INDEX WORDS: Workingwomen, Businesswomen, Career Women, Career Girls
Professional Dress Advice, Movie Costumes, Costume Designers, White-
Collar, Hollywood Movies, Magazines, Newspapers

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my wonderful family:

To my Uncle Ronnie and Cher, who always support and believe in me.

To my Granny, who is always proud of whatever I accomplish.

To my Grandma and Papa, who encourage me to be the best I can be, and do anything they can
to help me achieve my dreams.

To my Daddy and my sister, Marie, who have spent the past two years going through this with
me, and have always been willing to listen and help when I'm overwhelmed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Dress historically has often indicated occupation.” This quote from Penny Storm’s *Functions of Dress: Tool of Culture and Individual* (1987, p.136) tells how important dress is in relation to the working world. The age-old quote, “that clothes make the man,” is now true for women, too. But how do women know the difference between business attire and leisure time clothing? Over the years, experts in the fields of business and fashion have written numerous books and articles advising women on what to wear during the working hours. Movies inform the public of lifestyle changes, social events, and influence fashion; they can also be viewed to see if the costume designers took dress advice from magazines and newspapers into account when designing for movies, or if the professional dress experts were possibly influenced by the movie costumes designed by some of the greatest couturiers of the time.

As an avid movie viewer, I have always been intrigued with the costumes worn by the women and men on the screen. Historical movies and period pieces are my favorite movies and television shows to watch because of this interest. I plan to become very well versed in movie costumes and the silhouette of the 1940s, an era that produced some of the best items of apparel, in my humble opinion. One day I hope to continue this research with other decades, eventually becoming an expert in the field of historic costumes. I would love for my future career to deal with costuming movie stars with historically accurate representations of the period women and men they are portraying.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine what women in offices and professional settings were advised to wear to work during the 1940s compared to how movies costumed women working in business fields in movies set in and filmed during the same years. Women joined the workforce in large numbers during World War II; some went to work in factories where overalls and coveralls were required, while others worked in offices or other white-collar jobs that required professional attire. Workingwomen in the 1940s not only had to deal with factory regulations on clothing; they also had to abide by restrictions on clothing due to government regulations, restrictions on clothing, and factory regulations. Many women decided to stay in the workforce after the war ended and the clothing regulations were lifted. With the introduction of Christian Dior's "New Look," women had a brand new silhouette to wear to work. In this study, the terms "businesswomen," "career women," "professional women," "working women," and "white collar women," were used interchangeably and all meant that the women worked in an office, a business, or in the courtroom.

Significance

The significance of this study was to better understand what professional dress meant in terms of the movies and professional dress advice during the 1940s. This information will add to the body of knowledge about Hollywood movies, business attire, and women in the 1940s. There is currently a lack of information regarding movie costumes in relation to the work clothing worn or advised to wear during the years of and after World War II, and this study aims to add to the body of knowledge about women and clothing for white-collar jobs during the 1940s.

Objectives

The objectives for this study were as follows:

1. To understand the advice given to women about professional dress in the 1940s.
2. To examine the styles worn by businesswomen in Hollywood movies in the 1940s.
3. To compare the professional dress advice to the articles of clothing worn in the movies.

Limitations of the Study

As with all research, there were limitations to this study. The limitations were as follows:

1. The movies of the 1940s were mostly in black and white, which prevented the researcher from seeing what colors the women's outfits were.
2. A limited number of movies were reviewed, nine in total, one each from the years 1941 to 1949.
3. A limited number of primary sources were examined for dress advice. These included the following newspapers and magazines: *Vogue*, *McCall's*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Atlanta Constitution* (now known as *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*).

Definition of Terms

1940s – the decade including World War II and the post-war period

Ballerina length – “reaching to center of the calf of the leg or a little below, worn particularly by ballet dancers” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 325)

Bolero jackets – “waist length or rib length jacket, open in front with or without sleeves, often embroidered” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 45)

Bustle – “pad, cushion, or arrangement of steel springs creating a bulbous projection below the waist in the back of woman’s dress” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 65); in the 1940s, bustle-like additions were added to jackets, which is the context used for this study

Byron collar – “collar with large points and not much roll” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 116)

Cardigan – “coat with no collar, fastened down center front” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 107)

Chesterfield coat – “semi-fitted, straight cut coat in single and double-breasted style with black velvet collar” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 107)

Cloche hat – “deep crowned hat with no or very narrow brim, fitting head closely, almost concealing all of short hair” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 271)

Convertible collar – “rolled shirt collar that can be worn open as sport collar or fastened by a small concealed button and loop” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 117)

Costume – “an outfit worn to create the appearance characteristic of a particular period, person, place, or thing” (“Costume,” 2012)

Dior’s New Look – a style that premiered in 1947 and consisted of a mid-calf length skirt, a nipped-in waist, and rounded shoulders and hips (Esquevin, 2008).

Dirndl skirt – “full and gathered into band at waist” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 468)

Dressmaker suit – “suit made with soft lines and fine details, as by a dressmaker, contrasted to tailor made styles that have sharply defined lines” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 492)

Drop-front – “descriptive of pants that are fastened by two buttoned plackets on either side of the center front, allowing the front panel to drop down when unbuttoned,” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 161); in the 1940s, the style was also used for women’s skirts

Fashion – “the style or styles of clothing and accessories worn at a particular time by a particular group of people” (Stone, 2008)

Film Noir – films that “questioned the ideals of American capitalism” and “expressed the social and personal tensions between men and women in the postwar period” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 40)

Hollywood Film – “refers to movies made and released by a handful of filmmaking companies located in and around Hollywood, California” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 24). Includes movies produced by Universal, MGM, 20th Century-Fox, Paramount, and Warner Brothers.

Jumper dresses – “sleeveless and collarless dress usually worn over contrasting blouse or sweater” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 156)

Kick pleats – “single flat pleat or one inverted pleat at center back of skirt to make walking easier” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 404)

Peplum skirt – “extension of bodice of dress that comes below waistline, sometimes pleated, sometimes flared” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 393); in the 1940s, peplum detail was also found on the backs of jackets

Primary sources – those that appeared first in time (i.e. letters, photographs, films, diaries, etc.) (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 165)

Secondary sources – “works of historians who have interpreted and written about primary sources” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 167)

Separates – “clothes, mostly sportswear, intended to be worn together; jacket, blouse, and skirt or pants not sold as a suit are separates” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 443)

Shawl collar – “cut in one piece or seamed in the back, that follows the front opening of garment without separate lapels” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 119)

Shirtwaist dresses – “dress with top styled liked a tailored shirt, usually buttoned from neck to waist, with either straight or full skirt” (Goble & Davis, 1975, p. 159)

Suit – “an ensemble of two or more usually matching outer garments (as a jacket, vest, and trousers)” (“Suit,” n.d.)

Turnover collar – “any collar that folds over the garment or on itself” (Goble & Davis, 19755, p. 119)

White-collar – “belonging or pertaining to the ranks of office and professional workers whose jobs generally do not involve manual labor or the wearing of a uniform or work clothes” (“White collar,” 2012).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The 1940s was a very distinct decade, both in its fashion and in the popular movies. The common theme, however, lies within the realm of white-collar workingwomen. These women who came into the workforce were portrayed by famous actresses on screen, and encouraged off-screen by experts to dress the part during working hours. White-collar workingwomen were a huge part of this decade, in the movie world, working world, and in the fashion world. Women made up thirty six percent of the workforce during World War II (Casper, 2007). After the war ended, many women left the workforce to return to their home lives and begin families, while other women decided to claim their right to stay in the workforce.

The 1940s could be viewed as two “half-decades” (Graebner, 1991, p. 1): the first from 1940-1945, and the second from 1945-1949, separated in 1945 by numerous important events, including the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of World War II. In his book, *The Age of Doubt: American Thought and Culture in the 1940s*, William Graebner explained his version of the 1940s:

Seen in these terms, the first half of the forties was a culture of war: public, nationalistic, pragmatic, and realistic; championing the group and its political equivalent, democracy; committed to production and to the new roles for women it required; and, torn by the inevitable separations, sentimental. The second half was a culture of peace: private, familial, characterized by a dawn-of-the-new-day idealism; favoring the individual and its political equivalent, freedom; committed to consumption and the consequent reversion

to traditional gender roles; and, the far-flung populace brought back together, blissfully domestic (1991, p. 1).

This obvious difference between the first and second half of the decade also translated into the movies made in these years. From movies that focused on the war front, to those featuring workingwomen, to those about women waiting for their men to come back home, and movies featuring the war's aftermath, the 1940s had a wide range of movies starring women. For the purpose of this study, instead of using Graebner's decade split for clothing discussions, the decade separation used by Farrell-Beck and Parsons (2007) will be used. The decade split they used is 1940 to 1946 and 1947 to 1949. This split was used because 1946 was when "wartime consumer controls end" (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, p. 109). The Graebner decade split will still be used for the movie discussions.

With the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, America dove full force into the war effort, with men leaving their families to go overseas as soldiers on the battlefronts. Women rose to the occasion to fill the void in the workforce left by the soldiers, as they had done decades before during World War I. For the next four years, women were the driving force behind the American economy. This opened women up to a whole new world of independence ("Women's Fashions," 2008).

The 1940s was a decade of little certainty. The people of America and many European countries watched their relatives and friends go off to war, likely to never return. They learned that millions were killed in the Holocaust. They saw the invention and detonation of the atomic bomb to end the war. There is no doubt that these events affected all aspects of American life during the entire decade, not just during the first half (Graebner, 1991).

Even before war was officially declared in the United States, the fashion community, along with other industries, was supporting those who had enlisted and preparing for the day when the USA would inevitably enter the war. “Women of America . . . step forth and find your place in the war” (Baker, 1980, p. 4). This quote from the book *Images of Women in Film: The War Years, 1941-1945* was an example of the campaigns designed to recruit women into the workforce during the war. Magazines and newspapers encouraged women to go to work. Magazines were instrumental in letting women know that they could retain their glamour while working in factories (Baker, 1980).

The 1940s was a decade of change in other ways as well. Television became vastly popular when the war ended, and affected other mediums like radio and books. Televisions were very expensive, though, so by the end of the decade only nine percent of households had one (Casper, 2007). College graduates also increased after World War II, as did the reading of fiction books. Books like *The Egyptian* were made into movies within five years of their release. Paperbacks abounded in various genres like detective stories and thrillers (Casper, 2007).

When the war ended, women were no longer needed in the workforce, and were encouraged to leave their jobs behind for the more traditional role of homemaker. After the war, women who still worked were referred to as the “problem of working women” by *The New York Times* (“Working Women,” 1945). Some people believed the home and family unit would break apart if women stayed in the workforce and out of the home. However, many women did not want to leave their careers. *The Washington Post* reported in 1944 that so many women wanted to stay in the workforce that fifteen million jobs would have to be found for them (Lindsay, 1944b).

Women's Wear 1940-1946

For the first six years of the 1940s, conservationism was the primary concern in all facets of life. Because of this, women's fashion was fairly stagnant from 1941 to 1946 (Olian, 1992). The Fashion Group (an organization of industry professionals) stated in 1942: "The industry has existed upon the very nature of change, and now change is limited . . . not only by Government Orders . . . not only by diminishing supplies . . . but by the need to avoid obsolescence and waste at all costs" (Olian, 1992, p. iii).

During the early 1940s, before the United States entered World War II, the dominant silhouette for women included fitted jackets or bodices with padded shoulders and full, knee-length flared skirts (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007; Buckland, 2005). Skirts often had pleats or draping (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). The waistline was natural, the shoes were heavy, and women's go-to accessory was a hat (Baker, 2007).

This was the silhouette impacted by the L-85 regulations imposed by the U.S. government in April 1942 (Buckland, 2005). Under the regulations, clothing could not have the following: "no jackets over twenty-five inches long and no belts over two inches wide, no dolman sleeves, no cuffs on pant legs, no patch pockets, and no woolen dresses" (Esquevin, 2008, p. 119). Skirts could not be longer than twenty inches long (Olian, 1992). There was also a restriction on the yards of fabric allowed for the making of a suit, with three yards being the maximum. Accessories were not exempt from the regulations: shoes could only have a heel of one inch maximum in the United States (Baker, 2007). Rubber girdles were completely banned, and zippers could not be used for non-military clothing (Baker, 2007). Because of the new restrictions, the look of women's clothing became very controlled. This silhouette was the dominant one until 1946, after the war had ended (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). The new

silhouette that developed as a result of the L-85 regulations included pencil skirts that emphasized slim hips and jackets with padded shoulders, which gave a broad or square effect. By 1943, the silhouette of women's wear was a "pronounced T shape . . . broad shoulders and slim torsos" (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, p. 124). These broad shoulders would stay in fashion until the war ended, when shoulders began to have a more natural shape (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). This new silhouette was sometimes referred to as the "Adrian silhouette" by his fans (Esquevin, 2008, p. 119). Adrian was a well-known costume designer for the movies. His influence has been well documented and will be discussed later in this chapter.

During wartime, many other styles were acceptable for daywear. These included: shirtwaist dresses, suits, and separates that met the L-85 regulations (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). Suits were very popular during the war. In 1943, the skirts of women's suits were just below the knee in length and straight and narrow. Vest-like garments known as weskits were introduced into women's wear in the same year (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). Weskits were worn with both long sleeved dresses and skirts with blouses. During the war, scarves or turbans replaced hats, especially for women who worked in factories (Baker, 2007).

American designers took the L-85 regulations to heart and followed them to the letter, yet still managed to make women's clothing exciting. Adrian, one of the most famous costume designers turned fashion designer in this decade, added his own flair to the clothing designed in his house. He used military themed add-ons, like gold braids and gauntlet gloves (Esquevin, 2008). He also used colorful fabrics and sequins to make his designs stand out against the drab war colors (Esquevin, 2008). Many other designers also used military uniform styling to inspire their clothing.

Claire McCardell was another popular fashion designer who focused on clothing made of fabrics that could easily be washed (Yohannan & Nolf, 1998). She also heralded the idea of separates for mixing and matching. Her designs were not readily accepted until 1945, when retailer Lord & Taylor advertised clothing by McCardell and other designers as “The American Look.” McCardell’s unusual designs included tube pullover wraps, halter dresses and tops, and monastic style dresses (Yohannan & Nolf, 1998). “Claire McCardell was essentially doing for America what Coco Chanel had done before her in France – designing and popularizing a way of dressing that made a casual elegance not only acceptable but desirable . . . ” (Yohannan & Nolf, 1998, p. 87). In addition to favoring sportswear and wearing men’s clothing like Chanel, she also enjoyed using hooks, eyes, and clips, similar to the hardware used in Chanel’s clothing, “lead weights, stitched-in hem chains, and cast buttons” (Yohannan & Nolf, 1998, p. 90).

Pants were not a typical daily option for women in the 1940s. Dress reformers in the 1850s attempted the bloomer costume, which included a shortened skirt with pants underneath. This action was not adopted, yet short pants or knickers would become an option for women engaged in gymnastics and, by the end of the 19th century, other sports in college. Pants for sporting activities continued into the early twentieth century, when pajamas were introduced for women in the first decade, and by the 1930s, wide-legged pants were appropriate for entertaining at home. Otherwise, pants continued to only be an option for some sports and leisure activities. Patricia Cunningham (2003) noted, “it may surprise us to realize that it took until the women’s movement of the 1970s for women to be ‘allowed’ to wear trousers for white-collar jobs and for teaching, and then it was a struggle” (p. 221). However, once women started taking over factory jobs for men, both jeans and pants became acceptable for work wear (Baker, 2007). **Figure 1** is a prime example of something a woman would have worn for factory work during the war years.

Women working in factory jobs were often given coveralls or overalls to wear, while those in white-collar jobs wore what was deemed appropriate for the social norms of the period. Factories began to create outfits women could wear that were both safe and attractive. Women's magazines, like *McCall's*, tried to make this appealing to women by claiming wearing coveralls would save women "clothes, time, money, and nervous energy" (Baker, 2007, p. 30).



Figure 1: Example of factory wear (Olian, 1992, p. 30).

It was not acceptable for women to wear pants to the office. They needed something to set themselves apart from the factory women; something to make them look like they belonged in the white-collar workforce; something to make them look professional. Women had already been in the business world in smaller numbers for many years, and had been given much advice about what to wear on the job. The workforce called for more demure clothing, and professionals warned workingwomen against “being a slave of fashion” (Marcketti & Farrell-Beck, 2008, p. 51).

In late 1945, the L-85 regulations were rescinded (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). Designers began to produce skirts with more fullness than had been allowed during the war. The skirts that had been slim during World War II were now gaining pleats and flares (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). However, the hemlines stayed stagnant at right below the knee. Yet, shoulders were losing some of their broadness and becoming more sloped, eventually losing the padding altogether in 1946.

Women’s Wear 1947-1949

In 1947, everything continued changing in the fashion world. *McCall’s* interviewed designer Vincent Monte-Sano for their February 1947 issue, and asked pointed questions about where suit design would be going in the next few years, without the L-85 regulations to hold them back. Monte-Sano stated, “Don’t expect radical changes overnight,”

The slim line is still news, but with freer use of material, you’ll see longer jackets, and with longer jackets come longer skirts. You’ll see accordion pleated skirts again, cuffs on sleeves, more normal rounded shoulders. You’ll see the return of the ensemble, the suit with topper that’s so wearable and right for travel (*McCall’s*, February 1947, p. 141).

This was very accurate forecasting considering what would be introduced in the next few months. However, before the next silhouette took over, women were wearing suits with longer jackets and skirts that hit right below the knee. The “long slim look” (*McCall's*, March 1947, p. 163) was being pushed in the spring of 1947. Peplum skirts were the big news in February of 1947, according to *McCall's*. Described as “just a slight touch of the fascinating bustle business” (*McCall's*, February 1947, p. 163), many skirts or suit jackets had some sort of bustle detail.

In early 1947, a new silhouette took its place at the center of fashion: Christian Dior's New Look, also known as the Corolla line. “The basic elements of the New Look were rounded shoulders, a corseted waist, rounded hips, and a long skirt made full by petticoats” (Esquevin, 2008, p. 151). His look also had mushroom pleats and shoulders that weren't padded (Payne, Winakor, & Farrell-Beck, 1992). The new, fuller skirt was versatile enough to be worn for both daytime and evening events (Esquevin, 2008). His new silhouette caught the fashion world completely off guard, and ruined the ideas of returning to pre-war styles (Baker, 2007). According to Patricia Baker, “the look of the late forties was conservative and understated: the still essential accessories of hat and gloves complete an outfit . . .” (Baker, 2007, p. 26). The New Look was finished off with silk stockings, high heels, and a few simple pieces of jewelry (Reynolds, 1999).

Dior's new silhouette went almost unnoticed in America at first, and he was condemned by many because of the copious amount of fabric used to complete this look. Governments in both the United States and England claimed that the post-war economy could not handle this new silhouette (Baker, 2007). Although the fashion world readily accepted this new feminine look, consumers did not immediately accept the New Look. Many women and men protested the change in hemline lengths. Women did not want to cover their legs, and men did not want more

of women's bodies to be covered by more fabric. Some women were so against the hemline change that they created a club to fight the New Look, the "Little Below the Knee Club." This club gained chapters all over the country. Some chapters even adopted a battle cry: "the Alamo fell, but our hemlines will not" (Olian, 1992, p. iv). Even *McCall's* had readers writing in to question how long they would be forced to endure the "terrible long skirts" (*McCall's*, September 1947, p. 151), to which the magazine's Marian Corey responded,

And may we point out that terrible is the wrong adjective? The right word is *charming* or *lady-like* . . . If you are still holding out, better give in right away. It won't be long before the movies will show shots of us in our old knee-high dresses and we will shriek with laughter (September 1947, p. 151).

The women who disliked the longer skirts, though, were not in the majority. Most women were ready for a change from the wartime monotony. "They had had enough of square shoulders, short skirts, and dark colors. They fell for Dior's curvaceous line, which accented the bust, the waist, the hips, and the ankles, and the sheer extravagance of yards and yards of fabric" (Baker, 2007, p. 22). According to Helen Reynolds in *20th Century Fashion: the 40s and 50s*, "Dior's New Look marked a return to elegance – and women adored it" (1999, p. 18).

By May 1947, flared skirts were again making their way onto the American fashion scene. Not many were seen yet, but enough to catch the attention of *McCall's* fashion reporters. These skirts also had pleats, and were made of over five yards of material. Referred to as the "ballerina flare" (*McCall's*, May 1947, p. 163), it was predicted that by summer 1947, every girl would have one.

When questioned about his design choice that changed fashion, Dior defended his decision. "I designed clothes for flower-like women, with rounded shoulders, full feminine busts,

hand-span waists above enormous spreading skirts” (Esquevin, 2008, p. 152). Dior’s New Look finally gained acceptance in the United States and carried American women into the 1950s, looking feminine and elegant. His designs were the “antithesis of the boxier and broad-shouldered look of the war years” (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007, p. 143). The silhouette was also a complete fabrication: the shoulders, hips, and bra were all padded and the waist was boned (Baker, 2007).

As Christopher Breward put it in his book, *The Culture of Fashion*,

The launch of Christian Dior’s ‘New Look’ in 1947, with its huge swirling skirts, supported by crinolines or layers of petticoats, nipped-in waists, boned torso and cantilevered bust, sweeping necklines for evening wear and tightly-sleeved jackets for day, had been read both as a natural progression of extravagant French couture trends, uninterrupted by the Occupation, and a ‘unbelievable contrast with wartime and post-war austerity’ (Breward, 1995, p. 190-191).

Dior’s New Look touched every part of a woman’s wardrobe. Capes with full sleeves to the elbow were now worn over elbow length gloves for outdoor wear (Baker, 2007). Evening dresses also had small waists and accented hips (Baker, 2007). This new silhouette also affected undergarments. **Figure 2** shows the complicated unmentionables women needed to wear in order to achieve the perfect shape (Baker, 2007). It also changed shoe choice. The wedge or chunky heels that were worn during the war were now exchanged for higher and narrower heels to complement the long skirts. In the July 1947 issue of *McCall’s*, Jane Wallace and Dolly Reed advised women to only wear high heels with the New Look, because lower heels just were not as pretty. “The feet and ankles take the spotlight,” they stated (*McCall’s*, July 1947, p. 116).



Figure 2: Various late 1940s undergarments (Olian, 1992, p. 56).

The women of the 1940s had a lot of things to deal with during the war years with the L-85 regulations, but the later years in the decade allowed women's fashion to bloom into something new, beautiful, and undeniably feminine. Many elements of women's wear changed over the years of this decade: shoulders became less broad; waistlines became more accented; skirts became longer; heels became higher. All in all, however, many elements stayed the same. Women wore skirts, jackets, blouses, heels, and hats throughout the entire decade – something that neither World War II or its aftermath could change.

History of Women in Hollywood Movies

Out of the one hundred top grossing movies since 1946, almost all of them portray women in some way (Rothman, Powers, & Rothman, 1993). It was the way these women were portrayed that changed over the past one hundred years of movies. Stanley Rothman, Stephen Powers, and David Rothman published a study in 1993 entitled "Feminism in Film," in which they considered the changes in how women were portrayed in the movies. They analyzed one hundred and forty-six top-grossing movies, and discovered that women had the lead roles in only twenty five percent of them (Rothman, et al, 1993). The movies from the 1920s and 1930s were the first that showed women in "strong roles" (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 67). Actresses like Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Katharine Hepburn, and Mae West played "worldly women, often fallen women who were punished in the end . . ." (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 67). "These female characters did not compete with men, they occupied an entirely different world from them – a fanciful world of song and dance and excitement that must have appealed to many women in the audience" (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 67). The women audiences of the 1920s and the 1930s, who had endured World War I and the Great Depression, needed this escape from their reality.

The 1940s brought about a change in movies. Men were leaving their women behind to go to the warfront, and the movies of the time began to portray women in a different light. Where many women in real life were flocking to the workforce to take over factory jobs, women in the movies focused more on their family and/or romantic relationships (Rothman, et al, 1993). “Female leads were extraordinary individuals . . . female characters of the 1940s and 1950s would seek to divert men away from pursuing careers . . . to channel more of their energy into domesticity” (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 67). These movies featured women who pursued relationships with men, or attempted to have their man act in a manner the women deemed appropriate.

Rothman’s, Powers’, and Rothman’s study (1993) also looked at the number of women in movies from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s that had a non-traditional job. They found that “a significant number” (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 68) of women held jobs like doctors, lawyers, and CEOs. These women, however, were generally “much more interested in romance” (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 68) and “much more unlikely to be married at a film’s opening” (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 68). These movies showed a strong correlation between having a non-traditional job and the desire for romance. The Doris Day film *Pillow Talk* (1959) was an example of this type of portrayal. Her character, Jan Morrow, was an in-demand interior designer but was unhappy with her life. Her male lead, played by Rock Hudson, blamed her career for the unhappiness. In the end, the two married: Hudson’s character, Brad, was domesticated by Morrow, and in turn, Morrow found happiness in something besides her work (Rothman, et al, 1993). *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, a 1964 film, had a plot with similar elements. In the end, Molly Brown, played by Debbie Reynolds, decided that her success was not as important as her marriage.

After 1965, the idea of relationships and sex changed dramatically. During the pre-1965 era, sex outside of marriage was highly condemned. The movie characters that participated in this were always punished in some way. After 1965, however, this changed. Extramarital and premarital sex became more commonplace when the 1968 rating system was introduced. This new era of movies also brought about a change in how women were portrayed on screen.

“ . . . As representations of sexual conduct became more daring, women’s roles gradually expanded from the predominantly romantic to more complex characterization” (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 69). Female characters, while still caring about romance, also focused on their own self-interest. This type of on-screen woman carried the movies into the 1980s, where the Rothman, Powers, and Rothman study ended. The new self-interested and driven woman’s role created new conflicts for the movies, including women working while their husbands stayed home with the kids (*Mr. Mom*, 1983), enlisted in the military (*Private Benjamin*, 1980), and fought for the safety of the galaxy (*Star Wars*, 1977/1980/1983). In one of the most popular movies of the 1980s, *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), Meg Ryan’s character, Sally, was a successful author who attempted to not have any type of sexual relationship with her best friend, Billy Crystal’s Harry. She was unsuccessful, and the two ended up hurting their friendship over the course of the movie because they were scared of commitment. However, at the end of the movie they realized their true feelings and were married (Rothman, et al, 1993).

As the 1970s and 1980s progressed, on-screen women’s goals became “more closely aligned to those of their male counterparts” (Rothman, et al, 1993, p. 71). Even though women began to be portrayed in similar ways as men, they were generally painted in a more favorable light, especially in the business world, than a man in the same position. Women were also portrayed more favorably when in a position of authority, as seen in the movie *Stripes* (1981),

where the female MPs were viewed as more competent than their male counterparts (Rothman, et al, 1993). This could also be seen in the movies *Police Academy* (1984) and *Police Academy II* (1985), where the female officers were portrayed as strong and capable, as opposed to the silly portrayal of the men.

Movies and Their Influence in Fashion and Society

Hollywood has influenced reality for many decades, albeit in an indirect way. When it comes to fashion, the majority of styles have trickled down from the top – i.e., from designers to movie stars and designers’ on-screen costumes and characters to the moviegoer. Fashion and movies have often gone hand-in-hand. Even though the first films ever made did not revolve around clothing, it was not long before costumes became one of the audience’s favorite parts about movies.

Since the 1920s, fashion seen on the big screen jumped down into the streets. Women copied everything from hairstyles to makeup to clothing they saw on the silver screen. One of the first and greatest examples of this was the *Letty Lynton* dress, a dress with very large ruffled sleeves, from the 1932 movie of the same name, designed by Adrian. *Letty Lynton* starred Joan Crawford, one of the most famous stars of the decade. This dress was so loved by audiences and consumers that numerous recreations were made (Tortora & Eubank, 2010; Bruzzi, 2010). Copies were being sold while the movie was still in theaters. That same year, Crawford was named “the most imitated woman of the year” (Bruzzi, 2010, p. 502). Even men were influenced by what they saw actors on screen wearing – or not wearing. Everyone was paying attention to what the men were wearing on the silver screen, and fashioned themselves – or their men – after the movie stars. “They might not be able to find a Clark Gable of their own, but they certainly could get a guy with no undershirt” (Basinger, 1993, p. 116). This quote referred to the scene in

the 1934 movie *It Happened One Night*, where Clark Gable shocked the nation by not wearing an undershirt beneath his button down shirt. After this scene premiered, men's undershirt sales dropped dramatically (Tortora & Eubank, 2010). This incident also showed how influential movies were to women's fashions and desires.

By the 1940s, dressing like your favorite on screen character was common. Adaptations were quickly made following hit movies, so viewers did not have to wait long to be able to dress in a similar, if not as grand, style. World War II did have an effect on costuming the stars. The movie studios were not exempt from the L-85 regulations set forth by the government to ration fabric for soldiers. These regulations banned using silk and rubber, and other textiles were not available, which caused problems within the studios' design departments. The regulations also restricted the length and width of skirts, jackets, and dresses. Adrian, one of the most well known designers in the 1940s, was the head of costume design at MGM. He quit his job partly because of these regulations and opened his own couture design house in Beverly Hills. The suits he designed for the movies had "sculpted lines . . . the sure, severe, yet graceful angles . . . connote power" (Turim, 1990, p. 212). He paired his suits with hats and heels. Even with the regulations, though, Hollywood was able to maintain glamour: "It was thanks to the cleverness of Hollywood designers that movie costumes continued to have an air of fantasy and extravagance during the lean years of the early forties" (LaVine, 1980, p. 104).

The movies' influence did not stop in the 1940s. Another well-known trend that came from the silver screen was a dress worn by Elizabeth Taylor, one of Hollywood's long-time fashion icons, in *A Place in the Sun* (1951). This dress, designed by major designer Edith Head, was a "strapless, violet-encrusted New Look gown" (Bruzzi, 1997, p. 4). There were examples from of this from every decade: *Bonnie and Clyde* from 1967, *Annie Hall* from 1977, *Top Gun*

from 1986, and *Pulp Fiction* from 1994 all made contributions to the fashion worn on the streets (Bruzzi, 2010). *Top Gun* brought back Aviator sunglasses after Tom Cruise wore them on screen. After *Pulp Fiction* premiered, French designer Agnès b.'s black suits and "monochrome outfits . . . became synonymous with cool" (Bruzzi, 2010, p. 502).

Moviegoers were not just copying their movie icons, though. They were also copying some of the greatest designers to ever pick up a piece of fabric. This list included Edith Head, Gilbert Adrian, Coco Chanel, and Hubert de Givenchy (Bruzzi, 1997). Givenchy and other designers even formed close friendships with stars like Audrey Hepburn, and frequently styled them for many occasions. Even Christian Dior, one of the most notable high-fashion designers, worked on films such as *Les enfants terribles* (1949) and *Stage Fright* (1950) (Bruzzi, 2010). These designers began creating clothing for movies that were not "so fashionable that they would quickly become obsolete" (Bruzzi, 1997, p. 5). This meant regular women would be able to wear the knockoffs for a longer period of time, because the designs were not too far away from the norm of the decade.

According to Bruzzi (2010), "Hubert de Givenchy's collaboration with Audrey Hepburn fundamentally changed the relationship between film and fashion" (p. 502). His work with her in the movies *Sabrina* (1954) and *Funny Face* (1957), along with Edith Head's contributions to Hepburn's "before" looks in the movies, began a long running tradition of collaboration between couturiers and costume designers. Throughout the decades between the 1960s and 2000s, many other collaborations occurred in the movies. Queen Elizabeth II's favorite couturier, Hardy Amies, designed for the 1968 movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*; Ralph Lauren designed for the 1974 movie *The Great Gatsby*; Giorgio Armani dressed the characters in 1987's *The Untouchables*; and John Paul Gaultier was behind the costumes of the 1997 movie, *The Fifth*

Element, along with several other movies (Bruzzi, 2010). This tradition will most likely continue in the 21st century.

Movie History 1940-1945

The 1940s was a huge decade for movies. Many movies made during this time are still widely popular today. The 1940s birthed movies such as 1942's *Casablanca*, starring Humphrey Bogart; 1942's *Yankee Doodle Dandy*; 1945's *Mildred Pierce*, which was recently remade into a television mini-series; and 1946's *It's a Wonderful Life*, one of the most popular Christmas movies of all time (Graebner, 1991). Genres included comedies, dramas, film noirs, and musicals.

Pre-war movies, made in 1940 and early 1941, were some of the most memorable movies ever made. *Citizen Kane* premiered in 1941, followed by *How Green Was My Valley*, which was popular with audiences and critics alike (Dixon, 2006). Most of the movies made during these two years did not acknowledge the war overseas or its dangerous closeness to America. The only movie that dealt with war in these two years was *Sergeant York* (1941), which focused on a soldier from World War I. The movie seemed to foreshadow America's involvement in World War II by showing movement from isolationism to engagement in war (Dixon, 2006). In 1940 alone, no major movie star was in any movie that explicitly dealt with the European conflict.

Romantic comedies were one of the top movie genres of the early 1940s. *His Girl Friday* (1940) followed Cary Grant as newspaper editor Walter Burns, who was trying to stop his former star reporter and ex-wife (played by Rosalind Russell) from quitting in order to get married to someone else. As with most romantic comedies, Russell's character Hildy realized in the end that she and Walter were meant to be, and that she was born to be a reporter (Kozloff, 2006). The characters lived in the fast paced newspaper world, and each talked at lightning speed. According

to Sarah Kozloff, who wrote the chapter “1940: Movies and the Reassessment of America” in *American Cinema of the 1940s*, “. . . hectic verbal byplay, which (as in many romantic comedies of the period) substitute for sexual tensions and desires that could not be explicitly portrayed under Hollywood’s Production Code” (Kozloff, 2006, p. 27), so this fast-talking heard in the movies of the decade made sense. *The Philadelphia Story*, a 1940 movie starring Katharine Hepburn, was a different type of romantic comedy. In this movie, Hepburn’s character Tracy was wealthy and had no reason to work, and was therefore the type of “rich heiress who populated the most successful romantic comedies” (Kozloff, 2006, p. 29) of the decade.

Walt Disney had recently come on the movie scene after premiering *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1938. Disney’s *Pinocchio* premiered in 1940 as the first animated movie “with three-dimensional camera movement” (Dixon, 2006, p. xi). In 1941, Disney’s *Fantasia* made its debut, and with it ended the “color-sound abstract painting” (Mast, 1971, p. 229). Disney movies brought light and happiness to the movie audiences of the time, who were dealing with the aftermath of the Great Depression and the beginning of World War II. “The Disney fantasies of color and motion were perfectly suited to the audience’s craving for happiness, wholesomeness, and optimism in films” (Mast, 1971, p. 229).

Movies like these animated Disney musicals were very different from the movies made after America entered the war. It seemed as if Hollywood as a whole decided to join the war effort by making movies that supported the troops. *Casablanca* (1942) was one of the first to show this support by the main character, played by Humphrey Bogart, going against the Nazis in France. Movies such as *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) showed what life was like at home for those trying to survive the war. Many movies were made to depict life at the warfront and to show the evils being done by the enemy. *Hitler’s Children* (1943) showed people being whipped and children

being indoctrinated with Nazi philosophies (Dixon, 2006). *Action in the North Atlantic* (1943) revolved around a Marine, played by Humphrey Bogart, and his life under enemy fire.

Wartime documentaries were also popular during the first few years of the war. Some of the most famous documentaries include *The Battle of Midway* (1942) and *The Battle of San Pietro* (1945). They showed the horror that war was bringing and what the citizens were up against when it came to the war. These movies were condemned for being violent and accurate, “but these films did their part; they inflamed the public to a fever pitch, and the country united to combat the Axis powers” (Dixon, 2006, p. 5). Even President Roosevelt participated in the making of documentaries by pushing the production of *Why We Fight*, a series of one-hour documentaries made by Frank Capra, Academy Award winning director of successful movies such as *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Washington* (1939), and many others.

Even though so much focus was placed on the war, both in real life and in the movies, people still longed for an escape from the fear, sadness, and difficulties that the war brought to America. Hollywood was there to meet these needs with comedies from the likes of Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Abbott and Costello. *Buck Privates* (1941) with Abbott and Costello was a war themed comedy, and was widely successful. *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) was a comedy, starring Jack Benny and Carole Lombard that followed actors outwitting Hitler.

Musicals were also extremely popular during the war, especially those with patriotic themes. *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942), one of the most well known patriotic musicals, was “ultra-patriotic” (Dixon, 2006, p. 6) and starred James Cagney, who was just happy to be in a movie where “he got to display his skill as a tap dancer rather than shoot people” (Dixon, 2006, p. 6). *Hollywood Canteen* (1944) showed the activities of the USO and how they entertained

soldiers on leave. In addition, 1944's *Meet Me in St. Louis*, while not patriotic themed, was still incredibly popular, and one of Judy Garland's best musicals (Dixon, 2006).

Another popular film genre was the film noir, where women became criminals wrapped up in plots to betray their husbands or lovers. According to William Graebner in his book *The Age of Doubt: American Thought and Culture in the 1940s*, film noir was the most important new genre of the decade. The first movie that was generally attributed to the film noir genre was 1941's *Citizen Kane*, a film by Orson Welles. “. . . Multiple narrators, the flashback, chiaroscuro cinematography, and other techniques that would characterize the new genre of film noir” (Graebner, 1991, p. 17) were some of the defining features of *Citizen Kane*. Some historians argued, however, that 1940's *Stranger on the Third Floor* was actually the start of the genre. *Stranger on the Third Floor* was about a man who was framed for a brutal murder. In the end he was exonerated, but only when the real murderer was killed in a hit-and-run accident (Dixon, 2006). This genre was popular during both the first and second half of the 1940s. Hundreds of noirs were filmed during the decade, and they greatly contrasted with the optimistic movies from the first two years. “Far from offering happy endings, noirs delighted in telling their audiences that hope itself was an illusion” (Dixon, 2006, p. 11).

Movie History 1946-1949

After the war ended, the movies of the 1940s took a dramatic shift away from the pre-war and during-the-war Hollywood movies. Moviegoers wanted stories about social problems and other serious world issues (LaVine, 1980). This new desire led to movies with violence and horror, like 1947's *Boomerang*, in which a priest was assassinated.

Two popular genres of movies during the late 1940s were movies that centered on alcoholism and boxing (Graebner, 1991). The boxing genre was mostly full of Cinderella-esque

stories of men going from nothings to champions. Famous actors such as Kirk Douglas (1949's *Champion*) took on these roles. These movies always featured some type of "fix" within a match that would call the man's integrity into question and force him to make a choice between that and his career (Graebner, 1991).

Alcoholism was given much more attention after 1945. "Alcoholism was both a real-life barrier to achievement and happiness and a metaphor for the culture's growing anxiety about progress" (Graebner, 1991, p. 44). Two of the most important movies featuring alcoholism in the 1940s were *The Lost Weekend* (1945) and *Smash Up: The Story of a Woman* (1946) (Graebner, 1991). In *The Lost Weekend*, the story focused on a writer whose struggle was between alcohol and his work. After going to such extremes as trying to sell his typewriter for money to buy booze, he decided to give up the bottle and write a novel about his struggle (Graebner, 1991). In *Smash Up*, a woman fought between her desire to drink and her love for her young daughter, whom she ended up kidnapping from the girl's father (Graebner, 1991).

Movies after the war also dealt with the difficulties soldiers were facing upon their return home. *The Best Years of our Lives* (1946) was a movie about three returning soldiers who had trouble entering back into society after being on the exciting and dangerous warfront (Dixon, 2006).

Musicals and romances were still popular after the war, but instead of being patriotic, they focused on lighter subjects. *Ziegfeld Follies* (1946), which was a tribute to Florenz Ziegfeld, starred celebrities like Lucille Ball and Gene Kelly in an elaborate production. *The Harvey Girls* (1946) was another great musical which starred the talented Judy Garland. *The Barkleys of Broadway* (1949) brought together famous dancing duo Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. The

musicals also began to take on elements of the noir genre, as seen in *On the Town* (1949), which starred Gene Kelly and was filmed on New York streets (Dixon, 2006).

1940s Women in the Movies

During the 1940s, millions of people went to see movies every week. This number suggested that movies were, in fact, a huge part of people's lives and there was a definite influence. The producers of these Hollywood movies kept their eyes on what their audiences wanted, focusing on white women who were either young working girls or married housewives (Warner, 2005). By creating movies that focused on these women, the producers almost ensured that the viewers would turn to consumers and buy every copy they could find. In time, the lives shown in the movies became so popular that consumers demanded things from the "Movie World" (Warner, 2005, p. 84).

Movies and their influence made fashion even more important in the eyes of women. The 1936 musical *Colleen* fed this idea to women via song lyrics, which included phrases like "often times an evening gown worn at a dance/may be the inspiration for romance" (Basinger, 1993, p. 114). In her book, *A Woman's View*, Jeanine Basinger explained that "movies clearly state that fashion and glamour are fundamental to a woman's definition – in her own eyes, in the eyes of the man she loves (whether he knows it or not), and in the eyes of society" (Basinger, 1993, p. 114).

Dress historian Patricia Warner stated, "the most obvious way to show admiration for your idol was to dress like her" (Warner, 2005, p. 84). This quote from Warner's article "Sportswear, the Movies and the 1930s" expressed the sentiment of the 1940s. Audiences, particularly women, copied whatever they could from the movies and interjected it into their own lives. Replicating the clothing and hairstyles of the movie characters was very common, even if

it was on a small scale. “Fashion and glamour were the elements of the woman’s film that women could actually get their hands on” (Basinger, 1993, p. 115).

The “fashionably correct” woman became something that girls strove to be. In the 1940s, pieces of an outfit were just as important as the men women were dressing to impress. “A girl always tries on lots of hats before she buys one . . . I don’t see why I shouldn’t shop around for a man,” was a line from the 1946 movie *Two Guys from Milwaukee* that exemplified this belief that dress was of the utmost importance, all because the movies said it was (Basinger, 1993, p. 117).

But how do movies of the decade portray workingwomen? The 1940s had few movies where a woman was in a position of power in the business world. Even in movies where the woman was in charge, like *They All Kissed the Bride*, a 1942 movie that starred Joan Crawford as a trucking empire boss, the woman in the non-traditional working role was looked down upon, because men wanted a traditional wife. Much of the movie was spent “putting Joan Crawford in her place” (Basinger, 1993, p. 455). These movies showed women in a role of power, but with something (or someone) missing from their life at the end of the day. The moral of this type of movie came to be that women needed to give up control in order to be happy. Many of these movies portrayed the businesswoman as “cold and frigid, just waiting for a man to teach her about sex” (Basinger, 1993, p. 459).

Howard Hawks, a Hollywood director and producer, knew the role of the American woman was changing. He acknowledged this change by creating movies such as *His Girl Friday* (1940) and *To Have and Not Have* (1944). He formed the “Hawksian women” (Dixon, 2006, p. 17), “a figure of feminine pride and self-determination, unwilling to defer to men, capable of

acting decisively on her own” (Dixon, 2006, p. 17). Hawks himself discovered actress Lauren Bacall, who was able to play characters that were both self-reliant and sexy (Dixon, 2006).

Women were also portrayed as selfless during the 1940s. These movies of the decade, often called “weepies,” were marketed to women audiences and “symbolized the possibility of a better life, but on the backs of a class of women positioned and represented as either afflicted or that of self-sacrificing mothers” (York, 2010, p. 6). In this type of movie, women were seen as mothers, wives, or victims; there was no room for another role.

Stars like Ava Gardner, Barbara Stanwyck, and Rita Hayworth were now the proverbial bad girls on screen as characters who murdered, double-crossed, and used men as play things (Haskell, 1973). The femme fatale appeared in movies such as *Blood and Sand* (1941), which starred Rita Hayworth as a woman who tried to lure a man away from his sweetheart. In *Double Indemnity* (1944), Barbara Stanwyck convinced her wealthy husband to sign a double indemnity policy written by an infatuated insurance agent (played by Fred MacMurray). The two lovers plotted to murder the unsuspecting husband. A similar motive was shown in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), with the murderous wife portrayed by Lana Turner. These women had a different look than the other characters from the 1940s big screen. Staples of the femme fatale included long hair and/or sensual lips (Haskell, 1973).

Along with these femme fatales were other darker characters for women. “The forties was also the period of female gothic or paranoid women’s films in which the home – the woman’s space of domesticity – becomes the site of suspense, dread, and horror . . . ”(Graebner, 1991, p. 15). The domesticity of the late 1940s was very fragile, and these films reflected that. One movie that fell under this genre was 1948’s *Sorry, Wrong Number*, which revolved around a bedridden woman who uncovered an outside plot to murder her (Graebner, 1991).

Films about the war were popular in the 1940s, even after the war's end. There was a lot of courage and heroism showed by the women in this genre. The stars came alive as field nurses who fell in love with soldiers and did not always make it home (Haskell, 1973). Because there was a shortage of men due to the actual war, war films tended to focus on the women who were either left behind or in the fray.

In her book *From Reverence to Rape*, Molly Haskell stated, "A note of pessimism, whether explicit in the *film noirs* or suggested in the suppressed hysteria and emotional disproportion of the sentimental films, colors the forties" (Haskell, 1973, p. 194). This quote from the book summarized the attitude of the people and the movies in the 1940s. The Hollywood movie world was no longer a strictly sunny place, but now welcomed the darkness of social issues and criminals for a different kind of entertainment. According to Haskell, some of this pessimism also stemmed from the growth of women in the workforce, which caused a "sense of instability . . . charged the atmosphere with a tension not entirely accounted for by the plot" (1973, p. 194).

Movies and Racial Inequality

Historically, women and ethnic minorities have been discriminated against. Even after the Women's Suffrage movement in the early 1900s, African American men and women were still treated as second-class citizens until the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, and Asian and Hispanic people also suffered through racial and ethnic prejudice. There had long been the problem of stereotyping in all aspects of society, and movies were no exception. While this was not the purpose of the study, the researcher would be remiss not to mention it since all of the actresses portraying women in the movies reviewed were white women.

Some movies portrayed non-Caucasian characters as less significant people with the use of stereotypes. In their book *America on Film*, Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin went on to point out that most Hollywood movies centered on a “straight white male seeking wealth or power” (2004, p. 28). “If homosexuals or people of color appear in the film at all, they might be associated with the villains or relegated to smaller supporting roles . . .”(Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 28). They state,

Some may be benign, like villains wearing black. Others, like repeatedly casting Asians as mysterious mobsters, or Hispanics as gang members, can have a vast effects on how those identified as Asian or Hispanic are treated outside the movie house (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 27).

“Since the ideological status quo of American society is white patriarchal capitalism, it should come as no surprise that most Hollywood films encode white patriarchal capitalism as central and desirable . . . (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 28). When met with the question of more recent attempts of movies to be less racist and sexist, they responded by both agreeing and disagreeing with that notion by claiming that even films that feature women or African Americans as the lead character still reinforced that standard patriarchal society. “While the real world is comprised of people of all different races, genders, classes, and sexualities, the world depicted in Hollywood film usually posits straight white men as central and heroic, and everyone else as peripheral (or even non-existent)” (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004, p. 30).

During the 1930s and 1940s, Hollywood was very conservative in business. They did very little to change the stereotypes associated with racism. Because of the Production Codes enforced by the industry, various topics were off-limits, and this included certain African American characters and storylines, like characters who were half Caucasian and half African

American (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). This meant that African American actors and actresses were usually forced into playing supporting, often stereotypical, roles in Hollywood films. Even for those who managed to become stars from these roles, like Hattie McDaniel (who played a slave maid in and won an Oscar for 1939's *Gone With the Wind*), they were still resigned to being typecast for future roles.

Hollywood did, however, support equality in the Army during World War II. Movies such as 1943's *The Negro Soldier* were designed to persuade African Americans to join the war effort and dissuade racism in the Army ranks (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Although Hollywood's attempt was powerful, the Armed Forces were not integrated until after the war. This type of effort did not stop all the stereotypical portrayals of African Americans in films, even though many groups petitioned the studios to do so throughout the 1940s. When the films dealing with social issues began to come out in the late 1940s, several films dealt with racism, such as 1949's *Home of the Brave* and *Pinky*. These movies did not quite get the chance to influence as much as they might have, because the Cold War of the 1950s took over society's thoughts (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004).

Costume Designers as Influences

The old saying that "clothes make the man" could easily be changed to "clothes make the man . . . especially in Hollywood" (Ponkie, 1990, p. 25). According to Deborah Landis, "Costumes are one of the tools a film director has to tell a story" (Landis, 2004, p. 3). Costumes were a powerful way to express a character's background without words. For example, it is easy to put a character in a luxurious gown that gives away the fact that she is rich, or to put someone in rags to give the idea of their poverty. "Costumes are so much more than clothes," stated

Anthony Powell, a British designer. He said, “It is impossible for me to design for the actor unless I know who the character is” (Landis, 2004, p. 3).

Many fashion designers doubled as costumes designers in the 1940s. These men and women of Hollywood fame were the driving forces behind some of the most notable fashions of the decade.

It is impossible to gauge just how often a film star, by appearing in a particular dress or suit, or perhaps only through use of an accessory, hairstyle, or a detail of makeup, can provoke millions of imitations and thus create a fad (Engelmeier & Engelmeier, 1990, p. 7).

This quote, from the book *Fashion in Film*, did not exaggerate the influence of movies over the population of viewers. Some styles popular in mainstream fashion today were once costumes seen on the silver screen, like the little black dress and black leather jackets (Hillmer, 1990).

In the 1940s, designers also had to be masters of making the most out of a wardrobe hampered by L-85 restrictions. “For costume designers, however, the years of World War II were a time without ribbons, pleats, ruffles, cuffs, and frills” (Landis, 2007, p. 135). At the same time, though, moviegoers had an unquenchable desire to go to the movies. Instead of creating new, glorious clothing for leading ladies and men to wear on screen, costume designers were forced to abide by the L-85 regulations. Imported fabrics like silk were out, and cotton was used instead. Designers scavenged through the costume rooms, trying to find old outfits that could be updated and presented as new. They were also forced to ask the actors and actresses to provide their own clothing from their personal wardrobes (Landis, 2007).

When the war ended and the regulations were rescinded, costume designers grabbed the opportunity to return to luxury and glamour in their costumes. “. . . They embraced fur and

feathers, long full skirts, imported fabrics, and gold trim . . .” (Landis, 2007, p. 140). Designers were now spending thousands of dollars, sometimes more, on the costumes for their stars. Something that did not make reappearance after the war, however, was cleavage. Modesty was enforced by the industry’s Production Codes, which created friction between the designers and those who were imposing the rules (Landis, 2007).

“Researching the history of motion picture costume design is particularly problematic,” according to Deborah Landis in her book *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design* (2007, p. xvi). Even though costumes are one of the most important parts of a film, the designers and the work they do often get overlooked. “But costumes do not design themselves; they don’t arrive in the morning with the actor nor do they spontaneously materialize from somewhere within the collective unconscious” (Landis, 2007, p. xvi). The designers who created costumes and put outfits together for stars were the force behind every copycat fashion that came from the silver screen.

These film wardrobes were often exquisite, innovative works of fashion, the works of highly talented designers. Accordingly the New York garment district and the Parisian fashion houses, influenced by the clothing demand the movies created as well as by the designs Hollywood produced, often adopted ideas and patterns from movies costumes to the retail market (Maeder, 1987, p. 78).

Something important point to note, especially for this study, is that Hollywood’s goal in the 1940s was to create both realistic movies and idealistic ones; the same went for the designer in charge of the costumes for either type of movie.

But although it did produce some notably realistic films – and Warner Brothers was famous for its realist films – Hollywood is principally remembered for the way it ignored

reality. What people actually wore, whether in the present or the past, was largely lost sight of in the efforts to instill films with mystique (Chierichetti, 1976, p. 8).

Costume Designers Represented in This Study

During the 1940s, there were many costume designers and several film studios. The designers went back and forth between MGM, Fox, Columbia, Universal, and many more. They worked with each other and fought each other for jobs. The designers during this time were creators, making fabulous trends out of nothing. Many of the greatest designers of the age designed the costumes for the movies that were used for this study. They, along with a few other important designers, made 1940s Hollywood what it was. The designers discussed in this chapter each costumed at least one of the movies reviewed for this study, and they are ordered chronologically by year of the movie used. The following designers are discussed: Robert Kalloch, Adrian (who designed for two movies in the study), Edward Stevenson, Edith Head (who designed for two movies in this study), Milo Anderson, Kay Nelson, and Jean-Louis.

Robert Kalloch was a fashion designer turned costumer who first worked as a sketch artist for Lucille, Ltd. (Lady Duff Gordon), where he designed many dresses for dancer Irene Castle (Chierichetti, 1976). He started working at Columbia in 1933 as the studio's first contract designer. During his tenure there, he worked with stars such as Carole Lombard and Claudette Colbert, although they preferred working with designer Travis Banto. Kalloch moved to MGM after Adrian's departure in 1942. He stayed at MGM for two years. He then worked at Columbia Pictures for an employer who hated historical movies. Because of this, Kalloch had many opportunities to create modern and sophisticated clothing for his leading ladies (Leese, 1976). Some of his films included *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *Babes on Broadway* (1941), and 1941's *Design for Scandal*, one of the movies reviewed in this study.

Adrian, who was mentioned earlier in the text, went from designing costumes for the silver screen to designing for his own house after he left MGM in 1942 (Esquevin, 2008; Leese, 1976). Before he left the movie industry, though, Adrian was one of the most popular costume designers. In one year, he designed the costumes for twenty-eight movies, and almost never had fewer than ten movies to design for in one year. In total, Adrian designed for two hundred and twenty movies for MGM during his tenure there. In 1930, he introduced formal evening pajamas in *Our Blushing Brides*, which starred Joan Crawford. He was also behind the long-lasting trend of the pillbox hat, which he designed for the 1932 movie *As You Desire Me*. This movie also spawned a huge trend in the almost backless black gown worn by Marlene Dietrich. *The Philadelphia Story* in 1940 was the first film where Adrian designed for Katharine Hepburn. He put her character in pantsuits with belts and large buttons (Esquevin, 2008). He also added in accessories and costumes that harkened back to his previous work – an imitation diamond necklace from *Marie Antoinette* (1938) and a version of the *Letty Lynton* (1932) dress worn by Virginia Weidler, who played Hepburn's little sister (Esquevin, 2008). He designed for 1940s films like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941), *Woman of the Year* (1942), and *Smart Woman* (1949); the latter two movies were used for this study. Even though he left costume design in 1942 to open his own business, he continued to supply films with clothing over the next decade, and even returned to MGM for one more film, 1952's *Lovely to Look At* (Leese, 1976).

Traditionally, Adrian loved using black and white for his costumes. Since Hollywood movies were still mostly in black and white during his costume design years, using these colors provided him with the greatest impact on viewers. He frequently used straight lines, square shoulders, and very tailored suits. He also loved using large bows on various costumes. One of

his trademarks was over exaggeration of clothing pieces, like sleeves or collars (Chierichetti, 1976).

Edward Stevenson was another designer represented in this study. He worked at many different studios during his forty-year career in the movie industry. He began at Fox under the direction of his mentor, Andre-Ani. After one year of working under him, Stevenson moved to First National to take the head designer position (Leese, 1976). He stayed at this position for four years, after which he moved to Columbia Pictures, opened his own shop, and then went back into the studio for RKO and Fox. He was the head designer at RKO for several years after Walter Plunkett and Bernard Newman (two other famous designers not used in this study) left, where he tried to design clothes that “supported the script and didn’t detract from it” (Chierichetti, 1976, p. 141). Unfortunately for Stevenson, he missed out on most of the big films because the leading ladies requested their favorite designers. He was forced to design for the “lesser leading ladies” (Chierichetti, 1976, p. 146). He frequently designed for actress Lucille Ball, who was very loyal to him during the ten years he designed for her television show *I Love Lucy*. His films included 1943’s *Government Girl*, one of the movies being used in this study, along with movies such as 1941’s *Citizen Kane*, 1946’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*, and 1947’s *The Bachelor and the Bobby-soxer*. Stevenson’s work for Fox centered around period pieces such as 1952’s *David and Bathsheba*, which was nominated for an Oscar (Chierichetti, 1976). After this movie, though, Stevenson left Fox to have eye surgery. The last film he designed for was 1960’s *The Facts of Life*, starring Lucille Ball. He and designer Edith Head collaborated on this film, and shared the subsequent Oscar (Chierichetti, 1976).

Another famous costume designer from this period was Edith Head, who worked on films for Paramount, Universal, MGM, Warners, Columbia, and Fox. Her costume design career began

in 1923, when she answered a newspaper advisement for a sketch artist at Paramount. By the time she became Paramount's head designer, she was designing for at least thirty-five films a year (Chierichetti, 1976).

Edith Head's first extremely successful movie was *The Lady Eve*, a 1941 movie that starred Barbara Stanwyck. While other designers tried to hide Stanwyck's complicated figure underneath full skirts, Head embraced the challenge of lifting Stanwyck's waist. Head put Stanwyck in Spanish style motifs, which swept the nation after the movie premiered (Chierichetti, 1976). Stanwyck's clothing instantly became so popular that she insisted on having Edith Head design the costumes for all her films. Paramount loaned out Head to other studios just so she could design for Stanwyck. Head used the same style look for every movie until the premiere of Dior's New Look in 1947 (Chierichetti, 1976).

During the L-85 regulations, Head was one of the designers who spoke out in favor of the regulations in promotional messages. "All designers are turning to cotton," she said. "Silk is 'out' for 1942." Head continued that, "synthetic materials will be used more than ever before, and we are fortunate because they have been perfected to such a degree that it is almost impossible to detect that they are not pure fibers" (Landis, 2007, p. 136). Head also predicted the lowering of hemlines after the war, though she was shocked by the drastic measures taken by Christian Dior in his New Look (Chierichetti, 1976).

In the words of David Chierichetti, author of *Edith Head: The Life and Times of Hollywood's Celebrated Costume Designer*, "Edith outfitted Hollywood's most memorable stars for over four decades, winning eight Academy Awards for costume design" (2003, p. xi). The movies she was nominated for included: *A Place in the Sun* (filmed in 1949 but not released until 1951); *To Catch a Thief* (1955), which starred Grace Kelly and was Head's favorite film; *Funny*

Face (1956) starring Audrey Hepburn; and *The Ten Commandments* (1956) (Leese, 1976; Chierichetti, 1976). Not only did she design costumes for hundreds of films, but she also was the fashion editor for *Holiday Magazine* and wrote two books on clothing. She was criticized over the years for not being creative enough, but her ability to get the job done overshadowed that. “Often Head didn’t use a creative new design idea for fear it might get in the way of her main goals: keeping everybody happy and keeping herself permanently employed in a very unpredictable business” (Chierichetti, 2003, p. xii). She designed for two of the movies used in this study: 1944’s *Lady in the Dark* (with Raoul Pene du Bois) and 1946’s *To Each His Own*.

Milo Anderson began his costume design career in the 1930s for Goldwyn Pictures, but quickly moved to Warner Brothers-First National. He stayed at this studio for almost twenty years, and then left the business for interior design. When he made the move to Warner Brothers, he was known as Hollywood’s youngest designer (Chierichetti, 1976) and worked under Orry Kelly. Olivia de Havilland was one of the actresses who preferred working with Anderson to Kelly. “When there was no characterization to work with, Milo used my personality . . . I wouldn’t have dared suggest anything to Kelly” (Chierichetti, 1976, p. 81). Some of Anderson’s films include 1942’s *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, 1948’s *Johnny Belinda*, and 1945’s *Mildred Pierce*, which was used in this study (Leese, 1976). Joan Crawford won an Oscar for her portrayal in *Mildred Pierce*, even though it was said that she hated the way she looked in the movie (Chierichetti, 1976).

Kay Nelson designed costumes for Twentieth Century Fox during the 1940s and 1950s. Her films included 1947’s *Miracle on 34th Street*, which was used for this study, and 1949’s *Mother is a Freshman*, which was nominated for an Academy Award (Leese, 1976).

Jean-Louis was a Parisian designer who moved to New York to work for American designer and manufacturer Hattie Carnegie. Jean-Louis then moved to Columbia Pictures in 1944 to become the Head Designer, a job he held until 1958 when he moved to Universal (Leese, 1976). His first movie at Columbia was 1944's *Together Again*, which starred Irene Dunne. He also designed for a pregnant Rita Hayworth in 1945's *Tonight and Every Night*. This was Jean-Louis's first film in Technicolor. He also worked freelance for Warner Brothers after another designer quit halfway through *A Star is Born* (1954), which starred Judy Garland. His costumes were nominated for numerous Academy Awards for movies like 1954's *A Star is Born* and 1967's *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. His 1940s movies included 1948's *The Lady from Shanghai* and 1949's *Tell It to the Judge*, which was one of the movies used in this study. Jean-Louis left Columbia to do freelance work, but returned several times for movies like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) and *Lost Horizon* (1971) (Chierichetti, 1976).

The world of costume design was a big draw for many fashion designers during the 1940s. The men and women who designed for the stars during World War II were able to abide by the L-85 regulations and still make the women look glamorous and fashionable; those who designed after the war were able to use their new freedom and the new silhouette to create beautiful new garments. According to Deborah Landis in *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design*, "the 1940s saw the streamlining of the assembly-line process, and the formalizing of internal hierarchies within costume departments" (Landis, 2007, p. 140). Almost all the designers researched for this study were considered to be at the top of their field. **Table 1** shows each of the movies used in this study and who designed the costumes for each one.

Table 1: List of the movies used, year premiered, and costume designer

Movie	Year Premiered	Designer
<i>Design for Scandal</i>	1941	Robert Kalloch
<i>Woman of the Year</i>	1942	Gilbert Adrian
<i>Government Girl</i>	1943	Edward Stevenson
<i>Lady in the Dark</i>	1944	Edith Head
<i>Mildred Pierce</i>	1945	Milo Anderson
<i>To Each His Own</i>	1946	Edith Head
<i>Miracle on 34th Street</i>	1947	Kay Nelson
<i>Smart Woman</i>	1948	Gilbert Adrian
<i>Tell It to the Judge</i>	1949	Jean-Louis

Movies Summaries

The following nine movies were used for this study. The researcher wrote these summaries after watching the movies to explain to the reader the plot of the each movie. The movie selection process will be discussed in a later chapter.

***Design for Scandal* (1941); Designed by Robert Kalloch**

Design for Scandal starred Rosalind Russell and Walter Pidgeon as a judge and newspaperman, respectively. Pidgeon's character, Mr. Jeff Sherman, was a man willing to do anything to get ahead in life. When Sherman's boss, Mr. Judson Blair, decided to divorce his spoiled wife, Adele, Russell's C.C. Porter was the judge assigned to the case. When the case did not end favorably for Blair, he vowed that he would not pay the alimony and tried to come up with a plan to get the verdict reversed. Blair and Sherman made a deal to get Porter transferred to another district so a different judge could be over the appeal.

Sherman planned to bring down Porter in several ways. He began to look into her past for anything that could be used against her, but he also set a different plan in motion: he hired a friend to pretend to be his fiancée so a few months later, she could file a suit against Judge Porter

to claim Porter “stole” her man. Sherman followed Porter on her two-month vacation, and purposely ran into her frequently, trying to catch her attention. He even went so far as to send her roses, which backfired terribly since she was allergic to them. Sherman also staged a rescue of Porter’s young nephew, who fell in a lake after playing with him. He won the approval of Porter’s sister, who invited him to stay for dinner. Eventually, Sherman and Porter began to fall for each other.

When Sherman realized his feelings for Porter, he tried to stop the con. However, Porter found out what was going on before Sherman had the chance, and she took him and Blair to court. Sherman professed his love for Porter in the courtroom, which led to a dramatic question and answer session about whether or not she loved him.

Woman of the Year (1942); Designed by Gilbert Adrian

The movie *Woman of the Year* came out in 1942 and starred Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy in the first of many pairings. Hepburn was “Tess,” a diplomat, political pundit, and activist. Her many jobs took her around the world constantly, and she had friends in very high places all over the world, including rulers and other important diplomats. Tracy played “Sam,” a sports journalist whose life revolved around the next baseball game or fight. They met after writing back-and-forth columns about whether or not baseball was important and if it should be played during the war. They quickly fell in love, but Tess’s busy schedule and political obligations threatened to tear them apart just as fast.

Government Girl (1943); Designed by Edward Stevenson

Government Girl, which starred Olivia de Havilland and Sonny Tufts, premiered in 1943. Havilland’s character, Elizabeth “Smokey” Allred, was a government secretary whom was first seen before the wedding of her best friend. A kind stranger, played by Tufts, helped her out by

lending her a makeshift wedding ring after Smokey's friends lost theirs right before their wedding ceremony. After several encounters that led them to have friction, Smokey discovered that Tufts' character was actually Mr. Ed Browne, the man she was hired to work for in Washington. There was much confusion before she realized who he was and he realized she was not the girl who got married. Smokey was madly in love with Senator McGuire, even while Mr. Browne fell in love with her. After she agreed to marry the senator, she discovered that he has been using her stories from the office to build a case against Mr. Browne. Smokey realized she could not let anything happen to Mr. Browne because she had fallen in love with him, so she took drastic measures to make sure he did not get in trouble with the government.

Lady in the Dark (1944); Designed by Edith Head

Lady in the Dark, which starred Ginger Rogers, centered on Liza Elliot, the editor-in-chief of *Allure* magazine. Rogers' character, Liza, seemingly had everything she could want: a career she loved and Kendall Nesbitt, a man who loved her (although his wife had refused to divorce him for years). However, something in her life was wrong. She was sent to a psychoanalyst to explore what was going on inside her head to make her depressed and afraid. While she was struggling to figure out what was wrong with her, an employee, Charley Johnson, made no secret of the fact that he wanted her job and did not see her fit to run the magazine. She also had a third man in her life – movie star Randy Curtis, who was vying for Liza's attention, even while Kendall was discussing marriage.

Part of the movie was spent in Liza's dreams, where she was a completely different person. Dream Liza wore fabulous gowns and was surrounded by singing people who were celebrating her and her dream wedding. The crowd turned on her, trying to force her to declare her true self, the self that was different from whom she really was. One of her dreams involved a

circus act that she was forced to be part of after she could not decide between two photos for the magazines cover in the waking world. During the circus act, her “crimes” were stated: that she could not make up her mind between the two magazines covers and whether or not she is going to marry Kendall Nesbitt, whose wife finally agreed to divorce him. After revealing all of the dreams to the psychoanalyst, she flashed back to her childhood, her mother’s death, her father’s subsequent rage, and her first high school dance while trying to find the root of her problems – her fear of being compared to other women. Or is there something else stopping her from being happy?

Mildred Pierce (1945); Designed by Milo Anderson

Mildred Pierce, which starred Joan Crawford, began with a murder – her husband Beragon’s. Mildred’s life-long friend, Wally Fay, discovered the dead body after she lured him to her beach house and locked him inside. When Mildred was taken to the police station for questioning, she was told that her first husband, Bert Pierce, was being accused of the murder. After this was revealed, a flashback of Mildred’s marriage to Bert and how it ended was shown. During the flashback, the Pierce children – Veda and Kay – were introduced. Mildred explained to her children that she and Bert were separating. Mildred admitted to herself that she was broke, and would never make it now that her husband was gone. She recounted the tale of how she attempted to find a job and ended up working at a waitress in a restaurant, while trying to hide it from her spoiled older daughter, Veda. Mildred decided to open her own restaurant, and bought the building from Mr. Monte Beragon, who began to woo her. After the sudden death of Kay, her younger daughter, Mildred’s desire to open her restaurant took over her life. She worked tirelessly to make her restaurant a success. While telling the police her flashback story, she inadvertently gave them more reason to suspect Pierce and then confessed to the murder herself.

She explained how she and Beragon fought about money and Veda's future. When Veda's lies and her underhanded deeds were revealed to Mildred, she threw Veda out of the house. In order to get Veda back into her life, she went back to Beragon so she could give Veda the kind of life she wanted. While trying to give Veda her every desire, Mildred let the restaurant's finances fall to the side, and Beragon and Fay attempted to push her out of the business, giving her motive to kill Beragon and frame Fay. It seemed like the case was shut until Veda showed up at the police station to recount her own tale of the night and her role in the murder of her stepfather.

To Each His Own (1946); Designed by Edith Head

To Each His Own starred Olivia de Havilland, and was about an American woman who ran a munitions factory in 1944 London. Josephine Norris was forced to give up her baby during World War I, but spent the rest of her life watching him from afar. In 1944, she ran into a woman who was waiting for her soldier to come home, and Josephine was reminded of her past life, when she fell for the pilot who got her pregnant. Much of the movie took place in her memories, where she met Captain Cosgrove, a pilot on a tour around the country to sell war bonds. After a night of passion, Captain Cosgrove went off to Paris, and Josephine was left alone and pregnant. She needed surgery, which could cause her to lose the baby. Before she could go into the hospital, she heard that Cosgrove's plane was shot down and he was presumed dead.

Josephine came out of the surgery well, and the baby survived. Josephine then realized that she could not just go back home with a newborn. To avoid the scandal of being an unwed mother, she devised a plan to sneak the baby into her life by having a nurse drop him on a neighbor's doorstep, then volunteering to adopt him. The plan backfired when Josephine's friend lost a baby and the neighbor gave her the baby boy. Josephine could not reveal that she was the child's real mother without bringing scandal on herself and, more importantly, her son. She

resolved to still be involved in his life and spent as much time with him and his new mother as possible, to the point of overstepping. After some years, she tried to assert her claim over her child, only to find that her friends had adopted the boy. When she was unsuccessful at getting back her child, she ran off to find a job to support her into the future so she could get him back, settling for only having pictures sent by his new father until then. When her son grew up and joined the military during World War II, he had leave time in London, and she tried to reconnect with him once more.

Miracle on 34th Street (1947); Designed by Kay Nelson

Miracle on 34th Street, which starred Maureen O'Hara, was a movie about Christmas at Macy's department store. O'Hara was Doris Walker, who ran the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and was the single mother of Susan. Walker raised Susan to not believe in fairytales or things like Santa Claus. When a man showed up at the parade right at the moment a Santa Claus was needed, he was thrust into the job for the Christmas season. This man, who said his name was Kris Kringle, acted like the real Santa Claus. He soon inspired the customers and spread Christmas cheer to all those he encounters – except Doris Walker. After Kringle told her he was the real Santa Claus, she believed him to be insane and tried to fire him, only to find that Mr. Macy had embraced Kringle's way of helping customers. When Kringle's mental health was questioned, the Macy's staff decided he would be better off living with someone who could keep an eye on him. Kringle moved in with Walker's neighbor and love interest, Mr. Gailey. Kringle grew closer to the Walkers during the holiday season, and Susan began to change her cynical attitude.

When Kringle got into a fight with another employee, he was whisked away and put into a mental institution. Mr. Gailey, a lawyer, took on his case. When news got out that Kringle was

having a hearing to determine his mental state, the whole city turned against the men prosecuting him and the judge on the case. Mr. Gailey announced in court that he was going to prove that Kringle was, in fact, the real Santa Claus. Mr. Macy testified that he believed that Kris Kringle was Santa Claus, and that called into question whether Santa Claus existed at all. This question caused inner turmoil with the judge, who could not decide how he wanted to rule – should he say there was no Santa Claus and break children’s hearts, or say there was and risk his reputation as a judge? And what would Doris and Susan believe?

Smart Woman (1948); Designed by Adrian

Smart Woman starred Constance Bennett as attorney Paula Rogers. When District Attorney Bradley Wayne was found to not be doing his job, a special prosecutor was hired. This prosecutor was Robert Larrimore, played by Brian Aherne. Rogers was caught up in the D.A.’s world via blackmail, and was forced to take a case – the Johnson case – for him. This same case was handed to Larrimore the day the trial began. Larrimore and Rogers went up against each other immediately. They began dating after the case was closed, and quickly fell in love. The D.A. and his lackey, McCoy, attempted to use Rogers’s relationship with Larrimore to find Jasper, the man everyone was looking for, before anyone else. McCoy interrupted a family day with Rogers, Larrimore, and Rogers’s son Rusty. McCoy threatened Rogers, and told her that if he and the D.A. went down, they’d take her down with them. When Larrimore and his team located Jasper, they hurried to meet with him, but instead found him dead in his office. Larrimore revealed this to the D.A., and accused him of having a hand in the murder.

Larrimore proposed to Rogers before dinner one night, and she happily agreed to marry him. However, on the same night, McCoy murdered the D.A. Rogers took the case to defend McCoy, as part of their agreement. Larrimore, on the other hand, was prosecuting the case.

Could their love survive being on opposite sides? And would the truth that was revealed end the possibility of happiness for Rogers and Larrimore?

Tell It to the Judge (1949); Designed by Jean-Louis

Tell It to the Judge starred Rosalind Russell as Marsha Meredith, an attorney who was up for appointment to the federal bench. However, those making the appointment were unsure about whether or not she was stable enough following her recent divorce from Pete Webb, played by Robert Cummings, who supposedly cheated on her with a witness named Ginger. Ginger was hiding from the Mob, and was still connected to Webb's case, even as he was trying to win Meredith back and prove to her that he never strayed. Meredith tried to make Webb jealous by faking a boyfriend, a man she met on an elevator. She and Webb got thrown together, on the run from the police after the casino they were both in got raided. Webb found an old lighthouse where they could lay low for the night. They spent the night arguing about their marriage and the issues that caused them to divorce. Webb believed if he could just keep them secluded for a few days, he would succeed at winning Meredith over and they'd remarry.

Webb's plan worked, and he and Meredith quickly remarried. Trouble came again, though, in the form of Ginger, who showed up at Meredith's apartment, needing Webb's help. He went to her aid, and was seen by Meredith's grandfather, who disapproved of the union and sent the slightly drunk Webb away in a taxi. He ended up on a train to Philadelphia, while Meredith's grandfather told her that Webb was with Ginger. Meredith had to cover for the fact that Webb was gone to the press, who showed up on her doorstep for an interview after hearing about her recent marriage. She claimed to have married a different man, who died in a private plane crash right after they eloped. The story backfired when the fake boyfriend she met earlier in the movie showed up and claimed to be her "dead" husband.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In this study, I used a combination of qualitative methods to research and analyze the data collected. I employed the use of document analysis to help explain the professional advice offered to businesswomen in the 1940s. Various primary sources were reviewed using the University of Georgia's library's historical newspapers database system. In addition, I examined magazines from the time period, available in print in the UGA library. I also conducted ethnographic content analysis while watching a selection of movies from the 1940s that showcased women in white-collar jobs. I selected the movies along with input from my committee. One movie from each year of the decade, excluding 1940, was viewed. I used the information gathered in the document analysis to create a checklist of clothing choices that white-collar workingwomen were advised to wear on the job. After creating the checklist, I watched each movie three times to see if the clothing from the professional advice showed up on screen. A peer also reviewed each of the movies once, along with the checklist, in order to strengthen the validity of the study.

Objectives

This study had the following objectives:

1. To understand the advice given to women about professional dress in the 1940s.
2. To examine the styles worn by businesswomen in Hollywood movies in the 1940s.
3. To compare the professional dress literature to the articles of clothing worn in the movies.

Methodology

In this study, I implemented a three-step process to achieve my objectives of discovering more about white-collar workingwomen's clothing in the movies and what they were advised to wear. Firstly, I analyzed the professional advice and what was written about on-screen costumes using document analysis. I utilized this information to create a checklist of what women were advised to wear to work. Secondly, I watched each of the selected movies three times in order to adequately view what the lead actress was wearing to work. The movie selection criteria were listed later in this chapter. I noted what the actresses were wearing and marked that against the checklist, while paying special attention to make note of the clothing not appearing on my checklist. Finally, I compared the advice written in the 1940s to what women wore on screen.

I conducted a document analysis when looking at professional dress advice written in the 1940s. Document analysis was defined as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic material” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Document analysis “requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). This method was used when looking at primary sources from the 1940s. These primary sources included *Vogue*, *McCall's*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, *The New York Times*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. When looking at the magazines, I searched through every issue published from 1941-1949. For the newspapers, I conducted my search through an online historic newspaper database that included five newspapers. I looked at 1941-1949 in the newspapers in three-month increments to make the information easier to view. As in this study, “document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation” (Bowen, 2009, p. 28).

One of the reasons document analysis was helpful to this study was that “documents provide a means of tracking changes and development” (Bowen, 2009, p. 30). This method was very useful for tracking women’s dress because fashion is ever changing. By looking closely at the documents, it was easier to learn if and when a change occurred in the clothing working women were advised to wear. Document analysis was also helpful when the researcher needed to “verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources” (Bowen, 2009, p. 30). Some of the research used came from secondary sources and needed to be verified by comparing it to the primary sources. “Documents may be the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed . . . ” (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). It should be noted that many sources from the 1940s, including books, magazines, and newspapers, were extremely difficult to find. Several books were not available to the researcher. Some of the magazines that were read in the 1940s were also unable to be located, both in print and online. An example of this was the magazine *Mademoiselle*, which was used by Marcketti & Ferrell-Beck (2008), and was not available in any public or scholastic library open to the researcher and could not be found via the Internet.

In this study, I also performed ethnographic content analysis to gather information about clothing worn on screen in movies from the 1940s. Ethnographic content analysis was a version of document analysis, but the “ethnographic perspective can help delineate patterns of human action when document analysis is conceptualized fieldwork” (Altheide, 1996, p. 13). It was defined as “the reflexive analysis of documents” (Altheide, 1996, p. 14). I created a checklist for the decade that encompassed all of the advice given to workingwomen of the day that was found in the newspapers and magazines. I then watched each movie three times to determine whether the styles worn on screen were similar to those advised by experts in the field. I did not count the times certain aspects of dress showed up on screen, but noted if they did or did not appear in the

costumes. The traditional content analysis generally counts the frequency of something appearing, so this was where the difference in traditional content analysis and ethnographic content analysis could be seen. For this study, only the lead actress, who held a white-collar job, was examined. After collecting all of my data, I analyzed it according to the clothing advice given. I compared what advice was given during the 1940s to what was worn on screen. Clarissa Esguerra also used this method in *The Appropriateness of Historic Costume of Male Protagonist in Historic Epic Movies*. Using David Altheide's procedure detailed in *Qualitative Media Analysis*, Esguerra adjusted the steps of the method to fit with cinematic analysis (Esguerra, 2003, p. 87-88). I used her modified steps for this study, with some revisions to make it more specific to this study. The steps used are as follows:

1. *Topic* – the comparison between what businesswomen in the 1940s were advised to wear compared to what they wore in movies during the same decade
2. *Ethnographic study/literature* – review of literature
3. *Documents* – familiarization to the general fashion of the decade, the professional advice given, and the movies of the 1940s, as recorded in Chapter 2, Review of Literature and Chapter 4, Results and Discussion
4. *Draft Protocol* – created historic costume checklist of clothing women were advised to wear in the white-collar workforce during the 1940s
5. *Examine documents* – gathered data from movies about clothing worn by lead actresses/white-collar women, while taking into consideration the previously made checklist
6. *Collect data* – employed the checklist made while viewing each movie selected; each movie was watched three times for maximum clothing views

7. *Code data* – analyzed and decoded the collected data using the knowledge gained in the review of literature
8. *Compare items* – compared and contrasted any similarities and differences found between what was written about and what could be seen on-screen.
9. *Case Studies* – constructed summaries of each movie and examples of historic costume data for each
10. *Report* – assimilated findings, concepts, and interpretations

Most of these steps were the same as Esguerra's, but some modification was necessary. In each step, the explanation was changed to reflect this study instead of hers. Also, her Step 6 was originally "Theoretical Sample," which compared the two different time periods used in her study. Because the movies in this study were all made in the same decade, this step was not necessary and was omitted.

Movie Selection

For this study, I chose a movie from each year between 1941 and 1949 that depicted white-collar women and their clothing. The movies included: *Design for Scandal* (1941; judge), *Woman of the Year* (1942; political pundit and diplomat), *Government Girl* (1943; government secretary), *Lady in the Dark* (1944; magazine editor), *Mildred Pierce* (1945; entrepreneur), *To Each His Own* (1946; entrepreneur), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947; Macy's department store manager and in charge of Thanksgiving Day parade), *Smart Woman* (1948; attorney), and *Tell it to the Judge* (1949; attorney and federal judge). I watched each of these movies three times to adequately describe the costumes worn. I focused on the lead actress who held a position in the white-collar workforce.

These movies were selected after careful consideration. I looked at the top one hundred movies from each year on the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) and picked movies that fell into this category of white-collar workingwomen. Several of the movies were recommended by my major professor. The year 1940 was excluded because America had not yet entered the war and movies that premiered in 1940 were more than likely made in the late 1930s.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes a discussion of the results of this study presented by the objectives of the research. The objectives of this study were the following:

1. To understand the advice given to women about professional dress in the 1940s.
2. To examine the styles worn by businesswomen in Hollywood movies in the 1940s.
3. To compare the professional dress advice to the articles of clothing worn in the movies.

Additional Limitations

The researcher discovered these additional limitations during the course of gathering primary data and watching the movies:

1. The late 1940s magazines and newspapers did not offer a lot of advice to women on what to wear to work, presumably because women were being urged to leave the workforce.
2. Books and magazines from the 1940s were not easily accessible, like *Mademoiselle* magazine.
3. Several of the movies (*Design for Scandal*, *To Each His Own*, and *Tell It to the Judge*) did not show the women at work very often, which made it difficult to surmise their professional dress.
4. Many scenes showed the women covered by either large coats or desks, or the camera angle did not allow for the researcher to see complete outfits.

Objective 1

The first objective of this study was to understand the advice given to women about professional dress in the 1940s. The results were based on the professional clothing advice found in newspapers and magazines from the 1940s. The advice was then turned into a checklist for ethnographic content analysis. This checklist served as a means for gathering data from the nine movies viewed: *Design for Scandal* (1941; a judge), *Woman of the Year* (1942; political pundit and diplomat), *Government Girl* (1943; government secretary), *Lady in the Dark* (1944; magazine editor), *Mildred Pierce* (1945; entrepreneur), *To Each His Own* (1946; entrepreneur), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947; department store manager and in charge of Thanksgiving Day Parade), *Smart Woman* (1948; attorney), and *Tell it to the Judge* (1949; attorney and federal judge). The female lead from each movie, all of which worked in the business world, was analyzed according to what they were wearing for work attire. A summary was written for each movie, as well, to give the reader more insight into the movie and the characters themselves. The researcher also made note of any garments worn to work that did not appear on the checklist.

Data Collection from Magazines and Newspapers

The primary data collected came from the following sources: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. This information was gained by searching through the historical newspapers database online, a database that included five newspapers. I searched through the years 1941 to 1949 in three-month increments, using key words such as “career,” “advice,” “women,” “professional,” “suits,” and “businesswomen.” I also searched through the 1941 to 1949 bound issues of *Vogue*, *McCall's*, and *Harper's Bazaar* that were found in the UGA library, without the assistance of a word search or online database. A table of the advice found can be seen in **Table 2**. This information was then divided into two

checklists, one for the years 1941 to 1946, and one for 1947 to 1949, according to the decade break used by Parsons and Farrell-Beck (2007), which distinguished between the years of World War II (1941 to 1946) and postwar period (1947 to 1949).

Table 2: List of professional clothing advice

Year	Publication	Fashion or Business	Advice Given
1941	<i>The Washington Post</i>	Business	- Suits - Versatility
	<i>The Washington Post</i>	Business/Fashion	- Garment grippers - Color of the season: purple
	<i>The Washington Post</i>	Fashion/Defense	- More practical to wear convertible collar blouse with suit skirts
1942	<i>The New York Times</i>	“Career girl”	- Tailored topcoat with classic suit and tailored defense dresses - Polishable leather shoes (red and blue) - Heels
	<i>The Washington Post</i>	“Office wear”	- Rayon for fewer wrinkles - Full and pleated skirts not practical
	<i>Washington Post</i>	Fashion/Defense wear	- No uniforms if not required - Look subdued during daytime work - Simple elegance and looking young - Slim skirts - Plain jerseys - Dressmaker suits - Soft woolens
	<i>The Washington Post</i>	Business	- Black suits with colored accessories - Print/colored dresses
	<i>New York Times</i>	Business stats	- Suits in substantial numbers - Tweed, plaid, herringbone, twill

	<i>New York Times</i>	Fashion	- Vests added to suits
	<i>New York Times</i>	Fashion/Business	- Suit as mainstay - “Trim little shirt” for business
1943	<i>Harper’s Bazaar</i>	Business	- Pocket bows - Pink and white stripes
	<i>Harper’s Bazaar</i>	Business	- Suit - Drop front skirt - Single button jacket - Kick pleats
	<i>Harper’s Bazaar</i>	Business	- Wool flannel - Bowler hat - Ladies’ Chesterfield coat - Madcap hat
	<i>The Washington Post</i>	Fashion/Politicians	- Well cut dark frocks - Frills at neck/wrist - Tailored suits - Dash of red - Flat heeled shoes - Soft hued dresses/suits
	<i>The Washington Post</i>	Career/Fashion	- Simple little suit
1944	<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	Business	- Chesterfield coat - Rounded shoulders - Wool fitted suit - Dirndl skirt
	<i>New York Times</i>	Business/Fashion	- Bareback dresses with fitted jackets - Suits: bolero, cardigan, dressmaker, tailored
1945	<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	Business	- Uncluttered, simple clothes - Dresses with bright wools - Cloche hats - 3 piece suits - Push up sleeves - Wool skirts and blouses - Belts - Forest green, olive green, winter blue, royal blue, grays and

			printed browns - Bright scarves - Smaller handbags - String gloves
	<i>New York Times</i>	Career	- Tweed/monotone wool suits with soft detailing - Green suit with cut away front and belted back - Brown worsted suit with Byron collar and long jacket
	<i>New York Times</i>	Business	- Neutral colors with accents
1946	<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	Business	- Cotton - Two piece dress - Gingham plaid suit - Extra peplum - Cotton shoes
	<i>New York Times</i>	Business	- Pastel prints - Bolero and low cut silk dress - Rayon suit with fitted jacket and peplum skirt
	<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	Career	- Cotton and rayon dresses - Prints/checks/ stripes
1947	<i>New York Times</i>	Fashion	- Petitions in business offices → against longer skirts
	<i>New York Times</i>	Business	- Plaid suit under brown wool topper - Gray menswear worsted tailored knit with small shawl collar - Hand knit suit in cocoa wool - Long sleeved sweater blouse with turnover collar - Narrow gold belt
1948	<i>The Christian Science Monitor</i>	Business	- Wrap around brown wool coat

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jumper dresses with different blouses - Separates (skirts, weskits, stoles, jackets) - Jewel tone satins/ Iridescent gowns
1949	<i>New York Times</i>	Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cotton dresses (iridescent to sheer, etc.) - Scalloping and shirring details - Trim, fit bodice - Skirt with controlled fullness (wide pleats or back flare) - Sheer cottons

For the years 1941 to 1946, professional advice was found in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. No information was found in *Vogue*, *McCall's*, or the other newspapers that are listed in the Historical Newspapers Database. For the years 1947 to 1949, only one article per year was found from either *The New York Times* or *The Christian Science Monitor*. The advice found was listed below, discussed by year. Some of the advice found was not included in the checklists because it was impossible for the researcher to determine if they appeared in the movies (i.e. types of suit fabrics, shoe fabrics, and color in all but one of the movies).

Primary Sources (Magazines and Newspapers)

This section detailed the specific advice found from 1941 to 1949. Each of the articles discussed was found in one of the following primary sources: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. The articles were intended for women in the white-collar workforce and advised them on what to wear to work. This type of information was a direct way of influencing the wardrobes of working women.

1941

All the advice found from 1941 came from *The Washington Post*. Two out of the three articles were from the “Fashion Forum” column that appeared in the newspaper during World War II. Jane Driscoll, who was the Fashion Editor at *The Washington Post* during this time, wrote this column. The first article concerning women’s work attire was published on September 20, 1941, and touched on both business attire and fashionable clothing. In this article, Driscoll stated that purple was one of the season’s most popular colors. She also said that businesswomen “wear suits virtually every day” (Driscoll, 1941a, p. 13). The other “Fashion Forum” article by Driscoll was published on December 20, 1941; almost two weeks after the United States had entered World War II. In this column, a question was posed to her about which would be better with skirt suits, sweaters or blouses. Her answer was that both were equally popular, but that convertible collar blouses would be more practical for the Washington summer (Driscoll, 1941c, p. 13).

The third article found from 1941 was published on October 9, 1941, and was also written by Jane Driscoll. In this article, Driscoll reported on the winner of an essay contest entitled “An Ideal Wardrobe for the Business Woman” (Driscoll, 1941b, p. 17). The winner was rewarded with the pieces she wrote about, which included the following: a three-piece suit with

two blouses, a basic black dress, a plaid shirtwaist dress, and a coatdress. She was also given hose and an evening dress.

1942

The advice from 1942 was found in *The New York Times* and in *The Washington Post*. In this year, there were five articles found advising women on what to wear to work. Though it is a small increase from 1941, it shows that women were moving into the work force after America entered World War II and that what they were wearing to work was significant. The first article found was published on January 10. Once again, the author was Jane Driscoll and the column was the “Fashion Forum.” In this column, she advised businesswomen to embrace their black suits, and add a lot of colored accessories to liven up the outfit. She also recommended adding a belt or a new embroidered jacket, and buying printed or bright colored dresses if a budget would allow for it (Driscoll, 1942a).

The next article was from *The New York Times* on January 21, and was in the form of a business report. In this article, entitled “Business World,” the author stated that women’s suits were selling rapidly and businesses had already put in more orders to keep up with the demand. It also stated that the favorite fabrics were “tweeds, plaids, herringbones and twills” (“Business World,” 1942, p. 26).

Jane Driscoll authored another article about business clothing that was a part of a “series on the defense fashion outlook” (Driscoll, 1942b, p. 15). In this part of the series, published on January 28, 1942, she addressed the suit and its importance in spring wardrobes. She stated that the best suits were those made of fabrics like Oxford or Shetland. She also indicated the best colors for spring were brown, gray, and green. She commented on shoes in this article, too,

claiming they should be “spectator height pump shoes” that could be polished (Driscoll, 1942b, p. 15).

The next article found was published on February 2, 1942, and was also written by Jane Driscoll for *The Washington Post*. This article was entitled “Tailored Basic Wardrobe with Gay Touches Advised for Career Girl.” For this article, Driscoll interviewed Peggy Sweet, who was an editor at *Glamour Magazine*. Sweet stated that there were two things every career “girl” should have in her wardrobe for work clothing: a tailored topcoat with classic suit and a tailored defense dress. She also told career women to wear red and blue shoes with dark colors, because the service men enjoyed seeing women in bright heels (Driscoll, 1942c). It is important to note that “career girl” was the phrase often used to describe the workingwomen of the 1940s, and was used from this year onward in the professional clothing advice.

Another article in Jane Driscoll’s series about defense fashion was published on February 15, 1942. In this column, she advised women to only wear uniforms if they were absolutely required by their job. “Just because a woman is behind a desk does not mean she must be in a uniform,” stated designer Fira Benson (1942d, p. S10). Benson also gave advice on what women should be wearing instead. Her suggestions included slim skirts, dressmaker suits with white blouses, soft woolens, and plain jerseys.

The next article in this series was published on February 23, 1942. For this part of the series, Driscoll interviewed Bonnie Cashin, a New York designer. Cashin called for women to embrace more practical clothing in the coming seasons of spring and fall. She stated that skirts should be slim, but with enough fullness to walk in easily. She said that she preferred the twenty-six inch jacket with pockets, and that shoulders should still be slightly padded. She stated the bodice should still be trim (Driscoll, 1942e).

The “Fashion Forum” column appeared again on June 20, 1942, with more clothing wisdom imparted by Jane Driscoll. This article focused on fabrics that were practical for the office and would combat wrinkles. Her suggestion was to wear rayon fabrics, which did not wrinkle very much. She also suggested jersey fabrics, seersucker, and butcher linen (Driscoll, 1942f).

1943

The advice found in 1943 was from *The New York Times* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. It is important to note that 1943 was the year the vest came into fashion, especially paired with suits (Pope, 1943a). This advice was found in the fashion sections of *The New York Times* articles, but not in the business wear ones. However, since suits were an established part of the career woman’s wardrobe, it was safe to assume that a vest could have also been an integral part of the working girl’s office wear.

Harper’s Bazaar had three instances where work attire was discussed. In the February issue, a photograph was published that showed two young women, both wearing suits. The caption read, “in the office and out, the suit’s the thing” (*Harper’s Bazaar*, February 1943, p. 64). One of the suits had a “drop front skirt” and a bolero jacket. The other had kick pleats on the skirt and a single button jacket. This photograph can be seen in **Figure 3**. The shoulders on the two women’s suits were also broad, which was indicative of one of the decade’s most popular fashions (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007). In the May issue, in an article entitled “Cotton Commuters,” a woman was shown wearing a pink and white striped suit with breast pocket bows (May 1943, p. 80). This photograph can be seen in **Figure 4**. The last mention of business wear was in the August issue. In this photograph, two women were wearing suits, as seen in **Figure 5**. The suit on the right was a wool flannel suit in gray, with a broadcloth shirt, a bowler hat, and a

Chesterfield coat. The woman on the left was wearing a two-piece suit dress with a “Madcap hat” (*Harper’s Bazaar*, August 1943, p. 3).

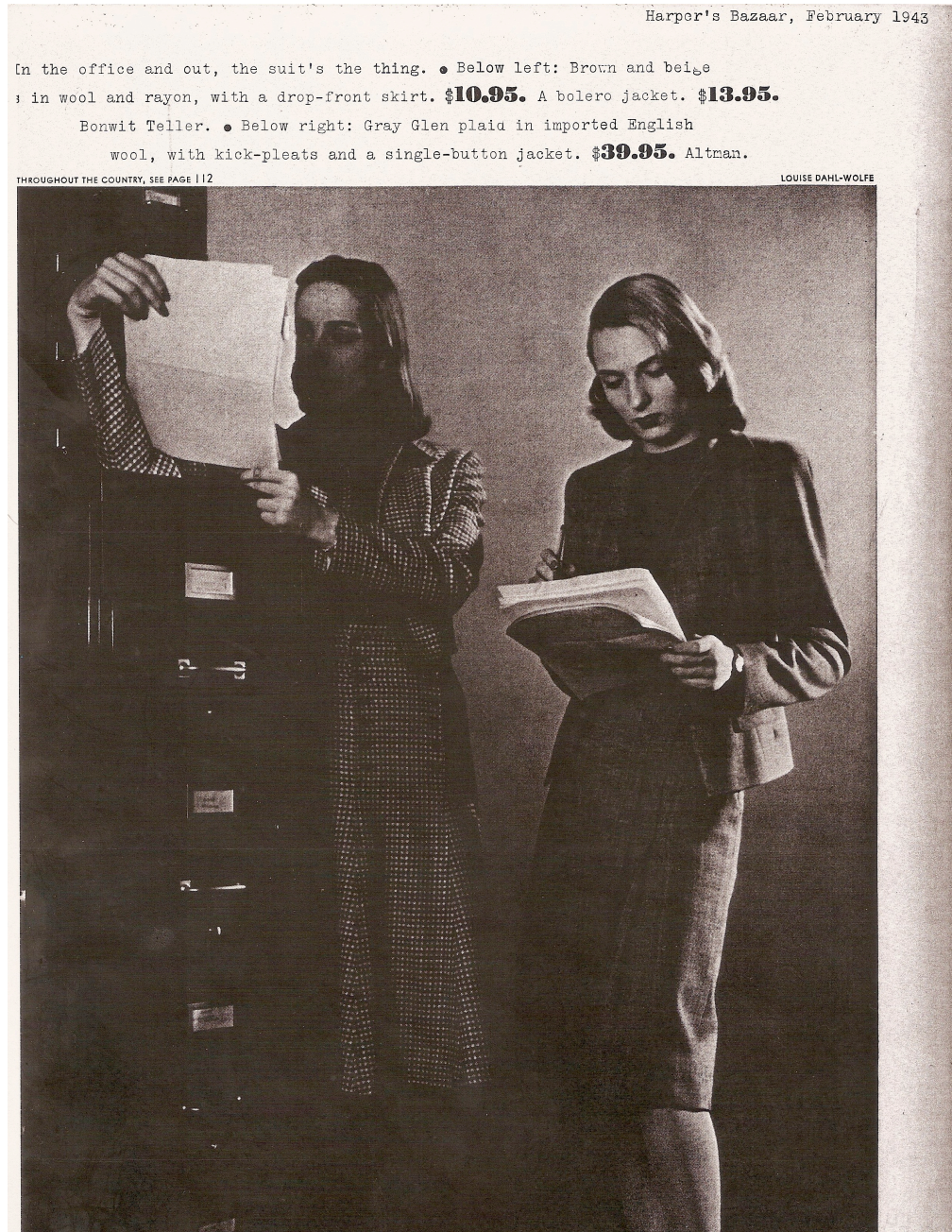


Figure 3: *Harper’s Bazaar* photograph showcasing work attire for businesswomen (February 1943, p. 64).



Figure 4: *Harper's Bazaar* photograph showing an example of a career woman's suit (May 1943, p. 80).

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"Little Britisher"... All wool flannel suit, striped English grey, 39.95
Shirt of Imported English Broadcloth (a honey!), 6.98 Piccadilly
bowler hat, by Dobbs, 8.95 "Lady" Chesterfield coat, interlined,
all wool, 59.95

Beau-Time Dress... Two-piece affair in rabbit's hair wool
(85% wool and 15% rabbit's hair), 22.95 Perky Madcap
"date" hat with spaghetti bows, 3.98.

YONE FRISSELL

IF IT'S "FAMOUS-BARR"

Figure 5: *Harper's Bazaar* photograph recommending suits for the business girl (August 1943, p. 3).

Virginia Pope, the fashion editor for *The New York Times*, wrote about suits in a column on September 12, 1943, entitled “The Fashion Outlook for 1943 – 44.” She advocated for a feminized suit, since the suit was now being used for both office wear and evening wear. With different blouses, the suit could fit different scenarios. For business wear, she recommended the tailored shirt (Pope, 1943b). In another article, this one from September 19, 1943, Pope added a “trim” shirt to the previous advice (Pope, 1943c).

1944

The advice from 1944 came from *The Washington Post*. On March 30, Malvina Lindsay reported on the best-dressed women. Included in this list was one Miss Octavia Dodd, who was said to be a career woman. Miss Dodd was put on the best-dressed list because of her ability to find clothing that did not scream that she was an executive, but was simply attractive (Lindsay, 1944a). In another article, this one from April 12, writer Peggy Preston discussed the female politician and her wardrobe. She used three women politicians as her examples. According to Preston, these women were seen around town and on the job wearing the following: well cut dark frocks, frills at the wrist and neck, tailored suits, dashes of red, flat-heeled shoes, and soft hues (Preston, 1944).

1945

The year 1945 did not have a lot of advice throughout the newspapers and magazines printed during the year. However, some professional advice was found, sometimes mixed with fashion advice. The first article found was published on February 23 in *The New York Times*, and discussed a fashion show that had shown spring trends for all types of women, including career “girls” and businesswomen. The fashion show exhibited green and pink dresses with bateau or

slashed necklines, peplum details, long torso silhouettes, and matching capes or jackets (“Make-your-own,” 1945).

Another article from 1945, found in *The Washington Post*, was published on March 8 and discussed what could be worn to the office. Martha Ellyn, the article’s author, recommended wearing barebacked dresses with fitted peplum jackets, either tailored or feminine. Suits were once again reinforced as the most important part of a business woman’s wardrobe, and Ellyn advocated varying suit styles, including bolero, cardigan, dressmaker, and tailored suits (Ellyn, 1945).

A second fashion show was held later in the year, and covered by *The Christian Science Monitor*. This article, published on October 24, covered a Boston fashion show, which was produced by businesswomen and businesswomen modeled the clothing. A few of the pieces worn included a Chesterfield coat with rounded shoulders, trimmed in lamb, and a fitted suit with a dirndl skirt (“Business Girls’,” 1945).

1946

This year had a larger number of professional dress advice articles in the newspapers than in previous years. The first article, from the January 19 issue of *The Christian Science Monitor*, advertised for an upcoming fashion show that would showcase outfits for all types of women, including career “girls.” Cotton and rayon dresses were touted as being the fashionable thing to wear, along with prints, checks, and stripes (“Monday Fashion,” 1946). Later in the year, on April 8, another fashion show exhibiting cotton trends was covered. The Maid of Cotton, a young woman selected to represent the cotton industry, modeled several cotton outfits to be worn for spring and summer. For business wear, she donned a two-piece dress consisting of a black

skirt and white blouse or printed blouse, with peplum or a bustle effect in the blouses (Driscoll, 1946).

The New York Times also had something to say about business wear in 1946. In an article from May 29, another fashion show featuring office wear was covered. Rayon suits with peplum accents and back belts were popular, as were cardigan jackets to be worn with flared skirts. Other styles worn for the fashion show were prints and pastels and boleros (“Fashions for Business,” 1946). Neutrals were recommended in a later article, published on July 31. These neutrals included gray, brown, and beige. Colored blouses and belts were also suggested (Pope, 1946).

The Christian Science Monitor published an article on October 9 that discussed what career “girls” themselves wanted to wear. The writer of this article, simply labeled a staff writer, interviewed Edna Somers, the director of the Fashion Center at Jordan Marsh Company, located in Boston. She stated that business “girls” liked to wear simple and uncluttered clothing. She also said that even though career “girls” had previously wanted sweaters and skirts, they now wanted to wear bright colored dresses that could double as date dresses (“Hoods,” 1946). She also stated that businesswomen liked cloche hats and push-up sleeves, along with three-piece suits. One of the most popular fabrics was wool, and the favorite colors were forest green, olive green, winter blue, royal blue, grays, and printed browns. In terms of accessories, bright scarves, smaller handbags, and string gloves were favored.

On October 31, *The New York Times* reported on yet another fashion show centered on career “girls.” This show exhibited wool and tweed suits, in green and brown. The wool suit had a cut-away front and belted back, with large patch pockets. Another suit in brown and pink checks had a Byron collar, a long jacket, and a full belt (“Career Girl,” 1946).

1947

The only professional clothing advice in this year came from *The New York Times*. This article was published on September 23, and once again covered a fashion show that focused on career “girls.” The models themselves were businesswomen, and they showed clothing for work, casual wear, and evening. The outfits shown for office wear included a brown plaid suit with a wool topper, a gray menswear tailored suit with a shawl collar, and a brown wool suit with a ribbed skirt, a long-sleeved sweater blouse with turn-over collar, and a small gold belt (“Fashion Show,” 1947). It is possible that the decline in articles from this year forward was due to the movement to get women back in the home and out of the workforce.

1948

The one article on professional clothing published in 1948 was published on October 14 in *The Christian Science Monitor*. Another fashion show was held by the “Women at Work” lecture series. The fashions shown included jumper dresses with various blouses, a wrap-around brown coat, and suit separates. These were among the most popular outfits with the fashion show’s audience (“Jordan’s Tops,” 1948).

1949

The only article discussing business wear from 1949 was published on May 11 in *The New York Times*. This article advocated the wearing of cotton dresses, casual shirtings, and chambrays for business girls. Accents like scalloping and shirring were on several of the outfits (“Sheer Cotton,” 1949).

Objective 2 and 3

The second objective of this study was to examine the styles worn by businesswomen in the selected 1940s Hollywood movies. The third objective of this study was to compare the professional dress advice to the articles of clothing worn in the movies. In order to achieve both of these objectives, a checklist was utilized. This checklist was made using the professional advice found in the primary sources. Each movie was viewed three times, once for the researcher to become familiar with the subject matter, and twice to use the checklists. The researcher made use of the pause and rewind features in order to more closely examine the outfits worn and to watch scenes multiple times to ensure maximum views of the leading ladies. The completed checklists can be seen in **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**. The researcher also had a peer, who has a degree in fashion merchandising, review all of the movies and complete the checklist on her own to add to the validity of the study. Her completed checklists can be seen in **Appendix 3** and **Appendix 4**.

In order to achieve Objective 3, the researcher examined what was found using the checklist. This included listing exactly what was marked off the checklist for each movie, and also what was worn for work that did not appear on the checklist. The following section includes the checklist results and discussion.

Discussion

After employing the checklists created from primary sources, the researcher found the following results for each movie and advice comparison. The movies are discussed in chronological order.

Design for Scandal (1941)

Design for Scandal, the first movie on the 1941-1946 checklist, had several of the articles of clothing from the checklist appear in the movie. Rosalind Russell's character, whose occupation in the movie was a judge, appeared at work several times during the movie. She wore a judge's robe with business wear underneath at the beginning of the movie. Her character wore two suits throughout the movie. The first suit was very feminized with trim lines and feminine details; it included a white tailored blouse with a Byron collar, a dark colored bolero jacket, and a "trim" bodice. The suit can be seen in **Figure 6**. She also wore open-toed pumps. The second suit she wore, seen in **Figure 7**, was also feminized; it included a cut-away jacket with peplum effect at the back and a skirt with kick pleats. The suit was two-toned, with a dark and a lighter color, one feature that was not on the checklist. The skirts were slim, and she wore dark colors. She also carried a small handbag and wore gloves. String gloves appeared on the checklist, but it was not possible to determine what type was worn in the movie, so they were not marked on the checklist or the "extras" column. The items she wore that appeared on the checklist were as follows: suits, slim skirts, white blouses, kick pleats, bolero jacket, feminized suit, peplum jackets, cut-away fronts, a Byron collar, a long jacket, trim bodice, dark colors, pumps, and smaller handbags. The two-toned suit and short jacket worn with the first suit were not on the checklist. *Design for Scandal* was in black and white, so it was not possible to judge exactly what colors the suits and accessories were. Robert Kalloch was the costume designer for this movie.



Figure 6: *Design for Scandal*; bolero jacket, white blouse with Byron collar, trim bodice



Figure 7: *Design for Scandal*; cut-away jacket with peplum, slim skirt with kick pleats

Woman of the Year (1942)

Woman of the Year, which starred Katharine Hepburn, had several of the items from the 1941-1946 checklist. Hepburn played a woman whose job was varied: she was a political pundit, an occasional columnist, and a diplomat. The following checklist items appeared in the movie: suits, slim skirts, white blouses, jackets with patch pockets, single button jackets, tailored shirts, a feminized suit, cardigan suits, long jackets, dark colors, checks, stripes, pumps, and belts. There were also other things the lead actress wore to work that did not appear in the checklist: a quilted jacket, jackets with broad shoulders, a white turtleneck, and open toed pumps. Hepburn's character was also seen wearing pants in her apartment while working with her assistant. *Woman of the Year* was in black and white. Adrian was the costume designer for this movie. Scenes from the movie can be seen in **Figure 8** through **Figure 12**.



Figure 8: *Woman of the Year*; jacket with patch pockets, dark skirt, and white turtleneck



Figure 9: *Woman of the Year*; striped cardigan with belt, dark skirt



Figure 10: *Woman of the Year*; quilted jacket, white blouse



Figure 11: *Woman of the Year*; velvet jacket, white blouse, dark pants



Figure 12: *Woman of the Year*; checked suit, one button jacket with patch pockets, broad shoulders, and white blouse

Government Girl (1943)

Government Girl, which starred Olivia de Havilland, had several items on the checklist in the movie. Her character, Smokey, was a government administrative assistant. The checklist items that were worn in the movie were as follows: suits, slim skirts, white blouses, bolero jackets, tailored shirts, feminized suits, trim shirts, cardigan suits, bow detailing, dark colors, checks, stripes, pumps, and smaller handbags. During the movie, Smokey was also seen wearing stockings, an ascot around her neck, a vest, a slightly full skirt, broad shoulders, and gloves. These were items that did not appear on the checklist. While string gloves were on the checklist, it was not possible to tell whether the gloves worn in the movie are actually this type. Because of this, they were not included on either the checklist or the “extras”. *Government Girl* was a black and white movie. The outfits worn can be seen in **Figure 13** through **Figure 17**. Edward Stevenson was the costume designer for this movie.



Figure 13: *Government Girl*; striped bolero jacket, broad shoulders, white blouse, dark skirt



Figure 14: *Government Girl*; checked blouse and dark skirt



Figure 15: *Government Girl*; short, dark jacket and white blouse with ascot



Figure 16: *Government Girl*; white blouse, dark skirt



Figure 17: *Government Girl*; white shirt, vest, dark skirt

Lady in the Dark (1944)

Lady in the Dark starred Ginger Rogers as the editor-in-chief of *Allure* magazine. Her character, Liza, wore several of the items that appeared on the checklist. She wore: suits with slim skirts, white blouses, single button jackets, tailored shirts, long jackets, bow details, neck frills, dark colors, the color gray, stripes, the color olive green, belts, pumps, and small handbags. She also wore several items to work that did not appear on the checklist. These included a fur coat, a skirt with pockets, box jackets, the color mustard yellow, and a fur stole. She also had very broad shoulders in her suit jackets. *Lady in the Dark* was the one movie used in this study that was in color, which made it possible to tell what colors the lead character wore to work. The outfits worn in this movie can be seen in **Figure 18** through **Figure 21**. Edith Head designed the costumes for this movie.



Figure 18: *Lady in the Dark*; dark striped suit, white blouse with bow detail, broad shoulders



Figure 19: *Lady in the Dark*; olive green suit with broad shoulders, white blouse, fur stole



Figure 20: *Lady in the Dark*; olive green suit with broad shoulder and tier detail, mustard yellow blouse



Figure 21: *Lady in the Dark*; mustard yellow blouse with neck ruffles, dark skirt, fur coat

Mildred Pierce (1945)

Mildred Pierce, which starred Joan Crawford as the title character, was an entrepreneur. She wore many of the items found on the checklist, and several pieces of clothing that were not found in the research. The lead character wore the following items from the checklist: suits, slim skirts, white blouses, jackets with patch pockets, tailored shirts, peplum jackets, long jackets, neck frills, dark colors, checks, stripes, belts, pumps, and small handbags. The items worn that were not on the checklist were as follows: fur coats, a fur hat, broad shoulders, jackets with cuffed wrists, jacket with tulip detail, strappy heels, gloves, and a jacket with a tie detail at the front. String gloves are on the checklist, but it was not possible to determine if the gloves worn were that type, so they were not included on either list. This was the second movie that showed the main female character wear fur after she gains success. *Mildred Pierce* was in black and

white, so it was not possible to tell specific colors of outfits worn. The outfits worn in this movie can be seen in **Figure 22** through **Figure 27**. Milo Anderson was the costume designer for this movie.



Figure 22: *Mildred Pierce*; black dress with broad shoulders, white blouse, and neck loop detail



Figure 23: *Mildred Pierce*; cardigan suit with dark skirt and blouse



Figure 24: *Mildred Pierce*; dark, striped suit with white blouse; broad shoulders



Figure 25: *Mildred Pierce*; jacket with tie detail, dark shirt with tie detail, dark skirt



Figure 26: *Mildred Pierce*; suit with dark blouse and broad shoulders



Figure 27: *Mildred Pierce*; dark suit with broad shoulders, dark blouse with neck detail

To Each His Own (1946)

To Each His Own, which starred Olivia de Havilland as an entrepreneur, had only three items from the checklist since most of the movie took place during World War I and the following years, while only a small amount of time was spent during World War II. Her character wore or carried the following items from the checklist: plaid, pumps, and small handbags. Because her character constantly wore a large trench coat that covered the rest of her clothing, the only items not on the checklist that could be noted were very broad shoulders and her trench coat. This can be seen in **Figure 28**. *To Each His Own* was in black and white, so it was not possible to determine what colors were being worn. Edith Head was the costume designer for this movie.



Figure 28: *To Each His Own*; trench coat with broad shoulders, plaid scarf

Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

Miracle on 34th Street, which starred Maureen O'Hara, had only one item from the checklist worn by the lead actress: tailored suits. However, there were many things she wore that did not appear on the checklist. Those items are as follows: a printed scarf, hat with a jeweled scarf, a below-the-knee skirt (which came into fashion in 1947), dark colored suits, belted jackets, jackets with a V-seam on the back, a tweed suit, a collarless suit jacket with asymmetrical fastenings, bow detail on the blouse, broad shoulders, and a pillbox hat. A few of these items that did not appear on the 1947 to 1949 checklist did appear on the 1941-1946 checklist and in the movies. This might mean that the movie was actually filmed in 1946, before the silhouette began to change, which would explain the details recommended in the advice from 1941 to 1946. Another explanation could have been budgetary, however, since costumes were frequently reused; these could have been from previous movies and were not updated for this movie. Kay Nelson designed the costumes for this movie. *Miracle on 34th Street* was in black and white, so it was not possible to determine any of the colors worn by O'Hara's character. The business outfits worn can be seen in **Figure 29** through **Figure 31**.



Figure 29: *Miracle on 34th Street*; large coat with printed scarf and jeweled hat



Figure 30: *Miracle on 34th Street*; dark suit with white collar/cuff detail, asymmetrical fastening



Figure 31: *Miracle on 34th Street*; suit with black bar detail

Smart Woman (1948)

Smart Woman, which starred Constance Bennett, only had four items from the 1947-1949 checklist that could be marked off: tailored suits, suit separates, scalloping detail, and plaid. None of the other checklist items appeared in any of the lead character's outfits. However, there were several items worn that did not appear on the checklist. Those items are as follows: small velvet collars, accented waistlines, bow detailing on the coat, heels, side bustle detail, belted jackets, a double button jacket, broad shoulders, patch pockets, and various hats. *Smart Woman* was in black and white, so it was not possible to determine what colors the lead actress was wearing. Adrian was the costume designer for this movie. All of the professional outfits worn in this movie can be seen in **Figure 32** through **Figure 37**.



Figure 32: *Smart Woman*; plaid suit jacket with velvet collar and pocket bows, broad shoulders



Figure 33: *Smart Woman*; dark suit with side bustle detail



Figure 34: *Smart Woman*; suit jacket with belt detail, broad shoulders



Figure 35: *Smart Woman*; black suit or dress with pearls and draping



Figure 36: *Smart Woman*; jacket with scalloping detail, broad shoulders, dark skirt



Figure 37: *Smart Woman*; suit with broad shoulders

Tell It to the Judge (1949)

Tell It to the Judge, which starred Rosalind Russell, had one item from the checklist worn by the main character: a long-sleeved sweater blouse with turnover collar. The two items worn that were not on the checklist were a fur stole and a large fashionable hat. Her one work outfit also had rounded shoulders, instead of the broad shoulders seen in the movies from earlier in the decade. Even though rounded shoulders were not on the checklist for business wear, they were very fashionable after Dior's New Look premiered in 1947. There were not a lot of extra items worn that were not on the checklist, due to the fact that most of the movie was not spent with the lead actress at work. *Tell It to the Judge* was in black and white, so it was not possible to determine what colors were worn during the movie. Jean-Louis was the costume designer for this movie. The one business outfit worn can be seen in **Figure 38**.



Figure 38: *Tell it to the Judge*; dark blouse with turnover collar, rounded shoulders, and fur stole

Peer Review of the Movies

In order to strengthen the validity of this study, a peer was asked to review the movies along with the checklists. The reviewer had a degree in fashion merchandising, and had one course in historic dress and fashion. There were several differences in findings between the researcher's checklists and the peer's. The peer marked off "suits" in only two movies from the 1941 to 1946 checklist; the researcher had marked that off on five of the six movies. The peer also did not mark "slim skirts" in the same places the researcher did. There was agreement, however, over the wearing of white blouses, dark colors, and pumps on the 1941 to 1946 checklist. On the subject of single button jackets and bow details, the researcher and reviewer agreed on most items, but not quite all of them. The researcher also had more items on the "other" part of the 1941 to 1946 checklist, presumably because of her familiarity with historic costumes and the extended time with the movies.

For *Design for Scandal*, the researcher had fourteen items from the checklist marked, and two extras. These included suits, slim skirts, white blouses, bolero jacket, kick pleats, feminized suits, peplum jackets, cut-away fronts, Byron collars, long jackets, trim bodice, dark colors, pumps, and smaller handbags. The extras were a two-toned suit and a short jacket. The peer reviewer marked off eight items on the checklist for this movie. These included: suits, convertible collar blouses, white blouses, single button jacket, feminized suit, dark colors, black, and pumps. The peer reviewer had no extras noted.

For *Woman of the Year*, the researcher had fourteen items marked on the checklist. These included: suits, slim skirts, white blouses, jackets with patch pockets, single button jackets, a tailored shirt, feminized suit, cardigan suits, long jackets, dark colors, checks, stripes, belts, and pumps. There were four extras: a quilted suit jacket, open-toed pumps, broad shoulders, and a

white turtleneck. The peer reviewer marked fourteen items on the checklist. These included: suits, three-piece suit, slim skirt, white blouse, single button jacket, feminized suit, Chesterfield coat, Byron collar, dark colors, black, checks, stripes, belts, and pumps. The peer reviewer had no extras listed.

For *Government Girl*, the researcher marked fourteen items on the checklist. These included: suits, slim skirts, white blouses, bolero jacket, tailored shirt, feminized suit, trim shirt, cardigan suits, bow detail, dark colors, checks, stripes, pumps, and small handbags. The extras seen were: stockings, an ascot, fuller skirt, a vest, and broad shoulders. The peer reviewer marked eight things on the checklist. These included: slim skirt, white blouses, tailored shirt, bow detail, dark colors, pastels, and pumps. The peer's one extra was a vest.

For *Lady in the Dark*, the researcher had fifteen items marked on the checklist. These included: suits, slim skirt, white blouses, single button jackets, tailored shirt, long jackets, bow detail, neck frills, dark colors, gray, stripes, olive green, belts, pumps, and small handbags. The extras found included: a fur coat, skirt with pockets, box jackets, very broad shoulders, mustard yellow, and a fur stole. The peer reviewer marked eleven items on the checklist. These included: three-piece suit, white blouses, single button jacket, feminized suit, neck frills, dark colors, black, gray, belts, pumps, and smaller handbags. The peer's extra item noted was a fur overcoat.

For *Mildred Pierce*, the researcher marked off fourteen items on the checklist. These items included: suits, slim skirt, white blouses, jackets with patch pockets, tailored shirts, peplum jackets, long jackets, neck frills, dark colors, checks, stripes, belts, pumps, and smaller handbags. There were seven extras found by the researcher: fur coat, fur hat, broad shoulders, tulip jacket, jacket with cuffed wrists, jacket with tie detail, and strappy heels. The peer reviewer marked

eight items on the checklist for this movie. These included: basic dress, white blouses, feminized suit, push-up sleeves, bow detail, dark colors, stripes, and pumps. The peer listed no extras.

For *To Each His Own*, the researcher marked off three items on the checklist. These items were: plaid, pumps, and smaller handbags. There were two extras worn: a trench coat and broad shoulders. The peer reviewer also marked off three items on the checklist. These items were: shirtwaist dress, a Byron collar, and checks. The peer noted no extra items worn.

The 1947 to 1949 checklist had similar results. The researcher and reviewer agreed on who wore tailored suits and plaid (the women of *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Smart Woman*). There was some divergence in the other categories: the reviewer noted that she saw characters wearing a wrap around coat in *Tell It to the Judge* and the color gray in *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Smart Woman*. Both the researcher and reviewer observed suit separates in *Smart Woman*, but the peer reviewer also marked them down for the other two movies on the checklist. The reviewer marked off the color gray for *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Smart Woman*; the researcher did not because she decided to not attempt to tell coloring for any of the black and white movies. There was also a difference in the extra items on this checklist. The researcher had ten for both *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Smart Woman*, while the reviewer had none. Again, this is likely due to the fact that the researcher had more time with each movie and has more knowledge of historic costumes and the time period.

For *Miracle on 34th Street*, the researcher marked one item on the checklist: a tailored suit. There were eleven items noted in the extras for this movie: a colorful scarf, hat with jeweled scarf, below-the-knee skirts, dark colored suits, belted jacket, V-seam on the back of a suit jacket, tweed suit, collarless suit jacket with asymmetrical fastening, bow detail on blouse, broad

shoulders, and a pillbox hat. The peer reviewer marked three items on the checklist: a tailored suit, suit separates, and the color gray. The peer noted no extra items.

For *Smart Woman*, the researcher marked four items on the checklist. These items included: tailored suits, suit separates, scalloping detail, and plaid. The researcher noted ten extras worn: small velvet collars, an accented waist, bow detail, heels, side bustle detail, a belted jacket, a double-button jacket, broad shoulders, patch pockets, and hats. The peer reviewer marked four items off the checklist, also. These items were: a tailored suit, suit separates, gray, and plaid. The peer did not note any extras.

For *Tell It to the Judge*, the researcher marked one item on the checklist: a long-sleeved sweater blouse with turnover collar. There were two extras noted: a fur stole and large hat. The peer reviewer marked two items on the checklist: wrap-around coats and suit separates. The peer noted two extras: dark colors and gloves.

Discussion

This study attempted to determine if there was any relation between the professional advice for dress from the 1940s and the clothes businesswomen wore in the movies made in and set in the same decade. As seen in the application of the checklists, there were some relationships between the professional advice and the movies, specifically those from 1941 to 1945.

Design for Scandal, the first movie on the checklist, exhibited fourteen out of the seventy-two possible items from the 1941 to 1946 checklist. *Woman of the Year* (1942) also had fourteen items marked on the checklist, as did *Government Girl* (1943). *Lady in the Dark* (1944) had fifteen of the seventy-two items, which was the highest number for this checklist. *Mildred Pierce* (1945) had fourteen items marked. *To Each His Own* (1946) had three of the items from the checklist.

When solely looking at the three sections of the checklist, the numbers are slightly different. The garment/silhouette section had a total of forty-one items. *Design for Scandal* had eleven out of the forty-one items. *Woman of the Year* and *Government Girl* had nine of the forty-one items. *Lady in the Dark*, and *Mildred Pierce* each exhibited eight of the forty-one items. *To Each His Own* had zero items from this section of the checklist. In the color section, there were twenty items on the checklist. *Design for Scandal* only had one item marked in this section, as did *To Each His Own*. *Woman of the Year*, *Government Girl*, and *Mildred Pierce* all had three items marked out of the twenty-one possible items. *Lady in the Dark* had the highest number in the color section, with four items marked, presumably because this movie was the only one in color. One of the extras for this movie was a fifth color. The third section of the checklist, which dealt with accessories, had eleven total items. *Design for Scandal*, *Woman of the Year*, *Government Girl*, and *To Each His Own* all had two out of the eleven items marked in this section. *Lady in the Dark* and *Mildred Pierce* both had three items out of the eleven items marked.

In addition, each of these movies had at least one extra item added to the checklist under features that were not originally on the checklist, but were worn in the movie. *Design for Scandal* (1941) had only two instances this: a two-toned suit and a short jacket. *Woman of the Year* (1942) had four instances: a quilted suit jacket, open toed pumps, a white turtleneck, and broad shoulders. *Government Girl* (1943) had five instances of extra items: stockings, an ascot, a fuller skirt, a vest, and broad shoulders. *Lady in the Dark* (1944) had six items marked as extras. These included: a fur coat, a skirt with pockets, box jackets, broad shoulders, the color mustard yellow, and a fur stole. *Mildred Pierce* (1945) had the highest amount of extra on this checklist with seven items. These included: a fur coat, fur hat, broad shoulders, a tulip jacket, jacket with

cuffed wrists, jacket with tie detail, and strappy heels. *To Each His Own* (1946) only had two instances of extras: a large trench coat and broad shoulders.

When the checklist is looked at by items instead of by movie totals, certain garments and features stood out as consistent. “Pumps” were the only items on the checklist that appeared in all six of the movies. “Suits” were seen in five out of the six movies on this checklist (they were not found in *To Each His Own*). “Slim skirts” were also found in five out of the six movies, again not in *To Each His Own*. “White blouses” were also found in the same five movies out of the six on the checklist. “Dark colors” and “smaller handbags” were also in five out of the six movies (dark colors were not found in *To Each His Own* and smaller handbags were not found in *Woman of the Year*). “Tailored shirts” were found in four of the six movies; they did not appear in *Design for Scandal* or *To Each His Own*. “Long jackets” were also found in four out of the six movies; they did not appear in *Government Girl* or *To Each His Own*. “Stripes” were found in four of the six movies; they did not appear in *Design for Scandal* or *To Each His Own*. A “feminized suit” was found in *Design for Scandal*, *Woman of the Year*, and *Government Girl*. “Checks” were found in three of the six movies; they appeared in *Woman of the Year*, *Government Girl*, and *Mildred Pierce*. “Belts” appeared in *Woman of the Year*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *Mildred Pierce*. “Jackets with patch pockets” were seen in two movies: *Woman of the Year* and *Mildred Pierce*. “Bolero jackets” were found in *Design for Scandal* and *Government Girl*. “Single-button jackets” were seen in *Woman of the Year* and *Lady in the Dark*. “Peplum jackets” and “cardigan suits” were also found in two of the six movies: the former in *Design for Scandal* and *Mildred Pierce* and the latter in *Woman of the Year* and *Government Girl*. “Bow details” were found in two of the six movies: *Government Girl* and *Lady in the Dark*. “Neck and/or wrist frills” were found in two movies, also: *Lady in the Dark* and *Mildred Pierce*. None of the other

items on the checklist appeared multiple times. As for the “extras” column, “broad shoulders” were found in five out of the six movies, excluding *Design For Scandal*. “Fur coats” were found in both *Lady in the Dark* and *Mildred Pierce*. None of the other extra items overlapped.

The fairly small number of extra items on this checklist compared to the number of items worn was very small. This could be taken to mean that the costume designers did a very good job styling the leading ladies for business wear. Almost everything they wore appeared on the advice checklist at some point, especially the movies at the beginning of the time period. More items worn appeared on the checklist than those that did not appear on the checklist during the years 1941 to 1946.

The relationship between the advice and the movie costumes changes during 1947 to 1949. Both *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947) and *Tell It to the Judge* (1949) exhibited only one item out of a possible fourteen total items on the 1947 to 1949 checklist. Each of these items was different: the “tailored suit” was marked for *Miracle on 34th Street* and the “long sleeved sweater blouse with turnover collar” was marked for *Tell It to the Judge*. *Smart Woman* (1948) had four items out of fourteen exhibited during the movie. These items included: the tailored suit, suit separates, scalloping, and plaid. When looking strictly at the garment and silhouette section of the checklist, there were ten possible items. Both *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Tell It to the Judge* exhibited one item out of these ten. *Smart Woman* exhibited three out of ten items, the highest amount for these three movies. In the color section, which had three possible items, only *Smart Woman* exhibited any items. *Smart Woman* had one out of the three items marked. *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Tell It to the Judge* each had zero out of the three items. In the accessories section, there was only one possible item. None of the movies exhibited this one item.

Each of the movies on the 1947 to 1949 checklist had extra items listed. *Tell It to the Judge* had three extra items, the least amount for this checklist. *Smart Woman* had ten instances, and *Miracle on 34th Street* had eleven. Only two of these items were the same: the belted jacket and broad shoulders.

The data from the second checklist for 1947 to 1949 expressed the opposite of the checklist from 1941 to 1946. In the checklist from the second half of the decade, there were a lot of extra items, and each movie had more extras than checklist items marked. This data alluded to the fact that the costume designers did not style the women to follow the professional advice from these years. However, because women were leaving the workforce, there was not a plethora of professional dress advice from these years. This meant the costume designer did not really have advice to follow even if they wanted to do so.

Based on these results, it was reasonable to believe that the professional dress advice and the costumes worn by white-collar businesswomen in movies did have a strong relationship in 1941 to 1946, but not in 1947 to 1949. Although there was overlap between the advice and the movies, it was not enough to definitively state that they affected or influenced each other after the first half of the decade. A relationship between the two in the late 1940s cannot be determined by this set of data.

The movies in this study presented an image of exaggeration when it comes to fashion. For example, the images found in *Harper's Bazaar* had similar elements to those found in the movies, but the movies tended to exaggerate every part of the woman's figure. This was frequently done to hide an actress's flaws, like Adrian concealing Joan Crawford's naturally wide shoulders by designing outfits with broad shoulders (Landis, 2007). The differences can be seen when comparing the photos from the magazine and the photos from the movies. In the May

1943 issue, the model's suit had breast pocket bow details (**Figure 4**). This was a very easy way of feminizing the suit, and was used in the movies; examples of this were in 1943's *Government Girl*, 1947's *Miracle on 34th Street*, and 1948's *Smart Woman*, when Constance Bennett wore a suit with plaid bows on the lower pockets. Other ways of feminization that the movies took to the extreme was an accented waistlines and broad shoulders, which were seen in almost every movie. However, the broad shoulders in the movies are much wider than those seen in the magazines, because the movies exaggerated everything. Another way the movies exaggerated elements dealt with the fun details in suits, like in the *Harper's Bazaar* photo from August 1943 (**Figure 5**). One of the suits in this photograph had a lot of detailing, specifically roses near the neck, and a very fun hat. Details around the neck were frequently used in the movies in this study. In *Design for Scandal*, Rosalind Russell's character wore a suit with very pointed lapels, drawing one's attention to her neck and face. In *Government Girl*, Olivia de Havilland's character wore an ascot around her neck. Ginger Rogers wore a suit with very broad shoulders in *Lady in the Dark*, but this suit jacket also had tiered flaps on it. She also wore a blouse with ruffles at the neckline. *Mildred Pierce*'s Joan Crawford had a dress with detailing at the neck, which looked like the collar tucks under an opening in the suit jacket. Maureen O'Hara's character in *Miracle on 34th Street* wore a printed scarf around her neck, and also had a suit with an asymmetrical fastening at the neckline. Some of the exaggerated features, like broad shoulders, were very fashionable during this decade, and also made the character look fashionable.

Since the majority of these movies were made underneath the L-85 regulations, it is also important to discuss whether or not the costumes from 1941 to 1946 reflected the clothing restrictions. According to Esquevin (2008), clothing could not have the following under the

regulations: “no jackets over twenty-five inches long and no belts over two inches wide, no dolman sleeves, no cuffs on pant legs, no patch pockets, and no woolen dress” (p. 119). Zippers could not be used for civilian clothing. Pencil skirts and padded shoulders, which gave the broad shoulder effect, were worn. In terms of the movies, slim skirts were worn in every movie from 1941 to 1945. Broad shoulders were seen in most of the movies; even suits in the movies after the war ended had this feature, until 1949’s *Tell It to the Judge* when rounded shoulders were seen, both on screen and in off-screen fashion as a result of the influence of Christian Dior’s New Look. Long jackets were worn in three of the movies on the 1941 to 1946 checklist (*Woman of the Year*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *Mildred Pierce*), but it was not possible to tell if these jackets were longer than the allowed twenty-five inches. Patch pockets were worn in *Woman of the Year* and *Mildred Pierce*; these were not allowed under the regulations, but were part of the professional advice found for the war years. It is possible these jackets worn were made before the regulations were put in place. The other regulated items – two-inch belts, dolman sleeves, pant cuffs, and woolen dress – did not appear in any of the movies.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the professional dress advice given to women in the 1940s and to compare the advice to what white-collar businesswomen wore in the movies of the same decade. Newspapers and magazines from the 1940s were used as the primary sources, along with nine movies from the decade. The researcher focused on the female lead that worked in a white-collar job. The following movies were used in this study: *Design for Scandal* (1941), *Woman of the Year* (1942), *Government Girl* (1943), *Lady in the Dark* (1944), *Mildred Pierce* (1945), *To Each His Own* (1946), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), *Smart Woman* (1948), and *Tell It to the Judge* (1949).

This study's objectives were as follows:

1. To understand the advice given to women about professional dress in the 1940s.
2. To examine the styles worn by businesswomen in Hollywood movies in the 1940s.
3. To compare the professional dress advice to the articles of clothing worn in the movies.

In order to achieve these objectives, a detailed search of magazines and newspapers was required. The researcher looked through 1940s issues of *Vogue*, *McCall's*, and *Harper's Bazaar*; also searched were 1940s newspapers including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Only the first three of these newspapers garnered any results.

Major Findings

1. Professional dress advice was not a priority with the magazines and newspapers of the 1940s, for reasons that this study did not examine.
2. There was an observed relationship between the professional advice and the costumes worn in the movies from 1941 to 1946.
3. There was no observed relationship between the professional advice and the costumes worn in the movies from 1947 to 1949.
4. Some items worn in the movies related more to the fashions of the decade than to the professional dress advice.

Objectives Examined

Objective 1. To understand the advice given to women about professional dress in the 1940s.

All of the written primary sources were searched for any reference to professional dress. The articles found were printed or copied and studied by the researcher. This advice formed the framework of knowledge for the researcher, and provided the necessary information for the comparison between the literature and the movies. Using this data, the researcher created a checklist of clothing items and silhouette features that were recommended to the businesswomen of the 1940s. This checklist was used to accomplish the other objectives in this study.

Objective 2. To examine the styles worn by businesswomen in Hollywood movies in the 1940s.

Nine movies from the 1940s were viewed for this objective. One movie each from the years 1941 to 1949 was chosen. These movies were as follows: *Design for Scandal* (1941), *Woman of the Year* (1942), *Government Girl* (1943), *Lady in the Dark* (1944), *Mildred Pierce* (1945), *To Each His Own* (1946), *Miracle on 34th Street* (1947), *Smart Woman* (1948), and *Tell It to the*

Judge (1949). The researcher observed what the main female character in each movie was wearing in scenes when she was at work.

Objective 3. To compare the professional dress literature to the articles of clothing worn in the movies.

In order to achieve this objective, the checklist created in Objective 1 was utilized. Each movie was watched along with the checklist to see if there was a correlation between the professional dress advice and the costumes worn in the movies. Using this checklist, the researcher found that there was enough of a correlation between the two primary sources to claim there was a solid relationship between the movies and professional dress advice for the years 1941 to 1946.

During this part of the decade, many more items were marked off the checklist than those noted in the “extras” column, which meant that almost everything worn in these movies was a part of the professional dress advice. There was not enough evidence to say the same about the years 1947 to 1949. The items marked off on the checklist were few in comparison to the full amount of items found in the professional dress advice during this part of the decade. There were also many “extras” listed for the movies in the second half of the decade. Therefore, it was safe to state that, from this set of data, the professional dress advice and the costumes worn in the movies did not have a relationship.

Implications

Historically, it is an accepted fact that fashion is influenced by the media. There were many instances, explained earlier in this study, where clothing that appeared on screen became a part of everyday wear. However, this study showed that the movies might not always have such an influence, as seen by the fact that nothing extra worn in the movies appeared in the professional dress advice in later years. There was also no evidence to suggest that the influence

went the other way; very few of the items from the professional advice were marked off the 1947 to 1949 checklist during the movies.

There could be many reasons for why this study did not reap the expected results of a relationship between the professional advice and movies for the entire decade. It is possible that the costume designers, especially those from the latter half of the decade, did not focus on what women were advised to wear to work, and instead designed costumes based on their personal preferences or what was being worn by the fashionable women of the day. The costumes worn could also have reflected the personality of actresses, who at times had a say in what they wore. The designers could have also been attempting to make the actresses more glamorous than normal women to demonstrate their success by what they wore. It is also possible that there is so little professional dress advice for women because the magazines and newspaper editors believed that women already knew how to dress properly for every occasion. Most women were already wearing suits as everyday attire, even those who did not work in an environment where professional dress was required. Dressing up was normal during the early 20th century, as sportswear items, like slacks, were not widely accepted as daywear (Farrell-Beck & Parsons, 2007).

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Continue investigating the research problem by viewing more movies from this decade to determine if the movies viewed by the researcher were flukes in terms of the checklist, or if other movies exhibit more of the recommended advice.
2. Continue investigating by searching for more primary sources (including books, newspapers, and magazines) that may give more professional dress advice, especially for the years 1947 to 1949.

3. Enlist other historic costume students or those already in the field to do a lengthier peer debriefing process in order to strengthen the validity of the results.
4. Broaden the scope of the research by also focusing on the male lead in the movies and advice literature, as the advice for men would be more readily accessible.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: 1941-1946 Completed Checklist

Advice	Design for Scandal (1941)	Woman of the Year (192)	Government Girl (1943)	Lady in the Dark (1944)	Mildred Pierce (1945)	To Each His Own (1946)
Suits	X	X	X	X	X	
Convertible collar blouses						
Three-piece suit						
Shirtwaist dress						
Basic dress						
Coat dress						
Tailored topcoat						
Tailored defense dress						
Slim skirt	X	X	X	X	X	
Dressmaker suit						
White blouses	X	X	X	X	X	
Jackets with patch pockets		X			X	
Drop front skirt						
Bolero jackets	X		X			
Kick pleats	X					
Single button jacket		X		X		
Two-piece suit dress						
Tailored shirt		X	X	X	X	
Feminized suit	X	X	X			
Trim shirt			X			
Peplum skirts						
Bateau/slashed necklines						
Bareback dresses with fitted jackets						
Peplum jackets	X				X	
Cardigan suits		X	X			
Chesterfield						

coat						
Dirndl skirt						
Printed blouses						
Bustles						
Flared skirts						
Push-up sleeves						
Cut-away fronts	X					
Jackets with belted backs						
Byron collar	X					
Long jackets	X	X		X	X	
Embroidered jackets						
Bow detail			X	X		
Rounded shoulders						
Trim bodice	X					
Neck and/or wrist frills				X	X	
Long torsos						
Dark colors	X	X	X	X	X	
Purple						
Black						
Bright colors						
Brown						
Gray				X		
Green						
Dashes of red						
Soft hues						
Pink						
Prints						
Checks		X	X		X	
Stripes		X	X	X	X	
Pastels						
Beige						
Forest green						
Olive green				X		
Winter blue						
Royal blue						
Plaid						X
Colored accessories						
Belts		X		X	X	
Pumps	X	X	X	X	X	X

Red/blue shoes						
Bowler hats						
Madcap hats						
Flat-heeled shoes						
Cloche hats						
Bright scarves						
Smaller handbags	X		X	X	X	X
String gloves						
Other:	Two-toned suit	Quilted suit jacket	Stockings	Fur coat	Fur coat	Trench coat
	Short jacket	Open toed pumps	Ascot	Skirt with pockets	Fur hat	Broad shoulders
		Broad shoulders	Fuller skirt	Box jackets	Broad shoulders	
		White turtle-neck	Vest	Broad shoulders	Tulip jacket	
			Broad shoulders	Mustard yellow	Jacket with cuffed wrists	
				Fur stole	Jacket with tie	
					Strappy heels	

Appendix B: 1947-1949 Completed Checklist

Advice	Miracle on 34 th Street (1947)	Smart Woman (1948)	Tell It to the Judge (1949)
Tailored Suit	X	X	
Long-sleeved sweater blouse with turnover collar			X
Jumper dresses			
Wrap- around coats			
Suit separates		X	
Cotton dresses			
Shawl collar			
Ribbed skirt			
Scalloping		X	
Shirring			
Brown			
Gray			
Plaid		X	
Narrow gold belts			
Other:	Colorful scarf	Small velvet collars	Fur coat
	Hat with jeweled scarf	Accented waist	Large hat
	Below-the-knee skirt	Bow detail on coat	Rounded shoulders
	Dark colored suits	Heels	
	Belted jacket	Side bustle detail	
	V seam on back of jacket	Belted jacket	
	Tweed suit	Double button jacket	
	Collarless suit jacket	Broad shoulders	
	Bow detail on blouse	Patch pockets	
	Pillbox hat	Hats	
	Broad shoulders		

Appendix C: 1941-1946 Peer Completed Checklist

Advice	Design for Scandal (1941)	Woman of the Year (1942)	Government Girl (1943)	Lady in the Dark (1944)	Mildred Pierce (1945)	To Each His Own (1946)
Suits	X	X				
Convertible collar blouses	X					
Three-piece suit		X		X		
Shirtwaist dress						X
Basic dress					X	
Coat dress						
Tailored topcoat						
Tailored defense dress						
Slim skirt		X	X			
Dressmaker suit						
White blouses	X	X	X	X	X	
Jackets with patch pockets						
Drop front skirt						
Bolero jackets						
Kick pleats						
Single button jacket	X	X		X		
Two-piece suit dress						
Tailored shirt			X			
Feminized suit	X	X		X	X	
Trim shirt						
Peplum skirts						
Bateau/slashed necklines						
Bareback dresses with fitted jackets						
Peplum jackets						
Cardigan suits						
Chesterfield coat		X				
Dirndl skirt						
Printed blouses						
Bustles						
Flared skirts						
Push-up sleeves					X	
Cut-away fronts						

Jackets with belted backs						
Byron collar		X				X
Long jackets						
Embroidered jackets						
Bow detail			X		X	
Rounded shoulders						
Trim bodice						
Neck and/or wrist frills				X		
Long torsos						
Dark colors	X	X	X	X	X	
Purple						
Black	X	X		X		
Bright colors						
Brown						
Gray				X		
Green						
Dashes of red						
Soft hues						
Pink						
Prints						
Checks		X				X
Stripes		X			X	
Pastels			X			
Beige						
Forest green						
Olive green						
Winter blue						
Royal blue						
Plaid						
Colored accessories						
Belts		X		X		
Pumps	X	X	X	X	X	
Red/blue shoes						
Bowler hats						
Madcap hats						
Flat-heeled shoes						
Cloche hats						
Bright scarves						
Smaller				X		

handbags						
String gloves						
Other:			Vest	Fur overcoat		

Appendix D: 1947-1949 Peer Completed Checklist

Advice	Miracle on 34 th Street (1947)	Smart Woman (1948)	Tell It to the Judge (1949)
Tailored Suit	X	X	
Long-sleeved sweater blouse with turnover collar			
Jumper dresses			
Wrap- around coats			X
Suit separates	X	X	X
Cotton dresses			
Shawl collar			
Ribbed skirt			
Scalloping			
Shirring			
Brown			
Gray	X	X	
Plaid		X	
Narrow gold belts			
Other:			Dark colors
			Gloves