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Embroidered Textiles

**The Function and Role of Costume Design
in the Cinema**

Submitted By:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Interviews

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1950-1951

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INTRODUCTION

In the future, the twentieth century will perhaps be referred to as the age which witnessed the arrival of an exceptionally powerful and evocative art form - the cinema.

Though representational art unquestionably has a great many merits - it is usually without the additional dimensions of sound and movement. Film utilises and manipulates the aforementioned qualities of sound and movement to enable cultures, characters and events outside the experience of audiences to be brought to life through the medium of film. Because of this, film is not a predominantly visual medium, but one which, as director Jim Sheridan describes it, "manipulates concepts of time" (Hugh Linehan, 'Film Ireland' P. 12).

What is meant by this statement is that time can be exploited within a film, by sound and music. These elements exist in order to break the visuals of a film into component parts - hence giving an apparent reconstruction of reality - an illusion which becomes a storytelling medium. The effectiveness of this approximation of real life, through the creation of external stimuli for the audience, is recognised by performance artists. They consequently apply aspects such as sound, music and movement - all of which may be present in a film - to their own art. The continuing development and acclaim of the genre of performance art is a testimonial to the fact that cinema, with its multi-faceted illusion, and its accomplishment in evoking a reaction from audiences - is a genuine art form of our time.

The critical role played by costume in completing the illusion of another form, place or situation is one which is constantly developing and progressing. It is

The first part of the book is devoted to a general discussion of the problems involved in the study of the history of the United States. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the general principles of history, and the second dealing with the specific problems of the United States.

The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed study of the history of the United States. It is divided into three main sections: the first dealing with the early history of the United States, the second dealing with the middle history of the United States, and the third dealing with the modern history of the United States.

The third part of the book is devoted to a study of the present state of the United States. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the present state of the United States, and the second dealing with the future of the United States.

The fourth part of the book is devoted to a study of the present state of the world. It is divided into two main sections: the first dealing with the present state of the world, and the second dealing with the future of the world.

an area which is being treated with increasing gravity by film-makers today. As the central structure of the film is created by the characters, the film requires the presence of human beings to represent these people - and human beings in essence, must be clothed. Costuming for film, however, goes far beyond the mere function of covering the body - it is crucialⁿ in establishing setting and period, as well as varied aspects of the character. Hence, costume is an essential component of the events described by the film - the composition of occurrences which is often described as the film's "narrative".

In its infancy the cinema was crafted in much the same way as the theatre of the time - where scenery and set design were a significant aesthetic concern, but the concept of costume being part of the set had not presented itself.

Clothing within the early feature films was fundamentally exhibited to heighten the appeal of the leading actors, regardless of their dramatic circumstances. Renowned players actually formed the habit of wearing favourite costumes of their own, in production after production - garments which often served no other purpose than to support the actor's personal charm. The practice of actors choosing the clothes which they thought suitable for their parts, was perhaps, in the main responsible for the medley of garments which appeared in the early cinema, contributing nothing to the narrative and detracting from the total visual unit. By the 1920's, certain astute producers began to engage costume designers, in an effort to amend the preposterously unrealistic, over-glamourised spectacles being presented by stylised performers.

Those producers who felt that specifically designed costumes would enhance the authenticity of the visual structure were apparently unaware of many of the values and preconceptions which surrounded costume design.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year, and the second section deals with the specific results of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific results of the work. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work in the field of research, the second section deals with the results of the work in the field of education, and the third section deals with the results of the work in the field of administration.

3. The third part of the report deals with the conclusions and recommendations. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions and the second section deals with the recommendations.

Generally accepted habits of mind about personal expression through clothes predominated over the sense of responsibility to accurately portray a historical or representational character. The issue was to ensure that a leading actor should appear appropriately attractive according to the fashion in beauty - and this took precedence over any sense of dramatic authenticity.

The practice of adorning principal actors with attractive trappings continued throughout much of the early cinema. Even when the costume initially seemed suitable to the character, the clearly perceptible richness of the fabrics, the often lavish and unnecessary embellishments and becoming accessories - neutralised any effect of character credibility. The glorious garb of Elizabeth Taylor in "Cleopatra" effectively illustrates this. Her gowns, composed of lustrous metallic gold feathers confirm, on one level, the extravagant beauty of an Egyptian queen - yet they ultimately serve to enhance her screen persona. Wearing the glittering costume, she is less like an Eastern woman of ancient times - than a stately, shimmering screen goddess - the Elizabeth Taylor conforming to the expectations of her admiring public (Anne Hollander, "Seeing through Clothes", P. 253).

Contemporary cinema in many ways appears to have transgressed the limiting preoccupation of covering its leading lights with finery, regardless of characterisation. This change is one which I intend to examine, in the following study. With the focus on the cinema of today - which is in a variety of ways, diametrically opposed to its early 20th century counterpart - I propose to examine and discuss elements of costuming which concern contemporary film-making. I will endeavour to establish the importance of these aspects of costuming and to confirm the belief that they greatly contribute to the success of certain productions.

In Chapter One, the specific focus will be on period authenticity in costuming; and its significance in establishing the effective illusion. Elements of period costuming, such as the use of artistic licence in the construction and portrayal of the clothing, and its role in the linking of characters will be explored. To do this, a discussion and analysis of two films - "The Piano" and "Dracula" will be undertaken, with references to the recently released "Age of Innocence" and Visconti's "Leopard". A comparative analysis will then be conducted on two Irish productions - "The Field" and "December Bride".

I have selected the aforementioned films as they provide a vivid and diverse portrait of the costume drama. With the exception of the "Leopard" they are, unquestionably products of the contemporary cinema, since all have been made within the latter part of the last decade. Also, the foreign productions which have been mentioned are ultimately indebted to meticulous costuming for their impact on audiences and ensuing commercial success.

In Chapter Two, I will examine the question of the employment of modern machines and new technology to create period clothing, and assess the methods which assist in the ageing of garments for authenticity. There will be references to the timespan involved in the research and construction of different projects.

The arguments in this chapter will be supported by their assessment and examination within the framework of some of the films which had been selected for analysis in Chapter One.

The mainstay of the discussion in Chapter Three will be the reflections of fashion in contemporary cinema, and in some way, the effect of successfully

costumed period dramas on mainstream fashion. There will be a focus on productions such as "The Piano" and "Dracula", with additional references to the costuming in "Annie Hall", "Barbarella" and "Out of Africa". These films have been selected for their impact on contemporary fashion, and evolution of high-street looks.

The conclusion will re-affirm the varied resolutions of the claims and arguments in each chapter.

The discussion and analysis of the function and role of costume in the cinema which will take place in the chapters to follow, proved to be a comparatively unaccommodating subject, from the point of view of research. With the limited scope for investigation in this relatively new area, there was a reliance on interviews, articles obtained in newspapers and magazines and certain publications which offered information in a very general way. Hence, much analysis of costuming in the relevant films was required.

The state of Irish film at present - which will be referred to in this study's conclusion, is perhaps a factor contributing to the absence of much published material on the subject of film costume, in this country.

However interviews with Tony Fitzmaurice (lecturer in Film Theory and Criticism), with Claire Garvey and Marie Tierney (both Costume Designers) and with Michael Grogan and Tony Murphy (both of whom hold professional positions at RTE) proved to be instrumental in providing information. Their input significantly lessened the difficulties and impediments in researching for the following study.

The information which has been afforded by the aforementioned interviewees, along with that from the other sources mentioned, will be used to support and confirm assertions and opinions on the role of costume design in the cinema, which will be vindicated in the chapters to follow.

For the purpose of this study, the data were collected from the
following sources: (1) the records of the Department of
Education, (2) the records of the Department of Health,
and (3) the records of the Department of Social Services.

CHAPTER ONE

In recent years, there have been a number of cinematic adaptations of period dramas which have displayed fascinatingly ornate visuals, in costume and set design. These narratives - which are vehicles to describe the events of a film - are intended as reflections of real life at close range; and when the question of different periods or eras becomes involved, the difficulty of achieving an effective illusion is intensified.

In this Chapter I propose to examine and assess the varying methods employed by productions such as:

"The Piano"	(Jane Campion, 1993)
"Dracula"	(Francis Ford Coppola, 1993)
"The Field"	(Jim Sheridan, 1990)
"December Bride"	(Thaddeus O' Sullivan, 1989)

- in enhancing the visual structure of the film, with the use of period authenticity in costuming.

In addition, references will be made to the element of authentic costuming in:

"The Age of Innocence"	(Martin Scorsese, 1994)
"The Leopard"	(Visconti, 1962).

It is now generally accepted that a new film genre is appearing; where costume not only functions as a backdrop to the narrative, but actually serves

Section 1. The legislative power shall be vested in the Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors in that State.

Section 3. The Senate shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for a Term of six Years; and they shall be divided so that one-third may be chosen every second Year; and if a Vacancy happen in the Senate, the State Legislature may fill it.

Section 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding the Elections of Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law alter or add to the Rules and Regulations.

Section 5. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be held on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law provide otherwise.

Section 6. The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes on Imports and Exports, on all other Taxes within the United States, but all Duties on Imports and Exports shall be uniform throughout the United States;

to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, to regulate the Commerce among the States, and the Commerce with the Indian Tribes;

to borrow Money on the Credit of the United States, to issue Bonds, Notes and Receipts for the same, to coin Money, to regulate the Value thereof, and the Coinage;

to fix the Standard of Weights and Measures, to provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

to define and punish the Offences against the Law of Nations, and those committed by the Citizens or Subjects of one State against the Citizens or Subjects of another State;

to define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

to declare War, to issue Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and to grant Letters of Consuetudine and Reprisal;

to raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

as a vital component in holding up certain scenes. Several illustrations of this new departure in costume are present in Jane Campion's "The Piano", and will be discussed in this chapter.

A comparative analysis will be made on productions such as "The Field" and "December Bride", which do not utilise period authenticity in costume, in this way.

This debate will determine whether the employment of detailed and authentic costuming as a vehicle to actually create scenes for the narrative is a method which is being adopted by contemporary cinema in general.

The words "period authenticity" are indicative of an accurate portrayal of life at the time; and costuming plays an essential part in the composition of a visual unit which achieves this. Good period costume is not a matter of one isolated, correct element of the film; but rather an integral component of the set - a means of creating a successful backdrop to the narrative. It is critical to establishing the period, as well as the nationality, gender, and class of each character.

It is not only the costuming of the principal actors which is important. Costumes worn by extras on a set carry even more weight, in fact - since these characters are usually bereft of any significant speech and movement. Hence the costuming speaks for the characters; contributing to the authenticity of the illusion by purely visual means.

To establish the techniques in the creation of this illusion, an analysis and examination of two films - "The Piano" and "Dracula" will now be undertaken.

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Jane Campion's "The Piano" uses costume in a particularly forceful way - Janet Patterson, the costume designer felt that the "romanticised look of many period films would be inappropriate for "The Piano" (Stella Brizzi, Sight & Sound, October 1993), as the costumes in the film have a language of their own. As well as appearing to be totally realistic, the clothing is completely harmonious with the nature of the film.

The main character: Ada is a mute-by-choice young Scotswoman who travels to New Zealand to enter into an arranged marriage with rich landowner Stewart. Ada's piano is effectively her "voice". Incapable of speech, she pours her emotions into playing the instrument - it is her unique means of expression.

Ada's personality is one of silence permeated with power. Her clothing, composed of dark fibres in natural fabrics is an extension of her sombre personality. It is also an integral part of her sensuality and the language of her body. The difficulty in successfully portraying a character from another time is greatly lessened by good costuming.

Holly Hunter, the actor who brought Ada to life wore a costume which was completely accurate period outfit, with the correct tailoring, and all the trimmings. The laced-up corset, hoopskirts, petticoats and pantaloons influenced the way the actor moved - and consequently, the way she behaved. "The costume helped me tremendously; the incongruity of a woman in huge hoopskirts, petticoats and pantaloons trying to manoeuvre her way gracefully through the bush" (Stella Bruzzi, Sight & Sound 1993 - P. 8). In this way the actor became more involved with the character she played; reflecting Ada's strength and sense of purpose.

Costume aids the actor in articulating the emotional stance of a character - their sensuality, strengths and weaknesses. Ada's clothing seems, at first, to be an indicator of an oppressed persona - imprisoned both by her incapacity to speak and her cumbersome, constricting crimoline. She appears to be the quintessentially Victorian woman - clad in the voluminous garments which seem to trap and defeat her at every turn - hampering her progress through the muddy forest and restraining and suppressing her natural sensuality. The conventional Victorian clothing as depicted, reflects the attitudes of the time - which were characterised by the "covering up" of anything which even remotely suggested sexuality or nudity.

The bizarre practice of sheathing the ankles of piano legs with special socks is one symptom of this neurotic behaviour. Perhaps this was one reason for a piano becoming the central erotic object of the narrative.

While Ada's clothes are relentlessly conformist, appearing only to disempower her and increase her vulnerability; they are her salvation when the frustrated Stewart attempts to rape her in the woods. Her all enveloping hoopskirts are too much for him to negotiate - hence his aggression is defeated by the Victorian symbols and attitudes which he himself advocates. The image created by this scene is a striking one - the skeletal frame of Ada's hoopskirts are reflected in the stark outline of the tree branches in the copse. Tony Fitzmaurice recognises this to be one instance where costume is almost entirely responsible for the emotional impact of the scene. He maintains that here, the costuming functions both "expressively and thematically" - the tree branches and hoopskirts are similar in their sheltering, protecting - albeit constricting qualities. Tony realizes that costume is, in fact, creating the scene. "The design in this part of the film is not just a parallel pleasure - but fully functional" (Tony Fitzmaurice, Interview - 02/02/1994).

As Ada begins to share an intimacy with George Baines, they create a private language between them which imbues clothes with a powerful sensuality. Baines allows Ada to "buy" her piano back from him by responding to a complex set of rules whereby she trades her garments, one by one, for the keys of the piano - removing the former in his presence. This process is much more like a tender, complicated seduction than a striptease.

Baines is as fascinated with Ada's clothing as he is with herself; rightly believing it to be an integral part of her. He becomes enraptured by burying his face in her garments; finding a tiny hole in her stocking which enables him to touch her skin. The concealment of Ada's form in the all-enveloping crinoline, and her gradual revelation of her body is, for him, all part of the erotic charge.

Through the intricate clothes-language which she creates with Baines, Ada becomes liberated from sexual repression and inactivity. The intimacy which has been constructed with the use of clothing signifies the end of a Victorian woman's restricted lifestyle. Ada finds a way to free herself by exploiting the very garments which represented her oppression. In this way, her clothes function as a liberating force rather than one of constraint (Stella Bruzzi, *Sight and Sound*, October 1993 P.10).

We realise, with hindsight, that Ada's Victorian garb had sheltered and protected her from the beginning of the film - on her arrival; she created a tent for herself and her daughter from her voluminous hoopskirts - the same skirts which acted as a deterrent to Stewart; the would-be rapist. Towards the film's conclusion, it is clearly evident that the petticoats, corset and crinoline are no

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longer harsh symbols of repression and constraint, but instrumental in her emergence from Victorian imprisonment.

Stewart, Ada's husband, has a conformist, uptight outlook which is clearly defined by his conservative constricting garb. He is rigidly Victorian in his too-small, formal suit and top hat, and appears to be continually puzzled and perturbed by Ada's unconventionality.

There is a significant contrast in the appearances of Stewart and Ada's lover, George Baines. In the case of Baines, a necessary element of artistic licence in the costuming was introduced. In order to reflect Baines' international, eccentric persona, the actor wore lurid colours and unconventional clothing which had apparently been obtained on his travels abroad. The scrimshaw buttons on his gear are indicative of Janet Patterson's attention to detailed authenticity - Baines, a whaler, would have been familiar with the craft which produced these; as it had its origins among illiterate whalers. The strong Maori tattoos on his face complete the character's personality. Baines' friendship with the Maori people reflects his aura of radicalism and liberation (Stella Bruzzi, *Sight and Sound*, October 1993, P. 9).

Nonetheless, the link between Baines and the Maoris is not as strong as it initially appears. The latter is consistently cleaner and less unkempt, and despite the tribal touches to his dress - his general appearance is fundamentally, if a trifle unconventionally, European.

However, costuming is directly responsible for the linkage of the individuals, Stewart and Baines. Stewart's clothing represents rigidity and conformity - qualities mirrored by his conventional character. Hence, a stark contrast is set up between Stewart and the eccentrically clothed Baines. The two characters

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the methodology used in the study.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the conclusions of the study.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the implications of the study.



Harvey Keitel in "The Piano" as Baines.

can be identified by their dissimilarity in codes of dress. Predictably, they remain at odds with one another throughout the narrative.

Character linkage is also apparent between Ada and her daughter, Flora. Their sense of mutual closeness is clearly portrayed through their noticeably similar costume (Stella Bruzzi, *Sight and Sound*, October 1993, P. 9). Flora's cumbersome clothes in sombre colours are almost identical to her mother's; in fact the child appears to be a diminutive version of Ada. This absorption of identities is indicative of their alliance, and is supported by the fact that Flora acts as Ada's interpreter to the rest of the world. There is, however, a stage in the film where Flora feels excluded from her mother's life; as Ada becomes increasingly involved with Baines. Flora goes to Stewart and betrays Ada - and her alienation from her mother is mirrored in her clothing - her style of dress is lighter and more practical; and the colours are brighter. The final images of the film see mother and daughter re-united; and once again similarly clad in dark Victorian crinolines.

It is clearly evident from the assertions which have been put forward in this section, that Jane Campion's "Piano" is a film set apart from other contemporary productions - ensuring its place beside Sally potter's "Orlando (1993) - which relies almost entirely on costume to unfold the narrative - in a new film genre. The latter production illustrates a span of four hundred years, where costume is used to define each new scene, and establish the time in which it is set. The hero - who metamorphoses into a heroine - is propelled from Jacobean times to Elizabethan, through to the eighteenth and nineteenth century - eventually finding herself in the twentieth century where she is finally at peace. This narrative is completely indebted to the meticulous costume throughout; without which the leading character's transposition from one era to the next, and the question of their gender, would be indeterminate. The



Holly Hunter in "The Piano" as Ada with daughter Flora.



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fundamental element of this new departure is a strong emphasis on authentic costume; which not only enhances and heightens the power of a film's illusion, but holds up the story. Costuming in these productions is also responsible for a degree of imaginative licence in constructing a character's identity and for the effect of linkage and contrast between certain characters.

The following section will involve an analysis of Francis Ford Coppola's "Dracula", and references to "The Age of Innocence" - a very recent production; and Visconti's "Leopard" which, in contrast, was made in 1962. The question of period authenticity will be raised in relation to these films and discussed with reference to an interview with costume designer, Marie Tierney. It will be ascertained whether or not the aforementioned productions were as successful and forceful with their use of costume as was "The Piano".

Marie Tierney - an Irish Costume Designer for film and theatre, is very aware of the importance of period authenticity in the cinema. Lack of attention to detail, or successive blunders can result in the existence of implausible notions about historical costume in the minds of audiences. This misconception about period clothing may, in part, wrongly influence popular perceptions of the past.

(Marie Tierney - Interview 01-12-93)

Due to her predominantly theatrical background, Marie has frequently recognised, with her informed eye, a reduction in the success of productions which fail to competently make use of costuming; hence compromising an

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otherwise accurate visual reconstruction of times past. She rejects as "utterly ludicrous" the practice engaged by early twentieth century films of dressing the leading actors in inappropriate finery, regardless of characterisation. Misrepresentations of period costuming, such as Elizabeth Taylor's incongruous gold metallic gown in "Cleopatra" is one example of this. Another is clearly evident in "Some Like it Hot" (1959). While the film is manifestly set in the twenties; with comparatively accurate costuming for most of the cast - Monroe's outfits, with their plunging necklines and clingy silhouette - are purely indicative of a fifties starlet. These inaccuracies serve only to flatter the egos of certain actors, while compromising the dramatic effect (Tierney - 01/12/93).

While she is by no means an advocate of such misrepresentations, Marie does believe that "certain liberties must be taken for the effective portrayal of certain roles". It has already been established that clothing is an indicator of a character's persona; directly related to the language of the body. It is essential to work with this in mind, in order to successfully portray the directors intention. Hence, Tierney's perpetual aim is to make costumes appear to be "absolutely realistic" (i.e. not posing any questions about period - yet "stylised in harmony with the 'feel' of the film").

One of the recent projects on which Tierney worked was "Lady Windemere's Fan" - a seventeenth century restoration play. Costume stylising was incorporated into a particular scene where a 1920's costume was worn by a character in a leading role, with the intention of highlighting her modern, twentieth century outlook. This innovation worked well, in that it created a strong contrast between her and the other characters - who all wore "conservative, stuffy seventeenth century outfits".

Tierney is, however, of the opinion that stylizing may also be easily overdone - as in the case of Francis Ford Coppola's "Dracula". While admiring the scrupulous accuracy of the Victorian costuming on the British characters, she felt that "the Eastern influences on the vampires costume were inappropriate" (Tierney - 01/12/93). The Count was self-consciously attired in satin and brocade, with an engulfing scarlet train. An elaborate butterfly wig and a long plait completed the voluminous image.

Presumably, the outlandish appearance of Dracula - which is diametrically opposed to the stiff, conformist Victorian outfits of the other characters - is intended to make him appear even more like a creature from another world. It is my belief, however, that Tierney is correct in her supposition that the startling, fairground-like clothing on the Count detracted from the more subtle and powerful effects of the film. The juxtaposition of the sober, almost anaemically coloured sequences of Victorian England, and the explosion of crimson and black of the Roumanian vampires was simply too mesmerising. Like all inept costuming, it stuck our like a proverbial sore thumb - and became a distraction in an otherwise striking and commendable film about corrupted desire. The over-zealous stylising in "Dracula" detracted from the effectiveness of the illusion, precisely because it chose to eschew aspects of costuming which attributed such success to "The Piano". Strict period authenticity was passed over in preference to inappropriately, elaborate fantasy. Artistic licence, in the case of the Count's costume was misused - thereby rendering it an unfavourable aspect; rather than an addition to the production.

One element of costume stylization within the film which did appear to be successful was Lucy's eerily evocative burial clothing - which was an extension of her new personality when she became one of the undead.



Gary Oldman in "Dracula" as the Count.





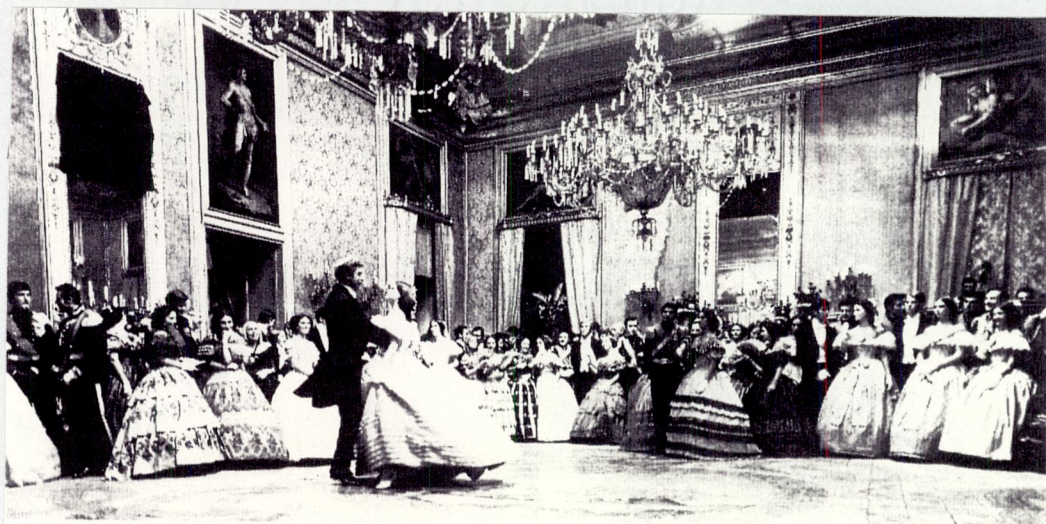
Sadie Frost in "Dracula" as Lucy.

Uncannily resembling a wedding gown, it was composed of elaborate pleats, ruffs and lace - with the result that she resembled, in part, a theatrical phantom and partly a sort of swollen, reptilian creature - a cross between a bat and a lizard. Her clothing mirrors what she is - the epitome of the vampire's relentless, diseased desire for engorgement (Richard Dyer, *Sight and Sound*, January 1993 P. 10).

Two other productions in which period authenticity in costuming can be regarded as a prestigious endeavour are Visconti's "Leopard" and Martin Scorsese's "Age of Innocence". Both films are indebted to sumptuous and meticulous production and costume design and while, unlike "The Piano" and "Orlando" they do not use costuming to actually create scenes within the narrative - they, to all intents and purposes, manage to convey a complete period aspect, through costuming and cinematography - by which the world inhabited by these nineteenth century characters appears to be fully restored. Visconti's obsessive attention to detail necessitated the services of a hundred and twenty make-up, hairdressing and costume personnel to restore and reconstruct an abundantly convincing ambience around an ideology - the Sicilian aristocracy - which, in the film is on its way to extinction. The director also insisted on completely accurate period underclothes; believing that the authentic corsetry would not only enhance the look of the costumes, but influence the way the actor responded to the costume. Visconti was convinced that the performances would be intensified by the wearing of period costume which was accurate to the last detail - and he was proved to be correct. His innovations with costume are mirrored in "The Piano", where actor Holly Hunter also wears corsets, petticoats and pantaloons which are true to the period.



iv. 39 (above) Period costumes from Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard*, 1963



Period scene from Luchino Visconti's *The Leopard*, 1963

Visconti's "Leopard"



It was unfortunate that for its American release, the film was badly dubbed and printed on inferior colour stock - hence losing much of its impact. Despite this, it is difficult not to be struck by the beautiful composition of the film - in contrast with the crumbling and decaying lifestyle which Visconti so meticulously portrays.

"The Age of Innocence" is immaculately edited and printed - yet without this advantage, it would unquestionably still stand up as a visually stunning testimonial to what can be achieved with authentic costuming. The elaborate, scrupulous detailing with costumes is part of an image-making process which also includes attention to the opulently ornate surroundings of upper-class New York society in the 1870's - with dazzlingly effective results.

The excessive attention to lavish, authentic detail present in the aforementioned productions and to some degree in "Dracula" - in the case of its Victorian costumes - is virtually unheard of within the Irish cinema. It must be supposed that this is primarily due to necessary improvisations made on a perpetually low budget - but perhaps also due to the recurrent depiction of Irish society as invariably rural and / or working class. Irish cinema, for the most part, produces films which are centred around this theme. The effect of this genre on period authenticity and artistic licence within Irish film culture will be assessed in the section to follow. To do this, productions such as "December Bride" and "The Field", which involve the work of Consolata Boyle and Joan Bergin respectively will be examined. Comparisons and contrasts between these and "The Piano" and "Dracula" will additionally be dealt with - in order to ascertain whether Irish cinema is, in any way, approaching the new departure in specific productions where costuming is a vital component for creating scenes within the narrative.



Michelle Pfeiffer in "The Age of Innocence"

The costuming in "December Bride" reinforces the image of inhabitants of the Irish countryside as stereotypically rough and rural. The leading character, Sarah, and the community which surrounds her are uniformly clad in a manner which seems to stem from the uncultivated aspect of the landscape. Sarah, despite her prettiness, appears to be perpetually windswept, plain and rough. Her turn of the century garments are curiously without detail - in fact, the only noticeable aspects are the continually rolled-up sleeves and threadbare appearance - indicative of class rather than period.

There is undoubtedly a preoccupation with class permeating films about Ireland. Sarah and her contemporaries are illustrated in sharp contrast with the appearance and demeanour of the local vicar and his wife. The latter pair, with their conservatively well-cut, comparatively expensive attire are portrayed as conformist, conservative, affluent outsiders, (Their apparent affluence is however, probably distorted out of proportion - as one can only compare their typical 1900's clothing with the peasant-like garb of the rest of the community).

The linking of individuals with elements of costume is again apparent here. The vicar's wife is attired in frills and soft fabrics, reflecting her continuous affectations and almost oppressed feminine subservience. Sarah's character is diametrically opposed to this woman's. The former is tough, outspoken and fiercely independent - and her rough clothing and lack of frivolous adornment is an expression of her independent spirit and the fearless drama of her body's movements.

Character linkage by clothing is evident in the resemblance of the Echlin brothers - Sarah's two lovers - to each other. Despite the fact that they are not physically alike, there is a sameness about their demeanour which reminds one of identical twins. Their costumes - the archetypal farmworkers' caps and

The Commission on the Environment and Development, established in 1983, was the first of its kind. It was created by the United Nations to address the growing concern about the impact of human activities on the environment. The Commission's mandate was to study the relationship between development and the environment, and to provide recommendations to the United Nations on how to achieve sustainable development. The Commission's work was organized into three main areas: the environment and development, the environment and human health, and the environment and the law. The Commission's first report, published in 1987, was a landmark document that laid out the principles of sustainable development. It defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This report was the foundation for the Brundtland Commission's report, "Our Common Future," published in 1987, which popularized the concept of sustainable development.

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collarless shirts, with the addition of cumbersome boots - are vehicles to convey their straightforward, uncomplicated stance. The use of clothing in this narrative places much less emphasis on attention to accurate period detail than the establishment of class and aspects of individual characters.

There are unquestionable similarities between the issues which are centred around the costuming of "December Bride" and those to be explored concerning another Irish production "The Field", for which Joan Bergin designed the costumes. The peasant-like attire is again predominant, and the characters are, for the most part rural farmworkers, preoccupied with the land. Though "The Field" is set in the early part of this century, there are definite parallels between costuming in this film and in "December Bride". The emphasis on the countryside and farming is, however, much greater in "The Field" - hence the characters' farmworking attire is more central to the narrative than in the other film. Yet, as in "December Bride", the garments say very little about period. The most striking persona in "The Field" is that of the main character - the "Bull" Mc Cabe. A tall, solid figure; his clothing is again without aspects of interest - apart from the black hat which denotes his authority and standing within the community. The dull, sober colours of his long coat and plain worker's shirt and trousers are an expression of his singlemindedness and unwavering stance; the colours he wears seem to merge into one dark, sombre shade. The solid, distinctive image which the "Bull's" costuming constructs is clearly indicative of his powerful, resolute personality. The other members of the community in "The Field" are depicted by their clothing as watered-down versions of the "Bull", once more reinforcing his dominating aura.

In this way, character linkage is clearly established. There is also a sharp contrast between the "Bull's" costume and that of the 'outsiders' who appear in

the narrative. There is the archetypal Irish priest - set apart from the community by his comparative wealth; comfortable house and his education. This illustration of the character is underlined by his expensive, well-cut clothing - indicative of his sheltered existence. His costume is an extension of his body and its movements - his gestures are effeminate, his way of walking has an incongruous grace. It reaffirms the difference between the priest and the "Bull" - the latter moves in great strides; his black coat billowing about his legs and his speech is punctuated by emphatic fist-shaking and decisive nods.

The central theme of the narrative is the conflict between the "Bull" McCabe and the American, who barges into the "Bull's" world, and attempts to obtain his precious land. The former is even more of an outsider than the priest - he is a foreigner; and his modernising enterprises immediately alienate him from the traditionally-minded community. The contrast between the "Bull's" attire and his is even more arresting. The American's image is slick and expensively tailored. His butter-coloured coat is pointedly unweathered; his white cuffs and collars spotlessly clean. He is, in short, everything that is alien to the "Bull"; and consequently the embodiment of evil - to be dreaded and opposed.

The one other significantly-clad character is the tinker's daughter. Her clothes are vivid and in bad repair - torn and slatternly. Yet she seems to look almost like an exotic bird beside the rest of the villagers in their dull, unimaginative garb. Her garments have more reference to period than any others in the film - the tattered wollen shawl and lurid, ankle-length skirt clearly portray her as a woman of times past - though of what exact period is still indeterminate. The splashes of colour which compose her outfit mirror her wild, unfettered personality.

Like the "Bull" she is strong-willed, but unlike him, she is free - and unashamedly exhibits a contempt for his obsessive enslavement to the land. The only truly liberated female in the film; her sensual and dramatic movements fit in perfectly with her exotic clothes. Despite the "Bull's" size, beside her he appears pale and fundamentally inferior. Hence, another two characters at odds exhibit their differences with the aid of costume. The detrimental effect the tinker has on the "Bull's" appearance and presence is a reflection of her effect on himself - when she is near he becomes wary and aggressive. His unexpressed fears of her are not unfounded. She is, as the film concludes, the cause of his irremediable downfall and the eventual loss of his field.

What must be derived from these films is that, in the case of much Irish cinema, the accurate representation of period is secondary to the use of costume as a medium to constitute class and link individual characters. This aspect of character linkage through costuming is also an integral element in productions such as "The Piano" and "Dracula", as has been established in the earlier part of the Chapter ; and this comparison between Irish and non-Irish productions is a noteworthy one. An additional feature which is common to all the films which have been mentioned is the employment of costume as an aid in articulating sexuality, strengths and weaknesses. This particular function of costume; if the previous account of the four films mentioned can be taken as an example - is being utilised with considerable success.

There is, nonetheless a very fundamental contrast between Irish cinema at present and certain elements of its foreign counterpart. Irish productions use costuming, in essence, to function as a component of the film as a cohesive visual unit; in harmony with the nature of the film - but focusing less on period authenticity than the matter of establishment and extension of characters.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study. It is followed by a review of the literature. The third part describes the methodology used in the study. The fourth part presents the results of the study. The fifth part discusses the implications of the study. The sixth part concludes the paper.

The results of the study show that there is a significant difference between the two groups. This difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The results also show that the treatment group performed significantly better than the control group. These findings have important implications for the field of study.

The study has several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small. Second, the study was conducted in a controlled environment. Third, the study did not include a long-term follow-up. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the topic.

Productions such as "The Piano", however, are essentially about ways of exploiting costume so that it not only serves to heighten the impact of the illusion - but actually illustrates the emotional drama of certain scenes, and is therefore instrumental in aiding the progress of the narrative. Because of the intensified focus on costume in these films, it is necessary to attend to details of authenticity and artistic licence with scrupulous care - a practice which is customarily infrequent within the Irish cinema.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter will examine one particular facet of costume design and creation - the question of employing modern machines and technology to create clothing which was in vogue in the 1900's or the nineteenth century. It will explore and assess the variety of methods used in the assistance of ageing garments and fabrics, for authentic effect. References will be made to the timespan involved in the research and construction of costume.

Opinions throughout the chapter will be supported by information from interviewees Marie Tierney and Claire Garvey; and declarations about costume creation will be augmented by its analysis and assessment within the framework of certain films which have been examined in Chapter One.

The challenge of creating period costume which, in the past would have been tailored, in the main, by hand using naturally dyed and handspun fabrics - with today's chemically-dyed fabrics and modern sewing machines is one which must be carefully dealt with. The central aim is to create clothing with today's level of machine technology which emphatically looks as if it is **NOT** made by machines. Most audiences, even without a knowledge of costuming, can astutely distinguish between the quality of a garment made using modern machinery and artificial fabrics and one of genuine period appearance.

Irish Costume Designer, Claire Garvey is acutely aware of the tremendous effort which is involved in the creation of authentic period clothing (Garvey, Claire: Interview 18/02/1994).

A graduate of the National College of Art and Design, Claire went on to do a post-graduate course in Russia, which centred on costume design. Here, she

The first of the two main parts of the book is devoted to a discussion of the various forms of the verb 'to be' and the various forms of the verb 'to have'. The second part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the various forms of the verb 'to do' and the various forms of the verb 'to go'.

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became acquainted with the arduous procedure of creating authentic period dress.

"We started on 19th Century Russian Folk costumes and then went on to European costumes of the same time". There was an onus on the students to make up the costumes in exactly the same way as they had been done in the 19th century - and to do this they were obliged to go to museums and libraries to search out genuine old pattern books of the appropriate time. "We had to learn exactly how the patterns had been cut, and to do them accordingly. We were taught how to construct a bustle, for example, right down to the last detail. It was the same with menswear - with the gentlemen's frock-coats, ordinary seams were disallowed. A fiddly triangle had to be inserted under the arm of the coat- and if it wasn't there, the costume wasn't right" (Garvey, Claire 18/02/94).

Electronic machines were used to actually make up the garments, but the basic patterns were identical to the originals. Period costumes were, in addition, brought to the studio, to enable the students to check their work against genuine 19th century clothing. In this way, they could ascertain whether they were making the garments correctly.

"There was no question of using your own technical knowledge to self create the clothes in a look-alike way" remembers Claire. "Modelling on the mannequin, and pinning it up here and there was really frowned upon". Garvey acknowledges this part of the course as a valuable learning experience, but she is unsure if this method of costuming is feasible for contemporary costume designers.

It is certain that the timespan for research and construction of any production (however concerned with the authenticity of costume) would not allow for such an intense degree of research, or such focus on minute details of costume. Garvey feels, herself, that such laborious effort is unnecessary. "A costume is fine so long as it conveys an accurate IMAGE of the time" (Garvey, Claire: Interview 18/02/94).

This raises an ethical question about the level of creativity involved in the look of contemporary costume in film. It has been established that perhaps the exacting methods of the Russians are too time-consuming for the end which is achieved. It is also known that Sally potter's "Orlando" and Jane Campion's "The Piano" were made in a relatively short time - hence it is unquestionable that a degree of improvisation was used for these visually stunning costumes. Claire Garvey has an attitude about improvisation and stylization which is similar to Marie Tierney's. The former prefers to add her own creative input - in a subtle and appropriate way - to a costume, rather than doing a complete re-hash of past techniques. "Surely", she says, "we can add something of what we've learned throughout the last century, to the making of a good costume" (Garvey - 18/02/94).

Louise Frogley is apparently another advocate of improvisation if her work on David Putnam's film "War of the Buttons", which was filmed exclusively in West Cork last year is an example of her general style in costuming.

On R.T.E.'s "Head to Toe" show (in November 1993), she explained that the nature of the clothes in "War of the Buttons" was fundamental to the plot, since the main thrust of the film concerns gangs of warring children who claim buttons, braces and shoelaces as trophies after a victory. Hence, it was essential not only to have about two hundred spare buttons and laces, but to

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the ability to make wise decisions for the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the United States. It is argued that the government has a responsibility to protect the rights of its citizens and to provide for the common good. This responsibility is derived from the social contract theory, which holds that individuals agree to form a government in order to protect their rights and to promote the welfare of the community.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the role of the individual in the United States. It is argued that each individual has a responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the community and to uphold the principles of the Constitution.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the role of the media in the United States. It is argued that the media has a responsibility to provide accurate and unbiased information to the public and to promote the interests of the community.

employ non-nineties materials, as the narrative is set in 1962. Zips and velcro were, without exception, eschewed. (Frogley, Louise - "Head to Toe" An RTE Production, November 1993).

Louise maintained that the biggest challenge of the film was that it should appear timeless, and the costumes should have a threadbare "lived-in" look. She aimed to make the clothing appear absolutely realistic and made a conscientious study of the period in which the film was set, producing sketches which clearly illustrated the styles of dress customary in the early '60's - yet her work was interpretive - in order to "project the director's intentions and ensure that the costume harmonised with the aura of the film".

To achieve the "worn" look for the boys' blazers, Louise made them without shoulderpads and interfacing. The fabric was invariably wool - which was washed repeatedly, and predictably shrunk dramatically. The fit of the garments was, however, satisfactory, as she had tailored them to be initially too large. Another method involved "tea-dipping" dresses and finer fabrics to make them seem aged. This involves - as the term suggests - washing the garment in a solution of tea to make it appear stained and faded. Louise added original 1950's cardigans to complete the look (Frogley, Louise - "Head to Toe" An RTE Production, November 1993).

The effort involved in pre-ageing and altering clothes for cinema is unquestionably a worthwhile endeavour. The artificial, glamourised look which would occur, were these methods not employed would be inappropriate for a great many films. A direct result of Louise Frogley's innovations with the costume, were cinema images which were noticeably less artificial and knitted together cohesively.

Marie Tierney has also had experience in tea-dipping and pre-shrinkage ; in fact every material which she uses for the costume has been treated in some way, consequently making the use of modern machines less obvious. The basis of this is her knowledge that authentic period clothing would seem more worn and soiled than garments of today's automatic washing machine age - and usually less "finished" - even among upper classes.

Some of Marie's more innovative methods for ageing clothes include running a cheese grater over fabrics to make them appear weathered and rough, and backing her car over boots and shoes to make them seem battered (Tierney: Interview 01/12/93).

For the stained, faded look achieved by tea-dipping, a simpler process is to spray the clothes lightly with a brown dye. Fuller's earth, a fine brown powder can also be applied to garments - effectively resulting in a dusty, aged look. The application of soap to collars and cuffs makes them appear greasy and repeatedly soiled, as well as old.

Claire Garvey often uses starch to stiffen collars and cuffs - repeated starchings, she maintains "gives them a yellowy, tired look". Her alternative to tea-dipping is to burn or singe fabrics very slightly to give them an aged appearance. This works especially well with fabrics such as satin, as the singeing produces a brownish hue which effectively tones down otherwise quite garish colours, and makes the fabric appear "less shiny and new" (Garvey, Claire: Interview 18/02/94).

A common practice in Ireland is the purchasing of antique or second-hand clothing and taking the fabric from them for use in costuming. It is also quite popular to leave the garments intact and change them only slightly, to suit the

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theme on which the designer is working. While Claire Garvey recognises the advantages of this from the point of view of improvisation, she personally does not approve - believing it much more effective to "build a costume from scratch" (Garvey: Interview 18/02/94).

Marie Tierney rarely uses modern fabrics, or anything which has been chemically dyed, when creating costumes. She doesn't usually work with fabric from second-hand clothes and if she cannot obtain the correct fabric, she alters what she has to make it suitable to work with. She found modern velvet, for example, to be far too soft to represent period clothing, as old velvets are much more stiff and heavy than their counterparts of today. Marie treated it appropriately - but in the main, she prefers to utilise coarse, unusual fabrics. Cotton and linen are continually given preference to polyester - and furnishing fabrics make good candidates for period fabrics, once they have been dyed. Marie often strips away the coarse undercloths from furnishings for her own use - and has adopted Hessian as a favourite for enhancing a poverty-stricken look in certain costumes (Tierney: Interview 01/12/93).

The clear evidence of pre-ageing, altering and the employment of unusual fabrics in "December Bride" and "The Field" were tantamount to Louise Frogley's suggestions that such interpretive work was vital "to ensure that the costumes harmonised with the aura of the film".

The appearance of Sarah, the principal character in "December Bride" is uncomprisingly plain and rough and her rare assumption of "Town" apparel underscores this. The limp, faded dress does little to accentuate her naturally pretty features although it is undoubtedly more feminine than her usual garb. To clothe Sarah in a conventionally attractive 1900's outfit, would startle and disorientate the audiences, since she has already been established as a

genuine product of hard, thankless farm work - too busy much of the time to bother about her appearance. Her torn dress is evidently either tea-dipped or treated with Fuller's earth, as it has a rather fusty, tired look.

In the case of the Echlin brothers there is a faint griminess about the necks of their collarless shirts, and the rims of their caps - not necessarily signifying uncleanliness, but rather, years of intermittent washing, and constant wear. Soap was undoubtedly employed here - and rubbed on the appropriate areas to give a greasy shine. An extremely subtle effect, it would normally to unnoticed for itself - yet it completes the image of the bothers as hardworking farmers, with little interest for much else but the rural routine.

Perhaps the "Bull" Mc Cabe's costume in "The Field" is most indicative of the effectiveness of these methods of altering costume. His shirt collar and the underside of his hat brim gleam with the familiar greasiness of soap- and the hat itself looks as though it has endured all weathers, judging by its battered shape. The cumbersome, dark coat which he habitually wears, normally appears to be black, but in a certain light, uneven brown patches are apparent. Fuller's earth, brown dye, singeing - or perhaps a combination of the three may have been employed to give this effect. Additionally, there are threadbare patches about the collar and sleeves.

The great advantage of utilising these methods, is that each in itself is so subtle and elusive that it is almost impossible to notice - yet when used in co-operation with another, a distinctive image is almost always achieved - and a character's costume reaches its maximum effect.

Most costume designers uphold the view that clothes and textiles are purely functional pieces - vehicles for enhancing a characterisation or representing a

period of time. Audiences today notice bad costuming - ironically the best costuming achievements are rarely acclaimed, because they knit so successfully with the visual construction of the set that they are not seen as isolated details - and designers are acutely aware of this. Glamourised, artificial garments, idealising leading actors are fundamentally unsuccessful because they subtly depersonalise the character which the actor is attempting to emulate, while simultaneously detracting from the more subtle (and often admirable) effects of the film. With this in mind, a concerted efforted is being made to transcend this age of technology and produce clothing as it is bound to have looked in times past.

1. The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the fresh air. It felt like a warm blanket after a long flight. The sun was shining brightly, and the birds were chirping happily. I took a deep breath and felt a sense of relief. The world was so beautiful, and I was finally home.

2. The second thing I noticed was the smell of the earth. It was a rich, fertile smell that I had never experienced before. It was like a secret language that only the wind could speak. I closed my eyes and let the scent fill my lungs. It was a reminder of the life that was out there, waiting for me.

3. The third thing I noticed was the sound of the water. It was a gentle, soothing sound that I had never heard before. It was like a lullaby that only the waves could sing. I walked towards the shore and felt the sand beneath my feet. It was warm and soft, and it felt like a hug from the earth.

4. The fourth thing I noticed was the sight of the mountains. They were majestic and towering, with snow-capped peaks that reached towards the sky. The clouds were white and fluffy, and the sky was a deep, vibrant blue. It was a sight that I had never seen before, and it felt like a dream come true.

5. The fifth thing I noticed was the feeling of the sun. It was a warm, golden glow that I had never felt before. It was like a blanket of light that I could wrap myself in. I closed my eyes and let the sun's rays fill my body. It was a feeling of peace and tranquility that I had never experienced before.

CHAPTER THREE

The mainstay of the discussion in this chapter will concern the reflections of contemporary fashions on cinema costume - and in some way the effect of successfully costumed period dramas on mainstream fashion. There will be references to productions which have been selected for their impact on contemporary fashions - in particular "The Piano", "Annie Hall", "Barbarella" and "Out of Africa" . Interviewees Marie Tierney and Claire Garvey have offered opinions on the subject, which will be used to add weight to the following points.

Clothing in the cinema is continually magnified and distorted out of all proportion - simply because it appears as a larger than life version of itself, on screen. No matter how a costume is displayed - be it dull or dowdy, or fantastically glamorous, it is visually satisfying because it adheres to our expectations of character type and setting. Costume endorses that each character's image is in harmony with their persona. This is clearly illustrated in "December Bride" (as mentioned in the previous chapter) where Sarah appears just as dowdy in her town clothes as she does in the working garb which she wears for the remainder of the film. Were she to appear in an incongruously fine turn of the century costume, the visual structure of the film would collapse. The cinematic depiction of events intensifies our attention to the way characters are dressed - the audience is aware that forethought and formulation have been invested in each outfit - however casually it may appear to be worn. Hence, commonplace clothing immediately becomes extraordinary when it appears on the screen.

The converse effect of this is the result that contemporary fashion seems automatically more dramatic and visually stunning when it resembles what is

worn on film. Audiences are consistently measuring themselves against the performers, identifying and empathising with the main protagonists. We leave the cinema with an overall impression, of which costumes are a fundamental component. Because of the possibility of re-creating aspects of a character or atmosphere which was memorable, with appropriate dress, fashion is greatly indebted to the medium of cinema. Without it the business of fashion would be far less influential on our lives.

What is meant by this statement is that cinema has a power and penetration which may, intentionally or not, promote certain styles of dress. One example of this is Vivienne Westwood's recent collection, which included a range of bustiers and corset-like tops, which appear to be directly inspired by Holly Hunter's costume in "The Piano".

Claire Garvey has noticed that Dolce and Gabbana - two other prominent mainstream fashion designers have produced "a lot of flowery, romantic gear; with plenty of bodices and flowing skirts", and that, in general, a great many flowing, romantic skirts and little corset-shaped bodices are appearing in this years Spring and Summer collections (Garvey: Interview 18/02/94).

The obvious sources of this romantic inspiration are the two immensely successful costume dramas which were released last year - "The Piano" and "Orlando". With their stunningly authentic adaptations of period costumes, it is hardly surprising that such ornate, elegant styles have filtered into mainstream fashion.

Genre films with strong elements of the youth culture of the time - such as those in which James Dean starred, or the "Gigi" films of the '60's, had a strong impact on fashion at that time, and are constantly being revived. Marie

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Tierney comments that a film would have to have "almost a cult following for styles of dress to be taken directly from it" (Tierney, Marie: Interview 01/12/93).

"Barbarella" is one such film. Featuring Jane Fonda as an intergalactic heroine, it is actually a piece of gross exhibitionism, with Fonda spending her time in a succession of scanty, high-gloss "G-strings" and metallic bras, or plastic body moulds. It was her thigh-high vinyl boots, however, which captivated the fashion industry. The following year, they were to be seen in every designers' collection.

Audiences themselves quite often adopt a subtle code of dress from characters which they wish to emulate - whether it is done unconsciously or not is a matter for further discussion.

While contemporary fashions are re-affirmed and enhanced on the screen - despite their appearance under the guise of ordinary clothes - certain films contain styles of dress which not only reflect the times, but promote new departures in fashion.

Woody Allen's "Annie Hall" (1977) offered a portrayal of womanhood which proved to be so popular that many attempted to reconstruct it through high street fashion. The central character, Annie, is depicted as being sensitive and affectionate, while retaining her independence and cool aura of self-containment. Her clothing is an extension of her character - ties and waistcoats worn with oversized blazers and loose cotton trousers. The overt masculinity of this gear is feminised by the soft contours of tie and waistcoat, and the loose, baggy lines of the trousers. Whether it was Annie's paradoxical character or merely her style which women wanted to emulate, remains

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Diane Keaton in "Annie Hall"



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indeterminate. Suffice to say that, for a time, crushed cotton trousers and huge ties were elevated to high fashion, all because of one film.

"Out of Africa" is another production worth mentioning for its impact on fashion. Unlike "Annie Hall" it is a period film set around the time of the first world war. The main protagonist, Baroness Blixen is clad, much of the time, in loose creamy linens and crisp cottons - understated safari gear which is stylized in keeping with the delicate, finely-cut fashions of that period. The film was widely acclaimed - and it is hardly surprising that the naturalistic elegance of its costumes led the way to a marked influx of safari-type clothing in cool, natural colours, to mainstream fashion of the 'eighties'.

In most respects, fashions triggered by film costume are entirely accidental. However, during the fifties and sixties, there emerged the practice of certain elegant actresses becoming ambassadors for fashion on and off the screen. Audrey Hepburn is one memorable "clothes-horse", whose particular brand of beauty epitomised all that was tasteful in the fashions of her day. Her image was, in the main, constructed by French couturier, Hubert de Givenchy - and in film after film, she appeared in his creations. Her role as a mannequin is particularly evident in the film, "Funny Face", where actual fashion modelling is knitted into the narrative.

French actor Catherine Deneuve is another who has unambiguously promoted fashions through cinema. Like Hepburn, she has a long-standing partnership with a particular designer. In her case, the designer is Yves Saint-Laurent, hence Deneuve's image is fixed within the figure-hugging, tailored lines of the Saint-Laurent fashions which functioned as "an index of bourgeois repression" in Luis Bunel's 'Belle de Jour'. The actor has reinforced, by way of her controlled sexuality and impeccable dress; "the predominant cliches attached

to French women - that they are well dressed and highly sexed" (Ginette Vincendeau, *Sight and Sound*, March 1992 P. 21).

It is, perhaps, rather demeaning that the success of these two actresses seems so indebted to their portrayals of fashion, on the screen. Audrey Hepburn perhaps has undermined her considerable acting talent by expressing her reliance on the - " .. my work went more easily in the knowledge that I looked absolutely right. In a certain way, one can say that Hubert de Givenchy has 'created' me over the years". (*Fashion in Film*, 1990 P. 10).

Catherine Deneuve became less confined to her accorded function as a mannequin, choosing scripts which enable her to bring her talents beyond the boundaries of mere glamorous display. There irrefutable fact remains, however, that an actor who has been perceived as less of a serious artist than an emblem of the fashion industry, must experience a certain degree of difficulty in establishing their potential for certain film roles.

Costume which influences mainstream fashion is not damaging to itself - its acclaim is in fact, confirmed and heightened by the appearance of fashions which have obviously employed it as an inspirational source. However, when costume is altered - in preference to authenticity - to suit the standards and preconceptions of modern audiences in relation to how clothing should look - it can have an irremediably detrimental effect on the visual structure of the film. This is clearly illustrated by the inaccurate costuming of the character of Queen Elizabeth I in "Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" (1939) and "The Virgin Queen" (1955), which will be examined in this section. This is an entirely different practice from employing artistic licence to befit a certain character. It is a consequence of inadequate research - and lack of

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1. Bette Davis in "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" (1939)
2. Bette Davis in "The Virgin Queen" (1955)



thoroughness in tailoring - resulting in an inaccurate representation of period style. These not infrequent lapses are easy to recognise in films from past decades, but they are extraordinarily difficult to spot in period films made in the 'eighties' and 'nineties'.

The most common and easily recognisable deviances from authenticity are incorrect fabrics, and silhouette. Devices such as corsets and other forms of underwear which shaped the body in past centuries are often eschewed because of the discomfort inflicted on the wearer. Yet these elements of costume affect the way the actor moves, and to some extent, heightens her success in the portrayal of a character, as the undergarments and trimmings are instrumental aspects of the lifestyle of a period character. This idea has been successfully exploited in Jane Campion's "The Piano", where the performance of Holly Hunter was significantly enhanced by her wearing corset, petticoats and pantaloons. It has been affirmed in Chapter One that the correct period clothing was an invaluable aid to the actor in accurately conveying how a Victorian woman moved and behaved.

Without the addition of the correct shaping devices, it is not difficult to spot a soft 1930's outline - a padded forties bust or the angular shapes of the fifties. These discrepancies are clearly evident in Bette Davis' two separate portrayals of Queen Elizabeth I. One production "The Private Lives of Elizabeth" was made in 1939, the other "The Virgin Queen" in 1955. In each of them the influence of fashions of the time was apparent in the historical details of Elizabeth's hair and costume. The 1939 version saw Miss Davis sporting a much softer bodice (a defining feature of 1930's fashion) than what she wore in the fifties version of the costume. The later production featured a dress which was shaped by the crisp, angular lines of 1950's fashion.

London, 1850. The first edition of the book was published in 1850, and it was a great success. It was the first book to be published in the new series of books, and it was the first book to be published in the new series of books.

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Recognising the inconsistencies in today's adaptations of period costume is considerably less easy. It is a matter of which designers must be continually aware. Contemporary preconceptions about how clothing should look must always be disregarded before undertaking to depict accurate period dress (Anne Hollander, "Seeing Through Clothes", P. 297 - 298).

From an Irish standpoint, Alan Parker's film "The Commitments" is an isolated case where, supposedly, Irish tastes and standards flow into the film's costumes, as it is a portrayal of contemporary Dublin. Unfortunately, as in "December Bride" and "The Field", the costumes function rather more to establish social class than give an accurate portrayal of contemporary dress in Ireland. The costumes knit successfully with the unsympathetic depiction of Dublin - the characters are all decisively "working class" and dress accordingly. The female characters - in particular, Maria Doyle, who plays Natalie, a central role - manage to look scruffy and sleazy in low-cut, clingy tops and scuffed shoes. The male characters appear equally sloppy, except for a brief scene where they are dressed in black suits for "The Commitments" first official appearance as a pop band.

Despite the film's acclaim, it is unsettling to dwell on the image of Irish fashion being forged throughout it. It is to be hoped, that foreign cultures will recognise that this costuming depicts the tastes and distinctions of a very specific group of people, and does not represent the mode of dress adopted by the country as a whole. Nonetheless, it is difficult to be certain that many people abroad will not perceive Ireland as an essentially impoverished and underdeveloped location, since the alternately garish and scruffy attire of the characters in numerous Irish films does everything to promote this.

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It is unarguably evident that certain films - whether they have a specific focus on costuming or not - have, to some extent, an impact on contemporary fashion. This has been clearly established in the case of "Annie Hall" and "The Piano". The fundamental difference between these two productions is as follows - "The Piano" is involved in a new departure in costuming where its functions goes beyond heightening the power of the film's illusion, but is directly involved in effectively creating scenes which aid the progress of the narrative. Essentially the costuming in "Annie Hall" simply establishes and supports the nuances of the central female character. This illustrates that film costuming which leads to innovations in the fashion world is not confined to a specific type of production - but can occur in a diverse variety of films.

With regard to the images of contemporary fashion which costuming in certain period films inadvertently reflects - it raises a question which, however it is answered, could have repercussions not only on costume design but on the entire film market. Do audiences prefer a close approximation of authentic fashion in other periods, above the pleasure of recognising our contemporary notions of beauty on film ? The answer differs with each individual - but good costume designers continue the effort of discarding their 'nineties' sense of style to achieve a successful authentic image.

CONCLUSION

Costume design for the cinema is an undertaking of extraordinary weight and responsibility. Costume is an integral component in the creation of a cohesive visual structure - it establishes an appropriate ambience for the film's characters. It also functions as a powerful medium in conveying aspects of character such as nationality, gender, class and degree of prosperity - and often extends beyond mundane details such as this. For good costuming can effectively illustrate a character's persona - denoting with cut, colour and form the emotional as well as social stance of each individual. Costuming can be an extension of the body and its movements - with certain styles underscoring, for example, the sensuality and self-containment of a free spirit such as the tinker's daughter in "The Field". It can denote ascetic, uptight conservatism, as it does in the case of Stewart's restricting, conformist garb in "The Piano".

Another level on which costume functions is the linkage of character - creating either a sympathy or sense of acrimony between certain individuals. When characters are diametrically opposed to one another, this is emphasised by their dissimilarities of costume, whereas when there is harmony between them, it is reflected in their mutual resemblance in styles of dress. This aspect of costuming is clearly evident in many of the productions which have undergone analysis in this study.

With particular reference to "The Piano" costume can actually, to some extent, create and embody the emotional drama of certain scenes, and because of this assist and take part in the unfolding of the narrative.

A costume designer must be aware of all these possibilities and capable of intensive research in order to achieve authentic period costuming. She must also be a sophisticated interpretive artist, to successfully convey the director's intention through clothing, to ensure that the costume is in agreement with the stance of the film, and to effectively portray the persona of each character.

The designer must have an extensive knowledge of the methods (as explored in Chapter Two) employed to make clothes appear as they should, without artificiality and implausible glamour.

She must possess an awareness of the preconceptions imbued in her by contemporary fashions, and her personal notions of how clothing should appear - and the ability to lay them aside. This is essential, to achieve a visual construction of period clothing which will not act as a documentary about nineties fashion.

All these qualities contribute to costuming which asthetically and effectively represents the period in which it is set. If the astute and informed comments of the interviewees, in particular Marie Tierney and Claire Garvey - whose knowledge and experience was a vital contributing factor to the research of this study - are to be taken as indicators of the standards and professionalism of Irish costume designers in general, one thing is decided. It is this: Irish costume designers seem to be, in the main, capable of producing work which would be derivative of all the above mentioned qualities. Why then, is costuming for the Irish cinema not comparable to the meticulously authentic, visually captivating and innovative costuming to be seen in foreign productions such as "The Piano" and "Orlando" ?

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It was originally intended that Irish productions and designers would be the mainstay of this discussion about costume's role in the cinema. This however proved to be difficult, due to the fact that there are comparatively few Irish film makers creating films about Ireland. The lack of national commitment to an indigenous cinematic culture and absence of any significant state financial support, means that non-Irish sources must supply the budget for films within and about Ireland. An unfortunate consequence of this is that international film-makers employ international film crew - hence the career opportunities for Irish costume and set designers, sound recordists and make-up artists remain limited. Because of this, the talents of Irish costume designers are neither being utilised, nor developed to their full potential.

Michael Grogan, the executive designer at RTE maintains that there is "a serious lack of adventurous period drama" in both Irish cinema and television today - a situation which is primarily due to lack of government funding. Mr. Grogan has noticed a "significant change of emphasis in productions in recent years" (Michael Grogan: Interview 18/02/94). Throughout the booming sixties RTE produced many classical dramatic films independent of sources from abroad, while additionally providing the costumes for undertakings in drama and light entertainment in theatre groups such as the Gaeity and the Olympia. Mr. Grogan is acutely aware that today "there is certainly not the same outlet for adventurous costume and make-up". Hence Irish television as a product is suffering, as the greater part of its endeavours end up as co-productions with the BBC.

The results of this co-operation with more affluent sources, are by no means, always demeaning to Irish culture, but the irrefutable fact remains that, once a film's economic control is in the hands of a foreign producer, the likelihood of

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also outlines the methodology used in the study and the results obtained. The second part of the paper discusses the implications of the study and the conclusions drawn from the research. The third part of the paper discusses the limitations of the study and the areas for future research.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting and the results were compared with those obtained in previous studies. The study found that the results were consistent with those obtained in previous studies. The study also found that the results were consistent with those obtained in previous studies. The study also found that the results were consistent with those obtained in previous studies.

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employment of an all-Irish costume design and wardrobe crew is significantly lessened.

Director Jim Sheridan has selected a procedure which he maintains will elevate Irish cinema to what he considers to be its appropriate standing, and thus amend the discrepancies in the employment of Irish production designers. During a recent talk attended by film lecturer Tony Fitzmaurice (Interview 02/02/94) Mr. Sheridan asserted that the future of Irish film would be entirely dependent on our ability to produce work which would be similar to a Hollywood movie, which would have a universal appeal. He openly criticised films such as "December Bride", dismissing it as "pretentious, unambitious, art-house material" appealing to intellectuals alone. He claims that there is "no future" for independent productions such as these and that they are detrimental to the financial situation of Irish cinema.

Many, including Tony Fitzmaurice, would disagree. While Sheridan's recent film "In the Name of the Father" was a financial success, it was also a clear example of the pitfalls which can occur when the content of the film is altered for commercial benefit, in order to satisfy the expectations of a global audience. The film was set up as a corrective to what Sheridan considers to be unambitious, intellectual Irish cinema. Despite the fact that the film has huge political implications, he focuses on "stories of the human condition" which are not attached to the nationality of the characters. While Tony Fitzmaurice sees that Sheridan's intentions were quite honourable, the former felt that the end product was an incoherent mess of "jumbled genres". (Tony Fitzmaurice, 02-02-94).

Hence, the difficulties and challenges of the film's political theme were not met, and "In The Name of the Father" became a misrepresentation of Irish

characters and culture. Despite this, it was resounding commercial success, and in this way, unarguably beneficial to the career prospects of Irish costume and set designers.

The future of Irish cinema, and Irish costume design within this remains indeterminate. There are those who would see the solution to the financial problems of Irish cinema in the complete immersion and absorption of Irish film culture by the Hollywood movie genre. It is also felt, however, that the success of Irish costuming in the cinema need not be indebted to a compromise of indigenous Irish film culture.

The comparative success of films such as "The Field" and "December Bride" - both of which were costumed by Irish costume designers - illustrates the fact that there is undoubtedly a place for independent productions such as these in the international film market. It only remains for their positive attributes to be recognised by a more global audience - which would perhaps subsequently lead to the emergence of a financially independent and autonomous Irish film culture.

It would then be possible for costume designers in this country to transgress the boundaries which are implicated by working within the limits of low-budget productions; and to produce costumes which would be comparable to the visually stunning and innovative work in productions such as "The Piano" and "Orlando". The potential excellence of Irish costuming is clearly apparent in "The Field" and "December Bride" as, even without the scrupulous attention to period detail and authenticity which adequate funding would allow, it exhibits qualities which would signify that the talents and powers of expression of Irish costume designers are easily on a par with their foreign counterparts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
JANUARY 1954

TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
FROM
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
RE: REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE RESEARCH
DURING THE YEAR 1953

The Department of Chemistry has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th day of January, 1954, and to inform you that the report on the progress of the research during the year 1953 is being prepared and will be submitted to you as soon as it is ready.

The Department of Chemistry has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th day of January, 1954, and to inform you that the report on the progress of the research during the year 1953 is being prepared and will be submitted to you as soon as it is ready.

It is evident from looking at the above mentioned productions, that Irish costume designers are aware that successful costume should only exist nebulously in the minds of audiences. In films such as "The Field" and "December Bride" the essence of its function is not to be noticed for its own correctiveness - or lavish impressiveness, but rather to act as a backdrop to the narrative. It greatly intensifies the power of the illusion, while simultaneously harmonising with the set and characters, so that it seems not to exist as costume at all - but rather clothing of the time, as it intrinsically must have looked.

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