Rob Wagner's Script
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Fashion

PARIS and Hollywood were never farther apart in fashions than they are in this, the second year of the atomic age. Hollywood, paced by Adrian, and Paris, behind the magic needle of Dior, have their lines clearly established in the current battle of the bulges. Unlike most wars, the women of 1947 cannot lose. What they lack in figure, they can recover in fashion, thanks to the *haute couture* of Mister Adrian and Monsieur Dior.

Actually, the opposing lines were not drawn, nor sewn, solely in an effort to capture the world's fashion leadership. They were inspired by distinctly different cultures, and reflect, in amazing degree, both the position of women and the economic stability of postwar France and postwar America.

Adrian, for instance, holds the feminine figure of America, like its truths, to be self-evident, and not in need of padding. He confines his exaggeration for the most part, therefore, to the shoulders. The feminine silhouette, as he sees it, has widened shoulders, a slim waist, and slim hips. She is strictly Twentieth Century, streamlined, smooth, svelte. "I feel very much the need of doing clothes that will fit into the wonderful new architecture and new rooms that we hope will be created this year," he said, in a recent issue of *Vogue*. "Contemporary clothes for a fast-moving century, clothes that are part of the life that women lead today."

Adrian's casualness, evident in all his styles, is borne of the self-confidence of the American woman, postwar edition. She knows that her country is looked to as the world leader. She knows that her government is the most democratic and, potentially, the most acceptable in the world. And she knows that her society enjoys the finest and the free-est. Adrian provides the style that expresses this unpretentious comfort.

Since the American woman's design for living is never fixed nor dogmatic, but always in step with changing conditions, Adrian modifies his basic lines wherever the design can be improved by additional yardage. If more material adds grace and meaning to a dress, he will drape the skirts, add a cape, or borrow the lines from the

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Japanese to make a blouse blousier.

This is a formidable fashion strategy, and one that can hardly be intimidated by the new Parisian designs. Adrian and his followers are made of sturdy stuff, and they will not retreat because their Paris contemporaries, bolstered, indeed, by a few New York disciples, drop the bulge from the shoulder and place it on the hip. Howard Greer summed it up nicely after returning recently from a first-hand glimpse of the new Paris offerings. He found them "distorting, extreme, exaggerated, and entirely contrary to the American figure, taste, and active way of life."

"In dressing women," he said, "I find that slim hips are definitely preferred."

That, again, partially explains the diametrically opposed trends in Paris-Hollywood fashions. Here, there is plenty to eat, and the worry is that hips *may* get out of line. In Paris, the problem (among many) is food, and the best way to make up for it is to add a few yards on the *derriere*.

Christian Dior, who seems to have appropriated the fashion rostrum in Paris and decrees decor at will, spins the feminine figure in the unconventional manner, trying to make her look good where she ain't. He seeks the ballet dancer illusion—natural, rounded shoulders, too weak to support a struggling world, a natural calling to the perplexed women of postwar France. Her waist is pinched in an exaggerated indentation, the better to emphasize her padded hips. Since Dior opened his new house in February, he has continued to startle the *couture* world with a frenetic use of *frou-frou*.

There are butterfly sleeves, box pockets, belled jackets, and barreled skirts, suggesting something like a Gibson girl, or whatever grandmother should have worn. He continues with other exaggerations—mad tunics, tier upon tier of back draping, swirls, pleats, and dips that recall a France in gay, flirtatious days, when she could afford to be extravagant.

Of the two, Adrian is far more realistic, far more representative of his environment. Dior tries to revive the glory of France, and for this he should be commended. But his elaborate fash-

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ions are beyond the reach of many in Paris; he must have his New York followers.

He has a few. Unencumbered by slim silhouette demands from the O.P.A., there are New York designers who are indulging in more drapery. They are dropping hemlines (the big battle ahead) and adding a puff or a pocket. But this is a natural *largesse* bursting out after wartime repression. Allay any qualms which might arise from the liberation of the American fashion libido. U.S. women have found a new expression in dress, and they will not retreat to the bustle and cinch waist that made grandma uncomfortable and misshapen. They have been years in developing and perfecting their figure, and now that they have it, they're glad.

DON LOPER, who used to be a dancer before he became an expensive designer of women's clothes, stepped high, wide, and handsome at the champagne cocktail party introducing his new lush, plush line of ladies' footwear.

First thing to hit your eye on entering his Sunset Strip establishment was a Cinderella slipper, world's largest, encased in a block of ice four feet square. Somewhat more accessible were jewel-encrusted gold and silver slippers resting in regal splendor in little shoe niches along the wall. The party brought out practically everyone who hadn't seen each other since yesterday's party. We spotted Cesar Romero, complete with beard, Bill Lundigan, Reggie Gardner, John Hodiak, among others. It was hard to distinguish between those modeling the shoes and those who were Mr. Loper's guests.

Judged by what we saw and what we heard, Mr. Loper is a designer to be watched. He's coming fast, and may well do as much for Hollywood fashion as Adrian.

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