

20th Century Dress and Culture Assignment

The possible real reason that the Zoot Suit riots occurred, was the rejection that men could be fashionable and aesthetically stylish as well. Press coverage assumed that it was because of rationing of fabrics due to World War II. However, if we take it from the women's perspective, they weren't assaulted for wearing informal, rebellious looks. While rationing of fabrics did limit women as well on what to wear, their fashion wasn't rejected unlike men. It was due to the ostentatiousness of the men and their security in their styles/sexuality that caused these riots. These Zoot suits caused waves though in what people wore. Jeans started becoming more appropriate for women, bright-colored suits for men, etc. Fashion wasn't a bucket that individuals were placed in. Fashion was the expression of the person which meant that more individuals especially the younger generations rebelled in the societal norms of dressing. As far as racism through clothing, Gucci, Prada, etc. have faced backlash for racist notions in their clothing line and accessories.

One scene that struck me but also intrigued me was one of the earliest scenes where Cathy Horyn explained the uproar of Raf Simons joining Dior. Dior is a very feminine, very fantasy-like brand whereas Raf in Jil Sanders evokes minimalism. Dior is romantic with their play of colors and charms in their designs and dresses. I personally think that Dior was a huge challenge for Raf as his play in colors was a different spectrum than what Dior's aesthetic was. Which is possibly why Raf only lasted 3 years in Dior.