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Women in American movies: an analysis of three 20th
Century films

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ABSTRACT

Abstract

The American film industry has grown in popularity since the beginning of the 20th century and has become a reference for many foreign countries. The film provides the opportunity to reflect on society, among other things, on the big screen. The rise of the Hollywood industry allowed for the creation of a wide variety of characters, including those belonging to minorities. Women, a socially vulnerable group, have always had a certain role in such motion pictures. Through the study of films from different decades such as *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *Sunset Boulevard* (1952), or *Annie Hall* (1977), popularly known worldwide, we analyze how social contexts influence the creation, stereotyping, and representation of female characters.

Keywords: women, American films, 20th Century, analysis, stereotypes

Resumen

La industria cinematográfica americana aumentó su popularidad desde inicios del siglo XX y se ha convertido en una referencia para numerosos países extranjeros. El cine brinda la oportunidad de reflejar a través de la gran pantalla, entre otras cosas, a la sociedad. El auge de la industria de Hollywood, dio lugar a la creación de una gran variedad de personajes, incluidos aquellos que pertenecen a las minorías. Las mujeres, un grupo socialmente vulnerable, siempre han tenido un papel determinado en dichas películas. A través del estudio de obras cinematográficas de diferentes décadas como *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *Sunset Boulevard* (1952) o *Annie Hall* (1977), conocidas popularmente a nivel mundial, analizamos el modo en que los contextos sociales influyen en la creación, los estereotipos y la representación de los personajes femeninos.

Palabras clave: mujeres, películas americanas, siglo XX, análisis, estereotipos

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Introduction

Roles always try to represent the canons to which society adheres at the time. For example, in post-World War II movies women follow the socially accepted canons and only played two roles: women as the submissive, servant, patient characters, and the other as the *femme fatale*. (Garcés) During the era of the cinema of compromise of the 70's and 80's the role of women underwent changes and did not reflect the submissive image that had been carried until now. The debate on equality and the greater or lesser relevance that both female and male characters should have been evident and have reached our days. So much so, that the data speak for themselves. From 2006 to 2017, the films awarded as Best Picture at the Oscars had men as protagonists, and only in one of them, a woman plays the leading role. (Garcés)

The main objective of this project is to study the representation of women in American cinema in the 20th century. I want to investigate and analyze the way the female image has developed through three different films of the 20th c. Another objective is to observe how historical, social, and economic facts influence the way these characteristics are represented in 20th-century films and to verify that the ideas accepted by the American society are subsequently reflected in the film adaptation.

Within the theoretical section, I will explore the social, economic, and historical characteristics of each period of the twentieth century in the United States. These references must be known to understand the following cinematographic representation. Understanding how the United States was during the different periods of the 20th century, from the most general to the most specific aspects concerning the theme, is one of the tools that facilitate the study of the films in the practical part.

Once the fundamental qualities of each era have been determined, the next objective is to examine the evolution of gender stereotypes throughout the 20th century in the United States. The idea is to study how the influence of context helps to generate opinions or prejudices that change with the context too, and also to understand how they have evolved throughout history and how this evolution causes a change in the role and the purposes when representing a character.

And finally, I want to study the role of women in American films of the twentieth century and their characterization in films. For that purpose, I will discuss the representation of the feminine character in three movies of the 20th century, while showing and explaining each of its main characteristics.

As for the analytical section, the main objective is to observe how the features previously discussed in the theoretical part are reflected in the exposition of the practical part. To study how and in what form the characteristics of an era appear in the film, how the film and the female characters have been portrayed in the film adaptation. These objectives try to analyze the role of women, how they appear on the scene, and to what extent the film adaptation represents what happens in reality.

The first movie that I have chosen is *Gone with the Wind* (1939), which is probably one of the most important movies from the 30s. Since its release, the film received positive reviews and the Oscar awards for Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay. The decision of choosing this movie is its recognition as the most famous movie from Classic Hollywood and is deeply rooted in people.

I will also talk about *Sunset Boulevard*, (1952) which is a movie from the 1950s. It is one of the most relevant movies from film noir. During this decade, the representation of women was based on the *femme fatale*, and in most of the movies from this decade, the female character plays this role. The reason for selecting this movie is to watch how different the role of the female character is from the first movie of the 1930s.

The last movie is *Annie Hall* (1977) which is the most recent of them. The aim for using this movie for the topic is that is considered one of the best-known works of Woody Allen, one of the best directors of the Hollywood cinema industry. In this comedy movie, we see how a relationship develops and we can see the differences between women and men in the New York of the 1960s.

The type of research methodology for this work is qualitative research, whose principal aim is the content analysis of historical events. The ethnographic, narrative, and phenomenological techniques, together with a grounded theory and a case study of the video data collection are the basis of the field of research.

As for the methodology, in the theoretical section, the research will focus on different features. In the first place, I will present the social, temporal, and geographical context of women in different periods of the 20th century which are essential to understand better the matter of the question. Next, I will determine the role of women in 20th-century films and consequently the evolution of gender stereotypes in the United States during the 20th century.

The next step will be to expose and evolve the elements of each of the studied points of the films, to make a comparison in the practical section.

For the practical part of the paper, the film analysis needs to be grounded in the theoretical part of the paper. Once all the theoretical aspects have been presented, the subsequent presentation of the film analysis will determine whether the theoretical aspects are reflected in the films.

Chapter 1. Gender stereotypes in the cultural context

1.1 Social, historical, and economic context of during the 20th century.

1.1.1 The 1930s

1.1.1.1 Historical Background

The decade of the 1930s was characterized by the economic crisis and consequences that originated in the crash of 29. At the political level, it was characterized by the rise of radical ideas, increased expectations of war, and tension that later led to the outbreak of World War II.

In response to the worst depression in American history, the elected president Franklin D. Roosevelt and a largely Democratic Congress established a broad range of spending and lending programs and new regulations that became known as the New Deal. (Fishback 1436). Some historians consider the existence of two or three New Deals. According to Rauch (1944), the shift took place between 1934 and 1935. The first New Deal encompasses the conservative policies emphasizing recovery and aid to big business and large farmers and the second New Deal was characterized by liberal programs designed for

reform and benefits to labor and smaller farmers (Rauch 80). The New Deal laws supported the population to carry out a more significant role in the government.

The economic crisis affected the standard of living of the Americans after the Roaring Twenties. After the unemployment rate increased, it was extremely frequent for all those who had resigned their jobs to lose their homes as well. During the late 1920s and especially during the Great Depression, thousands of people established their homes in *Hooverilles*. *Hooverilles* were settlements founded during the Great Depression for the homeless. The most vulnerable groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, were the ones who suffered the most from the negative effects on society. African Americans, Indians, and women were perpetually the first to be fired and the last to be hired, and their labor was paid at a lower price and they performed the most complex jobs.

The crisis also affected the middle class who had to stop buying luxury items and opt to obtain necessities instead. The economic depression affected only education and many students stopped attending both public and private classes, which led to many teachers and other public sector employees finding themselves idle or losing their jobs. Another consequence concerns the drop in the birth rate and an increase in mortality rates caused by famines, lack of food, and poor living conditions.

The depression affected both the cities and the rural areas of the country. The situation of agriculture was desperate since the meteorological circumstances had aggravated the losses caused by the economy. The desperation of the population to obtain food encouraged people to raid stores to obtain the products they needed to subsist, and sometimes even led to violent clashes.

By the end of the 1930s, all the measures that President Roosevelt had adopted ceased to have any value. World War II was an impetus for improvement in the economy and the life of the country. It helped to stimulate industry and, as a result, the country recovered and once again achieved an effective economic system. The Great Depression and the hardships of the 1930s came to an end, in part, thanks to the war.

1.1.1.2 The Economic Context

The decade of the 1930s began with the deep economic crisis in which the United States was immersed. The "Crash of '29" was the crash of the U.S. stock market that annulled consumerism and the happy 20s in the United States. After World War I, the US was one of the great powers and was in a privileged situation but the crisis spread to all sectors, causing the dismissal of millions of workers, the bankruptcy of many banks, a decline in population growth, and an increase in mortality.

After the Crack, the roles of women and men were progressively affected. The male figure represented the head of the family and was the bearer of the money that came home; while the woman worked at home. At the beginning of 1930, the female emancipation movement demanded the ability to manage the assets that they had brought into the marriage. Many women had to seek jobs to compensate for the loss of income caused by the dismissal of the head of the family.

However, it is a period of changes that the women as their target. They had to experience the inequality and discrimination they suffered due to sex, marital status, or age. Married women began being part of the labor force, and during the following decades, more of them would opt for jobs. The new government reforms enabled many women to take up administrative and skilled jobs. Although they were considered unskilled labor and their contracts were not permanent but occasional jobs, females began to have more job opportunities and to work in different areas.

At the beginning of the 1930s, only 17.7% of the female population was employed. A leading part of the feminine population worked at home and took care of household chores, childcare, etc. The percentage of women working in domestic and personal service was 29.6%. The share of women in manufacturing jobs in the mechanical engineering industry is 17.5%. (See Appendix, figure 1.)

The development of modern policies concluded with new laws such as The National Industrial Recovery Act (1932) which guaranteed reduced working hours for both sexes and increased wages. In 1938, the *West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish* was conveyed which

determined the labor rights of women and established a minimum wage in the state of Washington.

1.1.1.3 Social Context

During the 1930s, women represented a key element in American society. From a sociological point of view, the figure of women and men reflects two completely different ideas. While the man was recognized as the head of the family, women were reduced to housewives who took care of domestic work.

Although it seems that many of them were supported by their husbands, many others saw how their husbands — physically and psychologically affected — left many of their families and their wives, since they could not bear the economic situation of the moment. Women did not have an easy time, since many of them did not possess any kind of income. Widowed, single, or divorced ladies constituted the marginal part of the female population. The response on the part of many adult females was to try to climb out and try to find ways to be able to lead a decent standard of living. A massive part of the female population began to look forward to work, which caused some unease among the population, especially among men. Many of them considered that women's place was at home and did not conceive that a dame could opt for the same job as them or even for positions of a more exalted rank.

Stereotypes, gender roles, and traditional life began to be questioned with the controversy generated by this issue. In addition to the obstacles that women had to face, we cannot overlook the social differences such as race, social class, age, and marital status among others, which were an argument that many used against them to continue defending the backward mentality that characterized the society of the thirties. The First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt became an important political active figure and perhaps she had the greatest influence on the development of women in the 1930's. (Seeber 707)

The 1930s were a time when the work of women was not sufficiently recognized, however, many of their interventions and the help they provided were necessary to get out of the

economic crisis. All that was achieved at this time later served as the basis for the feminist decade that would revolutionize the 1950s.

1.1.2 The 1950s

1.1.2.1 Historical background

The 1950s are the times of the struggle for civil rights, the economic boom resulting from World War II, and the beginning of the Cold War. Although it was a period of conformity, modern ideals emerged and represented a revolution on a social, cultural, political, and economic level. The consequences of World War II suppose greater challenges and debates among a significant part of the population.

The utmost consequence was at the economic level as the United States was in a time of financial boom. Along with the Soviet Union, the United States was one of the world's significant powers. Due to the enmity that emerged between them in World War II, the United States and the USSR became political enemies bringing about the Cold War. During this period, the United States had two presidents: Harry S. Truman, who led the country in the early fifties, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, until the end of the decade.

In economic terms, consumption grew and aid to the underprivileged American population -women, African-Americans among others- increased. In the case of women, during a brief period, they began to occupy jobs that until then had been considered for men. The return of men to their occupations after the war generated a certain uneasiness among the feminine population, who did not want to go back on the advances they had achieved.

Experts use the word "boom" to refer to the financial boom in the United States but also to talk about the rise of the suburbs and the demographic increase of the 1950s, known as the baby boom. The increase in the economy led to excessive consumption and a higher purchasing power, so many families decided it was time to have children.

The increase in population and the massive economic capacity of the moment promulgated the sale of land on the outskirts of the cities. These areas known as *suburbs* were the residences of many families, mostly young. Many women perceive their role as being pigeonholed into traditional gender roles, and the emergence of these domiciliary areas

remains a possible cause. The rise of consumerism also led to current forms of advertising where women were represented as excellent housewives and mothers.

The development of cultural life did not favor women, who saw their role did not change. The mass media such as television, radio, or magazines and the diverse and emerging artistic representations such as cinema, music, and theater influenced society, which frequently refused to progress. Popular culture depicted domesticity and described traditional gender roles.

1.1.2.2 Economic Context

During the 1950s, the United States was experiencing a golden age of economic prosperity. The atmosphere conveyed by the U.S. was that of a country that recovered after the Great Depression of the 1930s. American society in the 1950s was immersed in a lifestyle known as The American Way of Life. Society was immersed in consumerism that caused an economic furor and an increase in demand as well as a real-estate boom. It also facilitated the development of new industries and sectors. Among these, the automotive sector topped this list along with the electronics and aviation sectors.

During World War II, women expanded the jobs formerly considered by men in many industrial factories to support the country during the war. Married women's participation was increasing from the 1950s through the 1970s, starting with the more elderly married women's groups to the younger ones. In most cases, participation doubled. Many factors contributed to women's entry into new jobs in various fields of work like the development of new educational methods and the proclamation of female education.

Compared to women's employment in the 1930s, 29% of women were employed, and 95% of them were in the labor force. (See Appendix, table 3) Of these, almost half were married (46%) (See Appendix, Table 4) and 42% were living with their husbands. (See Appendix, Table 5). This means that by the early 1950s, women had improved their employment rate compared to the 1930s. In addition, the variety of jobs was broader and while in the previous decades most of the female population performed domestic work, now the most common job was clerical work, followed by operatives and qualified and technical workers.

(See Appendix, Table 2). Part-time contracts were the hiring model followed by women. They endured a new way to enter the workforce, however, as more women obtained jobs, incomes declined.

When the war ended, men returned to their jobs, and many women left their jobs to return to their domestic duties. The stereotype that constituted American women in the early 1950s presented women as the example of the faithful homemaker and mother. The U.S. Government encouraged citizens to position women at home by promoting a campaign in which they had to return home to be excellent "housewives." This phenomenon was captured as a "national duty" for them.

Despite all the attempts by the government to generate an idealized image of the ideal woman who stays at home and takes care of the children, there was no shortage of women who opposed this thought. Many of them continued demanding the same rights; female liberation and the workforce played an important role and were the basis for building the social movements and labor forces a few decades later. Women at that time did not want to be considered mere housewives, since many worked as volunteers in libraries, schools. Many others joined the civil rights struggle in which the United States was immersed.

1.1.2.3 Social Context

After World War II and the establishment of the Welfare State in many of the developed and industrialized countries, U.S. citizens regarded the 1950s as a time of revival, hope, and a creative way of looking at life. The population was immersed in the phenomenon of the American Way of Life. Aspects that characterize this innovative way of life include optimism, consumerism, social mobility, the common good, etc.

A crucially key factor that conditions the role of women is the baby boom that occurs globally after the war. The increase in the birth rate after World War II is extremely important to understand what was expected of women at that time. According to Cherlin (1981), the explanation of the Baby Boom is the value placed on motherhood, home, and family during the 1950s and the influence of the Depression on people growing up during the 1930s.

The use of advertising along with the baby boom were two agents that promoted the role of the 1950s woman as the housewife. Women were the ideal mothers and wives who had to be at home taking care of the children and performing the rest of the housework. It was a step backward since women had already started working during World War II. They had made great strides in claiming civil rights such as women's suffrage.

The purpose of this advertising from the 1950s that tried to introduce the woman as a housewife was to show the model of the mint American family. Even the monthly magazines that were published contained absurd ideas about how to remain the ideal wife or how to make your husband happy - be happy, pick up the books, have dinner ready, don't burden your husband... - (See Appendix, figure 6).

In summary, the society in the 1950s was a male society in which the figure of women is reduced to subordination to the man. Women wanted to be recognized not only as of the perfect and capable woman of being a housewife and mother but as people who could contribute to society and who wanted to be recognized as an active part of a country that at that time needed them.

1.1.3 The 1970s

1.1.3.1 Historical Background

The decade of the Seventies was marked by a considerable number of events that followed on from the events of the previous decade. Driven by the advances already made, many social movements continued to retain broad relevance among the population. However, the 1970s marked a division in the American population. Many believe that these divisions affect American public life today.

The influence of conflicts such as the Vietnam War was part of these current divisions within the population. What many saw as injustices, but others saw as completely normal— since that was what had been done up to that point — gave rise to new social causes to fight for. This is when the gap between minorities -women, the African-American population, gays, lesbians...- and the so-called conservatives -who defended political conservatism and traditional roles- became wider.

Gradually minorities became the majority, which led to the election of a liberal president, Nixon. Nixon took it upon himself to abolish many of the policies which had consistently preferred the interests of the middle class, who felt slighted by the new president. Nixon's policies were more liberal, some of them being the Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan or a Family Assistance Plan. As Nixon's term in office progressed, the so-called "New Right" resisted the proposals and opted to continue with a more conservative way of life.

Alternative social movements joined the decades-old minority groups. Among the increased social movements that emerged, the most important were the environmental movement and the anti-war movement. The feminist movement continued to campaign against political and economic inequalities. Although many women were capable to take up other traditional jobs, the wage gap continued to widen during the 1970s. In 1977 they succeeded in ratifying the amendment ratifying equitable rights for men and women. Mexican-American and African-American groups made significant gains during the 1970s. Ultimately, the 1970s were characterized by a demographic decline. After the baby boom of the 1950s and the economic situation — which was not the best — in which the country found itself, the birth rate dropped. In addition, the advances that were achieved in divorce laws favored the demographic decrease during these years.

1.1.3.2 Economic Context

Since the beginning of the 1960s, women had started movements in support of equality. The 1970s coincided with the second wave of the feminist movement, which fought for equality in society in political and economic aspects. Women's struggles focused on work issues, questioning the wage gap, the difference in hours worked, and the possibility of supporting the same jobs as men. They demanded a legitimate active life and equal economic and working conditions for all women. From the late 1960s to the 1980s, the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) was born and brought about a social, cultural, and political transformation in the United States. (Bullock 314) They fought to stop considering women as second-class citizens, always subordinate to what men did.

At that time, they were fighting for gender equality in the legitimate sphere, where the wage gap was unusually large, and women's salaries were far below what men received. As they progressed and saw results in their protests, women chose to befall a large part of the country's workforce and many gained the necessary work experience that allowed them to combine family and work.

Many women who were not working devoted their efforts to training and education to be eligible for new jobs. During the 1970s, women increased their university attendance rates and lowered their scores in subjects that until then had been considered for men. As a result, women were fit to train and provide extra job opportunities in jobs that were more demanding for them.

The government's drive to produce laws that conformed to the civil rights of all citizens fulfilled a significant role in the advancement of the female workforce. One example is the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which defended a pregnant woman's right to be hired.

1.1.3.3 Social Context

In terms of social trends and lifestyle, the 1970s were similar to the 1960s. Society was immersed in a constant struggle for the civil rights of marginalized or socially disadvantaged communities: the Spanish-speaking community, homosexuals, diverse ethnic groups, or women, among others. Although all of them had great relevance and were massively supported by a leading part of the population, the most controversial was the movement for the struggle for women's rights and equality. During the 1970s, there was very little progress in economy and politics, but the social movements which progressed hugely in that decade promoted the cause of women's liberation for both the progressive and conservative population.

The inequality was expanded in various areas including the economy, working, and politics. According to Pierceson (2015), the feminist movement of the 1970s was focused on critiquing the patriarchal, or male-dominated, institutions and cultural practices throughout society.

The structure of the American nuclear family was changing. The number of divorces increased during the 1970s, and it was mainly because of the new role that women were taking, as it affected the family organization. There was an increase in the number of middle families, the rate of two-parent households increased, and the number of single mothers acting as head of the household.

With the overall increase in the divorce rate, many women felt liberated by the possibility of divorce and the knowledge that they could continue to possess economic stability. The economic independence they had achieved was primarily due to the numerous protests that took place during the second wave of feminism; which helped to achieve equality in many areas where women were still discriminated against.

After several years of feminist campaigns, in 1972, the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which guaranteed equal rights regardless of divorce, property, sex, employment, and other matters (Olson and Mendoza 200). However, during the 1970s, the neoconservatism movement arose in the United States, which was opposed to the civil rights ideals that were being protested at the time. In addition, the groups of anti-feminists that arose were on behalf of continuing with the gender roles established and were unbothered by the position of women in the family, traditionally and at home. In the mid to late 1970s, there was a decline in the movement. The insistence of the anti-ERA succeeded in undermining the Amendment in 1982.

The 1970s can be considered a turning point in the history of American feminism. During the second wave of the feminist movement, women managed to advance in areas like education, job training, sex... and moved away from the traditional demand for equality of the sexes and moved closer to the demand of living in a society with equal opportunities and social status for all citizens.

2. The evolution of gender stereotypes during the 20th Century

2.1 Early-20th century

Gender roles were very marked during the thirties, both women and men were pigeonholed into stereotypes. The way they behaved, the clothes they had to wear, or their jobs were some of the principles to the association of such gender stereotypes. Men were the ones who worked, and who could help their families in the economic crisis, while women had to stay at home and work. The population associated women with domesticity, motherhood, and work at home. Although many females had obtained new jobs outside the home, media, such as magazines and advertisements, portrayed women in a very specific way.

After the Great Depression, the image of women changed and the growth of the Hollywood film industry and advertising at that time boosted the stereotyping of females and transformed the concept of beauty that followed the canons of the happy twenties. Society implanted beauty canons, roles, and gender stereotypes associated with those seen on American movie screens and in advertisements. The idea of beautiful women breaking with the traditional style that until then had succeeded among society and women in the twenties.

The power of magazines is an influential factor in the rise of stereotypes. During this decade there were many magazines and advertising media that published weekly articles about how to treat men, how the perfect housewife should be, how women should dress among other topics. All this influences the conception of a representation adjusted to women. The distribution of occupational and nonworking roles in the ads reinforces the feminist's impression that women are rarely shown engaged in important activities outside the home. (Courtney and Wernick 94)

2.2 Mid-20th century

According to Tyler (1988), the years of the Great Depression and World War II represent a turning point where gender roles began to modify, and that favored the change

that the following generations would initiate to experience. In the 1940s, while they were in World War II, women took over the role that men had occupied until then in many areas. Many of them accepted the jobs that were considered for men, and many others began academic stages to improve their education so that they could later qualify for higher ranks in the workplace. However, when the war ended, men returned home and women's roles reverted to a domestic one.

During the post-war period, movements of authors who defended the position that women had until now arose, many of them wrote on behalf of the continuation of traditional gender roles, that is, the figure of the woman should be at home, and the concepts of domesticity and housework were associated with women. However, positions soon began to emerge, such as those of feminist trade unions and movements which opposed the gender roles that had been established, defending the position of women as something more than mothers and wives.

As in the 1930s, advertisements, magazines, and popular culture served to fuel gender roles. Besides, post-war American society was looking to the future, and the fruits of the post-war period were seen as a reason to present perfect family units. Popular culture gave meaning to a conservative ideology that pigeonholed women like the one in charge of housework and domesticity. This domestic and conservative ideology prevailed until the late 1960s, with the arrival of a new feminist wave. Women were the fundamental pillar of the house and the family. These gender roles supported or justified the idea that strong families would also make the country strong. Although it was very difficult to break out of that role, we can say that the 1950s were a breakthrough for the evolution of gender roles.

2.3 Late-20th Century

After the changes during the decade of the fifties, the seventies have the characteristics of a period of transition and the continuation of the advances achieved until then, mainly the changes were more significant in the employment and educational spheres. Although there was not a total consensus among the population, since many were in favor of the continuity of this social structure of society, many others began to rise and protest for a

much more egalitarian society that was not governed by such traditional sexual roles. That is why, during this decade of the wave of feminism, the struggle for civil liberties and labor influenced the evolution of these roles positively.

But these changes generated mainly in those who opposed them, the need to question how this would affect the lives of women and families. In the case of women, many began to question that gender changes would cause psychological and physical problems; according to Gore and Mangione (1983); Kandel, Davies, and Raveis (1985); Thoits (1983), (1986): "as women increasingly take on roles beyond home and family, the question is raised about the significance of these changes for their psychological and physical well-being. Studies have found that integration into society, in terms of multiple-role occupancy, reduces the likelihood of psychological distress among both men and women." Others justified their attachment to traditional gender roles with a difference in the focal point of the family. They asserted that these changes would affect the American family that had been created in the 1950s in a socioeconomic and sociological way.

Issues such as responsibilities outside and inside the family sphere, the worker rights that they had gained, the increase in female employment in other sectors, and the promotion of divorce laws that allowed for new family structures, were some of the causes that gave way to the change in gender roles. It is indeed women themselves who broaden the field of vision and who move away from the traditional sphere (Saxton 1-18).

Since the beginning of the twentieth-century women had been considered the weaker sex, and their representation and what was expected of them had not changed much for decades, since the main image has reflected a subordinate role to that of men. The housewife who took care of household chores and children and whose only aspiration was to live a previously planned life underwent the most drastic modification during the 1970s. Improvements in education rights, the right to vote, the creation of egalitarian laws, new reforms related to motherhood and divorce, and the sexual revolution of the time helped to change gender roles.

3. Women in 20th-century films

The cinema of the 1930s is an idealist and the role of women in the film becomes increasingly relevant until the 1960s. Although each decade has its distinct characteristics in the filmmaking field, stereotypes and gender roles in movies do not evolve until the 60s and 70s, so we find very marked and similar stereotypes for many decades of the twentieth century.

3.1 Early-20th century

The 1930s are known as The Golden Eyes in the Hollywood film industry. Gender roles on the big screen have always been influenced by other aspects in which society was immersed, such as the political, economic, or social context. Therefore, the role of women in the cinema of the thirties is associated with the figure of the woman and the mother. Everything that the woman can experience on the screen is related to the home or the femininity presented or not by the character.

During the 1930s, the female figure in Hollywood cinema appears in two main positions. The first of these represents the woman as wife and housewife and is the most recurrent female representation in cinema. Women always tend to play much more traditional roles, where their characters do not undergo many changes and are always the supporting role. The problems faced by the female characters are related to the domestic sphere and there is usually an exaggerated emphasis on these obstacles. The problems are related to cooking, cleaning, and beauty particularly.

The second shows the female protagonists outside the domestic role so that if on any occasion the female character went out of what was expected of them, they were considered characters with a lack of femininity and therefore went against society and what was established. These women were intelligent, strong, and belonged to the upper class. The genre of escape films that characterized the films of the thirties was glimpsed thanks to this type of female character.

3.2 Mid-20th century

In the 1930s, the figure of the *femme fatale* continued a new representation of women in the popular film noir that characterized that decade and influenced the next ones. Since 1950, males have outnumbered female characters in film at a rate of two to one (Mitsu 43). The woman went from being the submissive, innocent, and secondary character to remain the principal character and displaying an unusual image from what had been shown so far. The *femme fatale* is attractive, provocative, and capable of performing anything to achieve her goals.

However, the post-war environment changed the situation of the country, and this was reflected in cinema too. The situation in which the country found itself led to the return of the traditional approach that women had had in their film roles. Many felt that cinema was a good medium for spreading propaganda against enemies and Hollywood productions were steeped in American thought, therefore the films had to depict an ideal society. The role of women in the cinema of the 1950s was to represent an apprenticeship to men. Men oversaw learning how to be good American women with American ideals and making the right decisions that could influence the family. All this teaching was preceded by the idea of conveying a patriotic and anti-communist sentiment.

3.3 Late-20th century

The feminist movement that emerged in the seventies had such an impact and affected the film industry. During the seventies, the idea of discrimination against women attended a debate that affected many areas of society, workforce, social, economic life... But this debate was not transmitted to the screen until the end of the decade.

It was at this time that the feminist film theory emerged divided into two schools, the American and the British. According to Iadevito (2014): "it propitiated with greater force the inclusion of areas of female oppression that until then had not been represented or narrated." Many advocated that women should appear in another role and that their representation should be more varied. Many feminists expressed their support and defended

this current trend at the women's film festivals held in New York and Edinburgh in June 1972. Haskell's figure is crucial in the whole movement since she is one of the authors who acted as a spokesperson and criticized the anti-feminist reactionist of Hollywood as the phallogentrism of art cinema (De Almeida 12). Haskell denounces that the very traditional gender roles conceived in cinema are radically different from what women's identities are.

The films of the early 1970s focused more on men, and it was not until the last few years that both feminist and anti-feminist films began to be produced. The female gender roles experienced a dramatic shift that came in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in part due to the support of the feminist message and what had been accomplished up to that point. At that time, the film industry sought to find new female figures that would break with the previously established ones and reflect the independent women and their achievements of the previous decades.

Chapter 2. Analysis of the movies

2.1 Analysis of the role and characterization of women and film character in three American 20th-century films

2.1.1 *Gone with the Wind* (1939)

Gone With the Wind is a 1939 production set during the American Civil War that shocked the country through the 1930s. The film properly reflects the situation in which society lived at that time and presents the experiences of a young woman from the south of the United States. The weight that they had in society influenced by the war was nothing in contrast to the importance of men. In the cinematographic field, women received a broader recognition that would progressively increase throughout the twentieth century.

From the beginning, we observe how the female characters appear in a subordinate position, and with a clear role within the population. The women who appear on the scene belong to different races and diverse social positions. In *Gone with the Wind*, there is overprotection by the male population towards them, something extremely common in

American society, since the man was the head of the family and the protector of the house, not far from one-tenth of the families have a woman head at that time. (Pidgeon 84).

Our central character, Scarlett O'Hara is the daughter of a vast aristocratic family. She remains a person who belongs to high society, so Scarlett's life is settled. Her only concerns are to marry the right man, have children, and look beautiful. This is the role that women are going to perform throughout the movie since marriage is an issue that concerns all the high society females who appeared in the film. The internal debate surrounding the leading figure is about marriage and getting a proper husband. Women are stuck in the stereotype of marriage and mothers.

While Scarlett illustrates the idea of them as mothers, the other side of the coin is represented by the black women who serve the O'Hara family. They represent the most disadvantaged minorities and their role in society and the film is the same: service. Manny and Prissy, two of the black female characters that appear in this film have a minor role and their exclusive function is to serve the needs of the O'Hara family, sometimes the stupid dialogues and the personality of the characters reinforce the idea that they are a minority.

2.1.2 *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)

Sunset Boulevard is a production from the fifties that caused an extraordinary revelation in the Hollywood film scene. The film presents a revealing point of view for a movie of the thirties. The representation of women in this era changes radically with the figure of the woman as the center of the plot. Roles, in which they appear as perfect women in search of a husband or housewives, are barely frequent. In this context, the emergence of the new film noir presents a violent and corrupt society, and it is then when *femme fatales* seem, apparently, harmless women with dark intentions. In a society where women have more liberty and alternative family structures appear, consumerism and superficiality for external appearance promote the representation of this type of woman.

Only two female characters appear in this film and they reflect completely unusual values. Initially, Norma Desmond, the *femme fatale* of the fifties, and secondly Betty Schaefer, a character who represents more traditional values. The unique conflict she has is related to

men, since she is going to get married to Joe Gillis' best friend, and her feelings are confused. Despite being a stakeholder in American cinema, she occupies a secondary role in her work and claims more presence in the creation of scripts. This idea reflects the situation somewhat of women in society, who increasingly demanded more rights.

Norma Desmond is a forgotten actress of world cinema who has not appeared in Hollywood for years due to the emergence of sound films. The stereotype that is created of her is that of a woman without scruples, submerged in despair and oblivion, and capable of undertaking everything possible to achieve whatever she sets her mind to. The grotesque, lugubrious, and mysterious environment where the action takes place influences the character. Besides, she possesses all the characteristics of the *femme fatale*.

The *femme fatale* is also characterized by being independent and daring, Norma Desmond lives in an enormous mansion accompanied only by her butler and has decided to produce a screenplay. During the film, the character does not undergo any development, and it is conceivably the fact that she remains the one who manages to deceive Joe that provides the stereotypical idea of the *femme fatale* who is captivating and manipulative. Norma Desmond's dangerousness is not evident until she murders Joe Gillis in the last scene. Although throughout the film, one can have an idea of the character, the fact that she ends up committing murder is what finally convinces the viewer that he is in front of a real *femme fatale*.

2.1.3 *Annie Hall* (1977)

Annie Hall is a production of the late seventies. This film, considered a romantic comedy, is different from the rest of the movies in that genre. Through the characters who speak directly to the camera, the viewer witnesses a most peculiar love relationship between a man and a woman. The 1970s were the decade of social transgression in which the struggle for women's rights reached its peak.

The society of the seventies compelled many taboo subjects, among which was sex. As the revolution for equal rights progressed, topics that were considered taboo and not associated

with women began to appear in female characters. The change that had emerged since the late 1950s and developed in the 1960s became a reality in the 1970s.

In Woody Allen's romantic comedy, *Annie*, the female character, possesses many of the characteristics of the woman of the seventies. Although she manages a very ordinary life, she departs from tradition. Annie remains a woman with a considerable capacity for decisiveness when it comes to the aspects of her life. In most romantic comedies, the female character tends to be conquered by the man. However, early in the film, Annie shows interest in Alvy and she decides to take the plunge to try to succeed him over. This revealing stance shows a modern image of women. The young New Yorker experiences an evolution in her character throughout the film and it is that despite Alvy's attempts to convince her with his views, Annie displays that she is clear about her ideas. In a way, the need to express her ideas and have a voice in the relationship would represent the image of the feminist woman of the third wave in the United States.

2.2 Analysis of the evolution of gender stereotypes in three American films during the 20th century

2.2.1 *Gone with the Wind* (1936)

Gender stereotypes are prevalent in American society and consequently in their representation in film. In *Gone With The Wind*, the man is the one who goes to war, while the married woman stays at home with the responsibility of the house and children. Unmarried women have to secure the proper husband. The fact that the protagonist of the film was a woman, gives the stereotype of love and romance present in films in which women are the main characters. Even, the film romanticizes the Old South (Rentz 60) Likewise, slavery and poverty on top appear through ethnic stereotypes. These are very vigorous in the films, and in *Gone With the Wind* they appear in the characters of the maids. As for the leading character, Scarlett O'Hara, we can observe in her an evolution in the stereotype of them. She did not follow the conventional roles and stereotypes of the time and although the main dilemma of her character revolves around getting married to

unrequited love, there are behaviors in her that at that time were untypical of what was expected of a woman.

At the beginning of the film, we find a selfish woman, without any concern for her position in society, we observe a character very sure of herself and her ability to achieve everything she sets her mind to. However, as the film progresses, we meet a character who is not submissive, and who does not want to live in the shadow of anyone, much less of men. During the film, women who have lost their husbands in the war transmit a depressive feeling, but, Scarlett O'Hara adopts a completely independent stance. She decides to have fun and continue with her life as she has done so far. Something that was highly criticized as it did not correspond with what was expected of women, it was shocking for the viewers. As problems begin to appear in her life, she does not look for refuge in a man as it was something expected of them -and tries to relocate her family forward. This independent and constant figure that Scarlett shows breaks with the stereotypes that were held in that decade.

2.2.2 *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)

The stereotype that was present in American society during the 1950s was strikingly similar to that of the 1930s. The woman as housewife and mother was still present and most representations reflected that image. After World War, their role was almost a social imposition encouraged by the government, the media, and advertising. This idea of the stereotypical traditional woman is reflected in the female character of Betty Schaefer. Although her character does not undergo any change and hardly much is known about her, we can associate this role with her.

The change occurs in Norma Desmond, who does not follow the traditional model required of the American woman of the 1950s and breaks with the stereotypes expected of ladies. It is here that we note an evolution in the stereotypes that were reflected in the films of the thirties. The characterization of women and what they reflect on the screen changed with the arrival of the *femme fatales*. The role of women in noir films represents a turning point for the following models of them that will appear on the big screen. Until the late 1930's

the figure of the *femme fatale* was not manifested in the Film Noir (Boozer 20-35), but it has changed drastically from the '40s to the '90s (Boozer 20-35). The independence, the solitude in which the protagonist is immersed, was not something that was expected of women, nor represent the environment in which they should be. That is to say, the modern image that was projected of women in the cinema did not agree with what was happening in society. However, according to Boozer (1999), the *femme fatale* has its origin in “the massive entry of women into the work force [which was] encouraged during the war [and then] was suddenly discouraged at war’s end...”.

We can speak of film noir as an instrument that unconsciously promoted a change in the characterization and stereotypes that women had in society, and that influenced the cinema. The woman who promptly appeared on the screen was completely different from the one who appeared in the cinema of the thirties. The evolution favors the image that from this moment on would change the course of them on the big screen.

2.2.3 *Annie Hall* (1977)

In the 1970s, the image projected of women in the cinema was an immense advance in terms of the stereotypes that were reflected on the big screen. Improvements in student rights, voting rights, and improvements in divorce reforms, motherhood, and the sexual revolution of the seventies were reflected on the big screen. In the film industry, most films presented the corresponding social environment until the late 1970s. For many critics, *Annie Hall* supposes a critical change and a turning point in the history of women in films since it had an immediate and profound impact on American culture and The American Film Institute ranked it as the fourth greatest comedy and the thirty-first greatest film of all time. (Hoffman 3)

Annie's image presents new stereotypes never seen before in the image of women. Female characters were synonymous with traditional values, and their vision had invariably appeared in the same way. In *Annie Hall*, all these traditional roles are removed from the female character, and new stereotypes or clichés related to women disappeared and those that were associated with men changed too. Her relationships were never meant to end in

marriage, they are merely transient affairs that allow Annie to have fun and explore herself as a person (Washington 6).

The sexual revolution that was taking place in the United States during the seventies helped Woody Allen to present the sexual theme in an elegantly ordinary way. The conversations between Annie and Alvy about intimate relations would have no place in any of the films of the previous stages. This sexual freedom together with Anne's ability to decide for herself in such basic aspects as fashion — her style could be considered masculine since she dressed in ties and "men's" attire —, work or her political thoughts are some of the examples that were introduced in the film and that helped to better understand that voice that the feminine society of the seventies demanded so much. From the moment the audience is introduced to Annie, she stands out as independent and quirky. (Washington 5). In *Annie*, we can perceive the new woman who was demanding similar rights during the second wave of American feminism.

Conclusions

Gender roles along with the context in which a society lives are influential factors in cinema. For example, the importance of the characters, how are they characterized, and the role that they represent is essential to understand better what the film wants to portray. Consequently, female characters are governed by the canons that have been previously established about them and are reflected in films.

The historical, social, and economic context of each of the decades in which *Gone With the Wind*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Annie Hall* are produced remains as a crucial element in determining the representation of women in film, what their role is as well as what is expected of them in the films. Another element is the gender stereotypes that change over time and work according to the thought and contexts of each era.

The 1930s affected this imposition of gender roles both in society and in the filmmaking scene due to the global crisis that shook the world economy. The situation of the United States influenced the position of women within society. The female population experienced changes that instigated a society punished by the lack of resources. This led to women

being the ones in charge of working at home. They also are unconsidered women with the right to work, even though they carry out a significant role in ending the crisis.

After the Great Depression of the 1930s, female stereotypes were reinforced and due to the development of new media such as magazines and advertising, new, more discriminatory, and strict canons of beauty emerged. Although on the big screen women appeared in a traditional role taking the position of wife and mother, sometimes a more revolutionary image appeared — as in *Gone With the Wind* — which would be satisfactorily established from the thirties onwards.

In the 1930s cinematic environment, *Gone With the Wind* reflects a society at war where women were not extremely relevant. The female characters present the image of them as housewives and mothers, and although in Scarlett's character we find that traditional image, she also tries to break with stereotypes.

In the 1950s, cultural, social, political, and economic changes emerged. Women represent the domestic workers and the rise of popular culture reinforced this idea. On an economic level, society was immersed in consumerism due to the economic boom that gave way to the lifestyle known as the *American Way of Life*. This lifestyle was key to understanding the stereotypes that were established about women in the fifties. Society was unwilling to accept them in a position that was not subordinate and both the government and advertising placed great emphasis on making clear the position that women should occupy.

The Second World War supported women to leave the domestic role, and many of them began to work in new economic sectors, but the end of the war also marked the end of their working life. However, many of them did not want to give up what they had achieved, and a moment of liberation arose in the 1950s and that would worsen over time. The 1950s, despite comprising a period in which there were barely any changes, can be considered a turning point that served to initiate improvements in the position of women.

In terms of cinema, *Sunset Boulevard* indicates to us that minor improvement, since now the female leading character fulfills another role in the movies. The popularity of film noir caused the rupture of the traditional role seen until now and has introduced us to *femme fatales*, women who perform an unusual role of the female stereotype in cinema.

Finally, the 1970s, a decade that marked the creation of several social movements requiring the equality of minorities, including the female population. The feminist movement, known as the third wave of American feminism, represents the opportunity for women to achieve an egalitarian society and to obtain the same rights as men. In the economic context, they achieved the promotion of labor equality laws and increased job opportunities for many of them. The lifestyle of American society is key to following the struggle of many social movements, which managed to improve the social life of many women.

The image of women as mothers and wives was left behind and modern family structures emerged that supported women's economic independence. These factors influenced gender roles, which represent a continuation of the slight changes that had been introduced in the 1950s. This current position of women led to the emergence of opposing views, between those who supported the feminist movement and those who were in favor of continuing with a more traditional perspective. However, the improvement in rights, the recent reforms and laws, and the social movements represented a turning point in the history of American feminism.

In cinema, these improvements were reflected in female characters that broke with traditional stereotypes and the deception associated with women, as in the case of *Annie Hall*. Annie represents the values of the society of the seventies, a society immersed in the struggle for women's rights. In *Annie Hall*, we perceive the role of a woman in charge of her own life and with a completely various representation to what we had seen in cinema during the twentieth century.

Appendix

Table 1- Gainful workers 10 years old and over, by general divisions of occupations and sex, for the United States: 1930, 1920, and 1910.

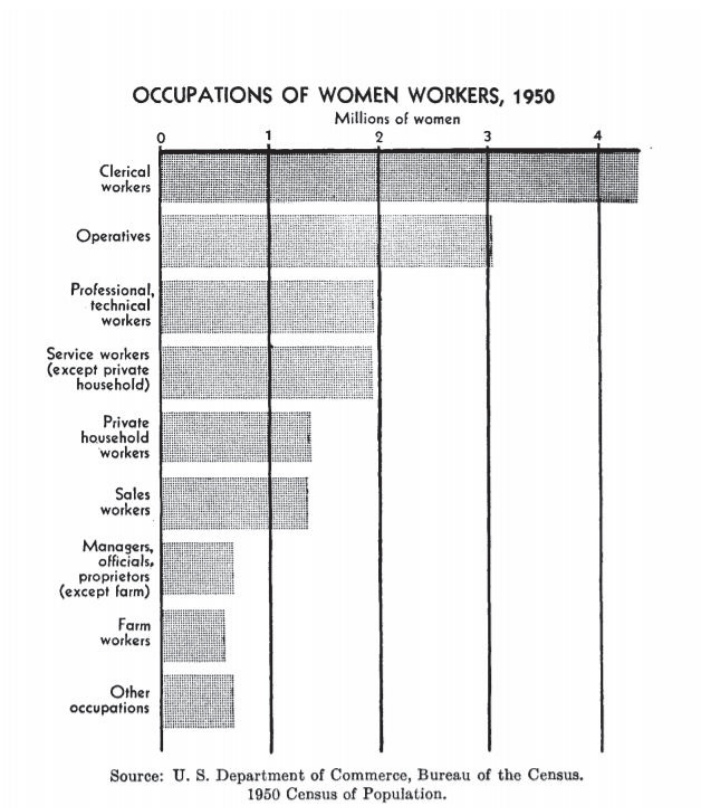
TABLE 2.—GAINFUL WORKERS 10 YEARS OLD AND OVER, BY GENERAL DIVISIONS OF OCCUPATIONS AND SEX, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1930, 1920, AND 1910
[Per cent not shown where less than 0.1]

CENSUS YEAR AND GENERAL DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONS	NUMBER			PER CENT DISTRIBUTION			PER CENT OF TOTAL	
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
1930								
All occupations.....	48,820,920	38,077,804	10,743,116	100.0	100.0	100.0	78.0	22.0
Agriculture.....	10,471,908	9,582,050	889,858	21.4	25.1	8.5	91.3	8.7
Forestry and fishing.....	260,400	250,140	10,260	0.5	0.7	0.0	99.0	0.1
Extraction of minerals.....	984,323	983,564	759	2.0	2.6	0.0	99.0	0.1
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	14,110,652	12,224,345	1,886,307	28.9	32.1	17.5	80.6	13.4
Transportation and communication.....	3,843,147	3,501,943	341,204	7.9	9.4	2.0	92.7	7.3
Trade.....	6,081,407	5,118,787	962,620	12.5	13.4	9.0	84.2	15.8
Public service (not elsewhere classified).....	858,205	838,622	19,583	1.8	2.2	0.2	97.0	2.1
Professional service.....	3,253,884	1,727,650	1,526,234	6.7	4.5	14.2	53.1	46.9
Domestic and personal service.....	4,982,451	1,772,200	3,210,251	10.1	4.7	20.0	35.8	64.2
Clerical occupations.....	4,025,324	2,038,494	1,986,830	8.2	5.4	18.5	50.6	49.4
1920¹								
All occupations.....	41,614,248	33,064,737	8,549,511	100.0	100.0	100.0	78.5	20.5
Agriculture.....	10,665,812	9,582,006	1,083,806	25.6	29.0	12.7	80.8	10.2
Forestry and fishing.....	270,214	269,541	673	0.6	0.8	0.0	99.8	0.2
Extraction of minerals.....	1,090,223	1,087,359	2,864	2.6	3.3	0.0	99.7	0.3
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	12,831,879	10,901,827	1,930,052	30.8	33.0	22.6	85.0	15.0
Transportation and communication.....	3,095,829	2,872,550	223,279	7.4	8.7	2.0	92.8	7.2
Trade.....	4,287,684	3,585,701	701,983	10.2	10.8	7.0	84.2	15.8
Public service (not elsewhere classified).....	738,525	727,030	11,495	1.8	2.2	0.1	98.0	1.4
Professional service.....	2,171,251	1,154,221	1,017,030	5.2	3.5	11.9	53.2	46.8
Domestic and personal service.....	3,379,995	1,193,313	2,186,682	8.1	3.0	25.6	35.3	64.7
Clerical occupations.....	3,111,836	1,689,911	1,421,925	7.5	5.1	16.6	54.8	45.7
1910¹								
All occupations.....	38,187,336	30,081,584	8,075,772	100.0	100.0	100.0	78.8	21.2
Agriculture.....	12,389,309	10,581,685	1,807,624	32.5	35.2	22.4	85.4	14.6
Forestry and fishing.....	241,806	241,249	557	0.6	0.8	0.0	99.8	0.2
Extraction of minerals.....	985,160	984,075	1,085	2.6	3.2	0.0	99.0	0.1
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	10,650,545	8,835,698	1,814,847	27.9	29.4	22.5	82.9	17.1
Transportation and communication.....	2,685,269	2,540,922	114,347	7.0	8.5	1.4	95.7	4.3
Trade.....	3,033,265	3,160,562	472,703	9.5	10.5	5.9	87.0	13.0
Public service (not elsewhere classified).....	431,442	426,606	4,836	1.1	1.4	0.1	98.9	1.1
Professional service.....	1,711,275	976,523	734,752	4.5	3.2	9.1	57.1	42.9
Domestic and personal service.....	3,785,798	1,225,395	2,560,403	9.9	4.1	31.3	32.6	67.4
Clerical occupations.....	1,718,468	1,120,849	597,619	4.5	3.8	7.3	65.7	34.3

¹ 1920 and 1910 figures for the respective general divisions revised to conform to 1930 classification.

Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1950 Census of Population.

Table 2- Occupations of women workers, 1930.



Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1950 Census of Population.

Table 3- Employment Status of Women, 1950.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN, 1950			
<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent distribution</i>	
All women (14 years and over).....	57, 102, 295	100	-----
In the labor force.....	¹ 16, 551, 990	29	100
Employed.....	15, 750, 660	-----	95
Unemployed.....	769, 030	-----	5
In Armed Forces.....	32, 300	-----	(²)
Not in the labor force.....	40, 550, 305	71	100
Aged 65 or over.....	6, 015, 255	-----	15
Aged 14 to 64:			
Keeping house.....	28, 118, 535	-----	69
Unable to work.....	568, 675	-----	1
In institutions.....	355, 535	-----	1
Other and not reported.....	5, 492, 305	-----	14

Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1950 Census of Population.

Table 4- Participation in Labor Force by women in various marital groups.

PARTICIPATION IN LABOR FORCE BY WOMEN IN VARIOUS MARITAL GROUPS			
<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Number of women workers, 1950</i>	<i>Women workers as percent of woman population in—</i>	
		1950	1940
All experienced women workers ¹	16, 498, 530	29	24
Single.....	5, 239, 800	46	42
Married.....	8, 618, 160	23	15
Widowed or divorced.....	2, 640, 570	33	28

¹ Includes employed women and experienced women seeking work, but not new workers.

Source: Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1950 Census of Population.

Table 5- Marital Status of women in the population and Labor Force.

MARITAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

Marital status	Women				
	Number in labor force, 1960 ¹	Percent distribution, 1960, in—		Percent distribution, 1940, in—	
		Labor force ²	Population	Labor force ²	Population
Total.....	16, 498, 530	100	100	100	100
Single.....	5, 239, 800	32	20	48	28
Married, husband present.....	7, 683, 030	47	62	31	56
Married, husband absent.....	935, 130	6	4	6	3
Widowed or divorced.....	2, 640, 570	16	14	15	13

¹ Based on the employed and the experienced women seeking work.

² Note that the data on marital status include the experienced work seekers as well as the employed (the entire labor force except new workers). Other sections of the report, dealing largely with detailed occupations, are based on the employed women alone.

7

Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1950 Census of Population.

Figure 6. 'Housekeeping Monthly' – 13 May 1955



The good wife's guide

- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favorite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.
- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.

Source: 'Housekeeping Monthly' – 13 May 1955. The Advertising Archives, 2021, <https://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/>

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