CULTURE AND FASHION DESIGN
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Culture and Fashion Design

18.1 Cultural Value and Fashion

Clothing has been an integral part of human life since prehistoric time. Throughout history, clothing has provided adornment, modesty, protection, identification and status. It has also reflected the change of our geographical, social, political, economic and technological development. Clothing has also played important roles in different historical and cultural events.

18.1.1 The Evolution of Historical Western Costume in the 20th Century

Economic factors influence the fabrics, styling and quality that are popular or available at a given time. Technology plays its part through the development of new materials and new methods of construction. Global events, music video, movie and celebrities have had a great influence on fashion in the twentieth century.

(a) 1900s

*Women's wear*
- The bust-line was protruded and the waistline was controlled by the corset which was known as the “S” band shape
- Women's dresses were long and full skirted, often had bustles which emphasised the hips

*Men's wear*
- The three-piece suit for gentlemen was introduced

(b) 1910s
- The hourglass figure continued to be in style but without the “S” shape
- Skirts became narrower at the hemline, high and close-fitting turtle neck or V neck
- During the First World War - trousers were popular, hemlines of skirts were moved upwards to ankles or lower leg
- After war - dresses and suits made from jersey fabrics, looser garments such as middy blouses
with sailor collars and sweaters

(c) 1920s
- Clothes became shorter and less fitted comfort and practicality
- Less class-conscious and youthful styles with rectangle silhouette
- The flapper – dresses with dropped waist were usually worn with long pearl necklaces and bobbed hair

(d) 1930s
- Classic suits and dresses, separate skirts and blouses were a highlight
- Natural shape silhouette with a narrow waist and high shoulders
- Hemline went down again
- Skirts were often made with godets or pleats which started below the knee

(e) 1940s
- Influenced by the Second World War – slimmer styles, shorter skirts (hemline back to knee level) and nipped-in waistlines in order to use less fabric
- Emphasised the natural curve of bodies, shoulder pads are used
(f) 1950s

**Women’s wear**

- Corsets were disposed but still emphasised waistline and hips
- Sleeves were usually short or three-quarter in length, a large variety of collar types, skirts were with mid-calf length and often flared below the knee
- Clam diggers, pedal pushers cape-like coats with wide sleeves, sloping shoulders were worn

**Men’s wear**

- Young men - button-down oxford shirts, oxford shoes, and narrow regimental ties
- Business uniform - narrow lapels gray sack-cut suit with striped tie, wing-tip oxford shoes and a gray fedora hat

(g) 1960s

- Miniskirts with tight boots and hippie style
- Pop art pattern and geometric dress shape, PVC dress
- Emergence of the “unisex” look

(h) 1970s

- Denim jeans with bell-bottom and hipster, tight fitting shirts
- Street style fashion with spiky and slashed details on clothes,
unisex styles

- Hot pants, pantsuits and jeans were popular for women’s wear
- Men wore suits with large butterfly bowties, wide collars, wide neckties, leisure suit with bright floral shirt worn beneath the jacket and without a necktie

(i) 1980s

- Skirt lengths ranged from long to short
- Broad shouldered and tailored power suits / pantsuits with excess use of should pads
- Popular clothes for women in the job market include broad and big jacket with tight skirt and a feminine blouse

(j) 1990s

- Fashions became more natural in shape, styles ranged from bagged pants to tight leggings, from oversized shirts to skinny tops
- Fashion tended to be more casual, both men and women were dressing less formally

18.1.2 National Costumes of East Asia & India

Clothing can be a valuable clue to various cultures. The style of clothing that people wear – the designs, the fabrics and the colours – can tell you a lot about the way how the people of a given culture think, their heritage, values and believes.

(a) Costumes of China – Qi Pao

The most popular item of most the Chinese women in modern times was the qi pao, one of the traditional Chinese styles which developed early in the Qing Dynasty. When the early Manchu rulers came to China proper, they organised certain people, mainly Manchus, into eight “banners” (Qi) and called them “banner people” (Qiren), which then became loosely the name of all Manchus. The origin of qi pao is that Manchu women normally wore a one-piece dress which came to be called “qi pao” of “banner dress”. Although the 1911 Revolution toppled the Qing Dynasty, the female dress survived the political
changes and, with later improvement, has become the traditional dress for Chinese women.

(b) Costumes of Japan - Kimono
The elegant and artistic kimono remains Japan’s national costume for men, women and children despite the fact that Western costume is being worn more and more because of its practicality. All kimonos are the same shape that can be worn by anyone, man or woman, regardless of height or weight. It emphasizes the beauty of straight lines. When the kimono is worn, the lines are free falling. When the kimono is folded to be put away, the flowing lines are in a sense preserved by folding along the vertical seams. Making the folds straight and correct evinces the good manners of the wearer.

(Source: Masterfile.com)

(c) Costumes of India
- men’s wear - The men’s costume is based on the turban, which is called pagri in India, is a piece of white or colourful cotton or silk printed with or without a border. The modern East Indian dress consists of a high-collared, buttoned-up choga with side vents.
- women’s wear - Sari is the most important and common garment for Hindu women in India.
18.2 Factors Contributing to Fashion Trends in Local and Global Context

18.2.1 Fashion Trend

Trend may refer to:

- The process of getting others to follow or copy
- Current style such as the latest ‘fashion style”
- Trend can be called “vogue”
- Something popular
- Movement of fashion

18.2.2 The Change of Fashion

Fashion is a social phenomenon common to many fields of human activity and thinking. The rises and falls of fashion have been thought to be related in the following fields and they are always inter-related:

- Geographical and environmental factors such as weather, climatic, location
- Social influences such as lifestyle
- Technological development such as high-tech materials
- Economic influences such as simplicity versus glamour
- Political Influences such as embargo
- Cultural developments such as believes and religion

The change of fashion is related to the spirit of different times, i.e. historical continuity, the cultural and social trend, the way we live and the environment that surrounds us. Fashion is not only restricted to apparel; it can also be any kinds of design, a popular kind of cuisine, a stylish restaurant, the development of technology, a particular kind of sport activity, a management style and so forth. Understanding the meaning of fashion helps explain how these transformations happen.
18.3 Fashion Designers

18.3.1 Exploring a Career in the Fashion Field

(a) Job Duties of Fashion Designers
- analysing trends in fabrics, colours and shapes, range planning and development.
- sourcing, selecting and buying fabrics.
- producing sketches by hand or by CAD.
- adapting existing designs for mass production.
- making and cutting patterns.
- supervising the making up of sample garments.
- liaising closely with sales, buying and production teams.
- negotiating with customers and suppliers
- most experienced designers with larger companies may focus on the design aspects of this process while pattern cutters and machinists contribute to the preparation of sample garments.

(b) Classification of Fashion Designers
- design directors
- design managers
- fashion designers
- artists.

18.3.2 Fashion Styles

(a) French Fashion Styles
Notable French fashion houses are mostly located in Paris. The style of French fashion is chic and stylish, famous for its skilful cut and accessories co-ordinations. French designs consider the epitome of style and fashion in ladies' garments. Famous French fashion design houses include Chanel, Christian Dior, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Louis Vuitton, etc.

(b) Italian Fashion Styles
The Italian fashion capital is situated in Milan because it is the hub for most of the well-known designers and it is also the exhibition venue for Italian fashion collections.

Italian fashion features casual elegance and luxurious fabrics. The first Italian luxury brand was Salvatore Ferragamo. Other exclusive
fashion names include Valentino, Gianfranco Ferrè, Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and Gucci.

(c) British Fashion Styles
The majority of British fashion houses are based in the capital of the country, London. British designs are considered to be traditional, classic, elegant, yet conservative. The Savile Row tailors feature classic gentlemen styles. Famous British designer names include Vivienne Westwood, Paul Smith, Mary Quant and Alexander McQueen.

(d) American Fashion Styles
The majority of American fashion houses are based in New York although there are also a significant number of them in Los Angeles. Chicago was once the centre of American fashion.

American fashion design is famous for its clean cut and casual style. Well known fashion designers include Ralph Lauren, who is known for his casually elegant clothes in natural fabrics, and Donna Karan, who is known for practical and sophisticated women's wear.

(e) Japanese Fashion Styles
Japanese fashion consists of a mixture of both traditional and modern styles. A large part of the traditional Japanese fashion has evolved to what is known as Street Fashion today although, occasionally, traces of traditional Japanese fashion can be encountered in large cities of Japan. Japanese street fashion started to impact Western fashion during the beginning of the 21st century. The term 'Street Fashion' is used to describe a fashion pattern that wearers customise their outfits by mixing and matching of current and traditional trends. Such clothes are generally regarded as DIY (Do-it-yourself).

Some of the most influential Japanese fashion designers include Takada Kenzo, Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo.
18.4 Total Image for Fashion Design

18.4.1 Major Fashion Trend

There are eight major fashion trends that have appeared through times:

- Elegant
- Feminine
- Ethnic
- Sportive
- Mannish
- Avant-garde
- Modern
- Classic
Each of the major fashion trends are discussed as follows:-

(A) Classic

Classic represents something that is long lasting. It can be worn for years and still looks trendy. In the textile sector, patterns like tartan, checks, stripes/ pin stripes and spots are all classic designs. In the fashion sector, some examples of classic styles are denim/ jeans, double breasted jacket, trench coats, etc. In terms of brands, some examples of classic style brands are Issey Miyake’s pleated fabric, Emilio Pucci’s psychedelic patterns, Missoni’s zigzag knitted design, Giorgio Armani’s muted colour tone and Christian Dior’s New Look.

Plaids are one of the classic patterns

Double breasted jackets are regarded as a classic design

(B) Modern

The term “modern” in fashion first appeared in the 60s when everybody was talking about science and technology. Some examples of modern designs include Mary Quant’s five point hair cut, PVC clothing, which is an influence by the development
of plastic, anything white and metal and round shapes, similar to the planets. Modern also means being or in accordance with current social fashions or the contemporary style. For example, “fashionable clothing” or "a fashionable cafe".

Shopping tastefully – Giorgio Armani’s series of concept stores include fashion department, beauty department, lifestyle department, bookshop and café, all under one roof

Pierre Cardin’s design the 60s, featuring a space-age look

(C) **Avant-garde**

According to Wikipedia, the term “avant-garde” in French means *front guard*, *advance guard* or vanguard. It is commonly used in French, English and German to refer to people or works that are experimental or novel, particularly with respect to art, culture and politics. It is most commonly applied to visual arts, fashion, film and literature.

In fashion, avant-garde styles usually refer to experimental dress codes. For example, Lolita style, punk, body piercing, cosplay, etc.
Two girls dressing like visual rock characters from their favorite manga (cosplay)

(D) Mannish

The First World War (1914 - 1918) has changed the role of women in society. With the rise of working class women, dress worn in that period became more practical and functional and hence the trend of mannish was established. The flapper style in the 20s was a representative of one of styles of the earlier mannish women’s wear. Mannish can be applied to both men’s wear and women’s wear. Basically, it can be divided into the following types:

(i) Marine

This is similar to marine uniform or nautical style with colour combo of red, blue and white. Other details include stripes, anchor, cotton strings and scarves.

A marine fashion style
(ii) Military

Any kind of military uniform can be a reference such as the Russian military uniform that consists of long, double breasted jacket and boots. Other military inspirations include camouflage pattern, turquoise colour, buckles, metals, etc.

(iii) Dandy

A combination of jacket, waistcoat, shirt, tie or bow tie, pants and leather Oxford shoes. In the broad sense, anything that generates a gentleman look can be considered as part of the dandy style.

(iv) Aviator

This is influenced by the uniform of aviators, which usually consists of washed leather jacket with a lot of badges and sun-glasses.

(v) Safari

This usually refers to garment made of linen, short sleeves shirt with functional pockets tied with belt, to match with short pants or Bermuda pants.

(E) Sporty

With the world’s concern for health today, sporty style has become a major trend in recent years. Sporty style means casual clothing suitable for sports but nowadays it also applies to clothing that is sportingly fashionable or stylish. More and more fashion brands have developed their sport line. One of the successful examples is Y3 (Yohji Yamamoto x adidas).
(F) Ethnic
Ethnic elements can be found anywhere. It refers to national dress codes which are applied to fashion. Some examples of fashion items with ethnic element are as follows:

- Chinese - Chinese knots, mandarin collar, slit, oriental colours such as jade, peacock, gold, etc.
- Japanese - Cross openings, asymmetrical cuttings, kimono design.
- India - Scarves, heavy embroideries, earth tone colours, tie and dye.
- American - Cowboy look

Cowboy look usually consists of a cowboy hat, suede jacket or waistcoat, denim, leather accessories and cowboy boots

(G) Feminine
This refers to clothing characterised by or possessing qualities that generally attributes to a female. Following are some patterns or designs that are generally categorised as feminine:

- Low necklines
- Defined waist or tight fit clothing
- Floral prints
- Soft colours such as pink, pastel blue, etc
Transparent materials such as lace, chiffon, etc

High heel shoes

(H) Elegant
This is defined as styles that give a sense of tastefully fine or in some other cases, designs that are luxurious. The term also has a meaning of tasteful beauty of manner. For example, Giorgio Armani is famous for his elegant designs.

14.4.2 Use of Materials
Materials are the media for fashion designers to express their creativity. To start a new seasonal collection, designers will preview fabric and trimming ranges. In some companies, designers are responsible for selecting the whole range of fabrics. In other companies, this task will be done by fabric merchandisers. Choosing appropriate fabrics is the key to successful designing, e.g. stiff fabrics to create shapes and volume, soft/ shinny/ floral prints for feminine and romantic design.

(A) Fabrics
Fabrics used for fashion can be either:

- Woven material such as twill, tweeds, calico, oxford, satin – clothes used for dress, jackets or pants.
- Non-woven material such as lace, felt, etc.
- Knitted material such as jersey, cables – clothes used for stockings, jumpers or sweaters.

These fabrics can be either made by:

- Natural fibers such as cotton, wool, silk, etc.
- Man-made fibers such as nylon, polyester, etc.

(B) Factors Affecting the Selection of Fabric for a Design
A balanced range of fabric should include a variety of design and structures:

- Weights and textures
Classic and fashion fabrics
Prints or novelties

Sources can be obtained from trade fairs, suppliers or swatches sent out by textile companies. Following are factors to consider when selecting appropriate fabric(s) for a design:

- Weight
- Handle
- Texture
- Colour
- Pattern or print
- Price
- Availability
- Performance (e.g. warmth, stain resistance, etc)
- Quality
- Timing

It is important to work out a balance between the number of items, the core fabrics and the accent or highlight fabrics when designing a collection. Too many colours and fabric designs will look uncoordinated. On the contrary, too few colours used will make the collection look dull or repetitive.

Designers should consider the body type and lifestyle of the targeted market. Consistency in selecting fabrics helps build image and signature of the collection or a brand. For example, Coco Chanel for jersey and tweeds, Issey Miyake for pleated polyester, Vivienne Westwood for tartan and checks, Missoni for zigzag pattern, etc.

(C) Trimmings

Trimmings are details or accessories applied to the surface of a garment. It can be of decorative purposes. Some examples of different trimmings of decorative purposes are beads, appliqués and embroidery. Besides, trimmings can also be of functional purposes. Some examples are buttons, hooks and eyes.
14.4.3 Use of Fashion Accessories

In the 21st century, fashion accessories have become almost as important as clothing. Fashion magazines are stuffed with advertisements of handbags and shoes and most fashion brands have developed their own accessories collection including lines of hats, bags, belts, shoes, sunglasses, scarves and fashion jewelries.

The reason behind is appropriate co-ordination of fashion accessories could change the look of an outfit and thus provides convenience for working women. Another reason is that fashion design is becoming increasingly simple, so accessories help brighten up a style and create a personal appearance.

(A) Handbags

Handbags are subject to the same trend as fashion. There are also classic designs that include Louis Vuitton’s totes and Chanel’s quilted bags.

Over-the-shoulder bags and backpacks are often matched with casual wear while clutch bags usually go with eveningwear. Bags designed in deep neutral colours such as chestnut, charcoal grey and black are always best sellers because they work well with almost all colour tones.

(B) Shoes

Material choice for shoes is very important because the same pair of shoes could be worn every day. Day shoes are normally in lower heels and should be more comfortable. Popular colours for day shoes are those of neutral tones such as black, white and tan. The design of shoes is often affected by season:

(i) Summer

Light or bright colours, open-toe design, sling-back and sandals. Materials can be cloths, plastic or leather.

(ii) Winter

Dark colours, boots or shoes designs can have high instep that looks good with pants. The materials used can be leather or suede.

(C) Hats

In the 19th century, women in the West wore hats when they went out. One’s outfit was incomplete without a hat. Today’s street scene is dominated by bare heads;
however, wearing hats that match with the outlook gives a dramatic effect.