The Rise of Fashion through Culture and History

Jasmilex Sanchez Guzman

City University of New York

New York City College of Technology

Dr. Alyssa Adomaitis

BUF 4900 Internship

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The rise of fashion has continuously expanded year to year because of the impact of culture and history. While visiting the symposium for the 50 Years of The Museum at The Fashion Institute of Technology: Fashion is Cultural History, there was an open to discussion with Felicia Caponigri in company with Susan Scafidi and Valerie Steele, who amongst discussed five reason on why Fashion is Cultural History. One reason discussed was how historical events has had an impact on fashion. Next reason was how museum have collection of historical pieces to showcase fashion throughout the years. Another reason discussed is how gender has changed the social norms of fashion. More so, another reasoning is the importance of cultural knowledge and knowing when it’s appropriate to use their designs. Lastly, the use of historical designs that are recreated by current designers. Fashion and culture may change, but history will remain the same.

# Historical Events in Fashion

Throughout the years, historical events have had an impact in fashion trends and what could one wear. During the symposium, Scafidi and Steele discussed an important factor in history which was World War I, this war had changed the vesture in women attire. During World War I, fashion was divided into two section; the pre and after war (Reddy, 2018). During this time society had an impact in women dressing and how the way they dressed classified them as upper or lower class. Before war women attire were more of a natural shape, subtle classier look, then after the war dress attire completely changed. The flapper era 1920’s, women attire was energetic and freeing with shorter dresses, skirts and short hair length. This impacted fashion because it opened new opportunities to expand how women dressed as well as their lifestyle encounters, which is the way one dress and act in their social circle (Lennon, Johnson, & Rudd, 2017). History will always repeat itself through fashion, and fashion will live through history.

## Memories of Fashion. Memories are stored through photographs and the mind; fashion collections are stored in museum so the memories long live. During the symposium, it was discussed that designers would collect fashion pieces and place them in museum as a way to honor other fashion designers and their culture. For example, in Europe museums would collect historical pieces that are from their own culture; as oppose to American museum who are diverse on collecting archives from all over. For Europeans keeping memories of art and fashion one will say is more significant to them because of the privilege of having one of a kind pieces. Visiting exhibitions such as Cristobal Balenciaga’s in Getaria, Spain shows Balenciaga first designs in his home and now turned into a museum to show others how it all began (Menkes, 2011). Keeping historical designs in museum is a way to show appreciation for the designer and their artwork.

Gender and Social Norm. Breaking boundaries on what should a gender could and could not wear is about breaking what social norm wants one to be programmed to. Traditionally, in the past female and male wore clothing that match their gender meaning females with feminine attire and male with masculine attire. Now a days, time and fashion have evolved into becoming androgynous in the social norm. For example, Yves Saint Laurent “Le Smoking” collection which showcased a woman wearing a suit; but suits were only worn by males (Akdemir, 2018). It’s all about breaking boundaries on what one could wear, and as time has evolved, so has fashion in the social norm of gender.

Relativity of Culture. Learning the culture, tradition, and beliefs in a place where one does not know the history is important to understand in fashion. Now a days, brands are having trouble understanding the concept of culture relativity and how to appropriately go about with their designs. During 2018 Fall Winter show, Gucci showcased a turtleneck sweater, but not jus any turtleneck sweater; a blackface sweater (Skvaril, 2019). This is what called lack of knowledge in one culture, this is simply racist and no sympathy for a culture who have gone threw years of slavery as well as discrimination for being people of color. This in no shape or form okay to even cross one mind and think that it’s okay to come out without thinking of the consequences that occur. It should be an eye opener to designers who have been in the industry for a long time and even for upcoming designers to learn a culture tradition, beliefs and the yes’s and no of what they can incorporate in designs.

**Influences in Fashion.** History influences fashion trend of today, because designers from this era would use historical items and reinvent it in their designs. Bringing back historical designs is a way to remind consumers the importance of appreciating how a piece of clothing is cut, the pattern, the placement of a material can help bring back memories. Bibhu Mohapatra, for his Fall 2019 ready- to-wear; designed his eveningwear by his inspiration of “ Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland” (Borrelli-Persson, 2019). The inspiration came from the gardens and the setting of the location, and Mohapatra took it upon his creativity and created eveningwear that consist of shapes using petals. It’s a style that one would not wear everyday, but it holds a historical value because of the creativeness and the story behind the place of choice. Reinventing designs and the usage of historic influences are allowing designers to let their creativity flow.

**Conclusion**

Fashion is just more than creating clothes, selling and making profit. Fashion is culture heritage because of it’s uniqueness of history and how history repeats itself when designs are being created. It shows how memories can help relive a moment and help one learn about why certain clothing were made one way instead of the other. Not only learning about how it is made, but also learning different cultures; learning to respectfully acknowledge one’s beliefs and traditions. Lastly, bringing back creativity and reinventing historical pieces and bring one’s vision to life.

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