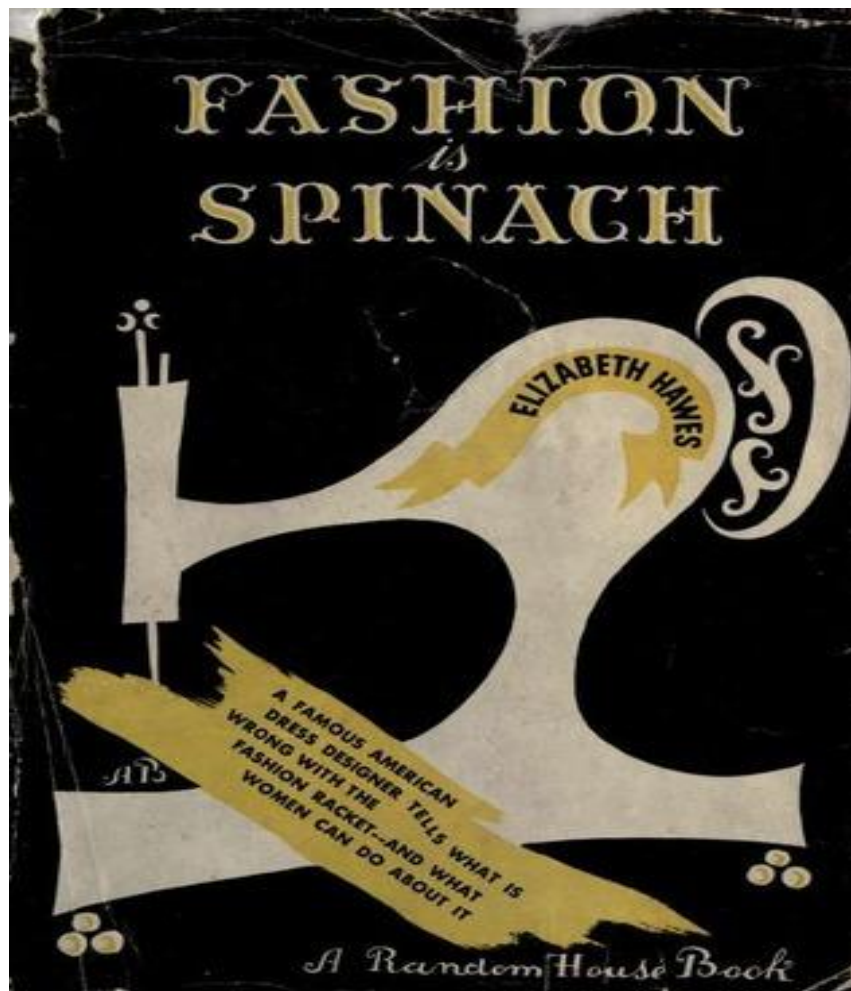


Fashion Is Spinach

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Fashion is Spinach is a book written by Elizabeth Hawes. This book gives readers an interesting and entertaining account of couture and ready to wear fashion in 1938. Throughout the book Fashion is Spinach, the reader is given a glimpse of the everyday life as well as the fashion industry in the 1920's and 1930's. Many readers wonder why she called fashion spinach because according to the text Tuesday Stitches the author was not a huge fan of the leafy vegetable. The book speaks about what Hawes thinks about fashion. She hates spinach and thus is not very fond of fashion either. It speaks about women's fashion and personal style and changes the women wanted in what they were wearing. In the beginning of the book there is a story of a young woman possibly Hawes herself who works in the fashion industry. She speaks about her personal life, her move to Paris and a chance to get into the couture industry and get a closer look and better understanding of what it was about. Throughout the book she speaks about having very little in life to having huge success later. She speaks about her experiences in the couture industry as she moved from job to job and learns many things along the way. She eventually returns to the United States and starts her own very successful design house which was a huge accomplishment. The second part of the book speaks about her design houses and many experiences that led her to be a pioneer in the ready to wear fashion industry and her contributions to the industry. She was a very creative, talented and outspoken woman who was not shy to express her views and opinions. It was this that made her into the great success she had become. The book provides a fun and interesting treat for all fashion lovers. It demonstrates Hawes feelings and views about women's clothing and its functionality. She believed that the body and the clothing worn must work together. Hawes wanted to bring stylish clothing with an "American sensibility". In other words all women deserved to have beautiful, comfortable and functional clothes. Her goal was to create simple and practical designs made of quality fabrics that were easy to wear. Her guiding philosophy was that "there is a difference between fashion and style". She believed that when one dresses to fit their own

self it lasts and becomes their style which is timeless and classic.

In this paper I will discuss and demonstrate my appreciation for the magnificent work Elizabeth Hawes did throughout her career . Her ability to combine politics and fashion and her multiple books and her couture and ready made fashion designs was brilliant according to Jamie of the Courtaid Clinic. Working in Paris in the 1920's as a sketcher and copying couture design,she sent a lot of information on trends back to America. It is compelling how her tensions and interests influenced her work. She combined socialist ideals with a dress business while her writing reflected her inspirations derived from the fashion industry. According to Tuesdaystich, Elizabeth Hawes was an American clothing designer and who was an inspirational and outspoken critic of the fashion industry . She was a champion of ready to wear clothing and defended people's right to have and wear clothes they desired rather than the clothes dictated by the fashion and the current trade. Hawes finds that the whole concept of fashion as an idea that clothes must change every six months and that keeping up with these changes is an important part of a woman's life. Hawes wanted well designed clothes that suit the woman wearing them and will last a long time. She recognized that the couture styles she created were not affordable to majority of American women and then explored various options while trying to figure out how mass production works.

The onset of World War II had a big impact on Hawes and awakened her social conscience and effected her role in the fashion industry. She came to believe that being a fashion designer may not be an appropriate career choice for her at that time and shut down her business. Instead, she became involved in writing for the new left wing newspaper. In 1943, she took a job in a factory for three months and then relocated to Detroit to work for the United Auto Worker's Union. According to the text in lovetoknow.com she wrote for the Detroit free press. Her hard work during the war resulted in her book entitled Why Women Cry. She made the last attempt in the fashion business and reopened Hawes Inc for eleven months .

In the first half of the book, Hawes talks about a woman who works in the fashion industry. She tells her own story of moving to Paris and getting an inside look at the couture industry. At the end of her time in Paris, she returns to the United States and opens up one of the first American design houses. As per TuesdayStitches.com, the second half of the book talks about Hawes design house and her experiences with running a made to order house and the work she did for the ready to wear industry. Throughout the book, she discusses her experiences working in the couture house and her experiences in the fashion industry.

Elizabeth Hawes enjoyed a diverse career that started from being a copyist in the haute couture salons in Paris in the 1920's. She sketched the most latest french fashions to be copied back home in the American companies. According to womenhistory.org, Hawes took on many different roles throughout her lifetime. She was a journalist, an author and was outspoken politically engaged advocate for women's rights. Hawes accomplished a lot in her career but her most successful was the drop of her namesake line in 1930 earning her a huge reputation for innovative fashion. She eventually retired from the fashion world but her legacy continued in fashion and style after she wrote a book entitled Fashion is Spinach. According to Hawes, style was about sharpening an authentic, appropriate and personal look. She said "style was that thing which being looked back upon after a century, gives you a fundamental feeling of a certain period in history. Style gives you shorts for tennis because they are practical . Style takes away the wasp waited corset when women get free and active. Howes also believed one should feel free to wear whatever makes them happy. Her goal was to encourage the American fashion industry to create clothing accesible to all American women that actually suited their lifestyles. The book provides an important insight into the fashion industry in the 1920's and 1930's and highlights a huge number of issues that would influence the changing scenary of the American fashion industry in the 20's century. Hawes lived and started her career throughout the time when the Soviet Union still existed . She traveled to ther to explore her growing interest in mass produced clothing. She

showed some of her designs to members of the Soviet state clothing brand. She was accompanied by a theatrical director whom she married . Later that year, she published her book *Fashion Is Spinach*. This was a breaking point for Hawes. The book discussed how women are manipulated by the fashion industry. According to Glamourdize.com, she stated” fashion is a parasite on style – a horrible little man who tells you last winter's coat may be in perfect condition but you cant wear it because it has a belt.”

Hawes published numerous books throughout her lifetime. The subjects discussed in these books demonstrated her different interests and causes including gender equality, workers rights and fashion ethics. Elizabeth Hawes created simple, unique, elegant and practical garments for women. According to the article”Pandora”, her designs were smart and timeless. They remained stylish and contemporary during the early 1930's and through the late 1940's due to her choice of quality of material and simplicity of the design. She was instrumental in being able to drape the fabrics on the body and creatively pieced together as beautiful works of art. Hawes was very committed to the idea that “ form follows function. The most important hallmark in her designs was the desire to make clothes that were stylish, easy to move and to incorporate breathable fabrics that were easy to wear. According to Pandora, she focused on construction and comfort, rather than embellishment. She incorporated a variety of interesting fabric combinations and construction techniques. She was uniquely successful in using somewhat complex positions to create visual interest in the best designed ready to wear clothing for women. According to the covtaid.org because of the work that Hawes did, she was able to reflect on her experiences in ways that are fascinating to see now. *Fashion is Spinach* is a is entertaining but is a sharp and opinionated critique of the ways women are sold fashion rather than being encouraged to develop longevity through personal style. Hawes states that style gives the feeling of the period and the changes in the point of view. According to fashionencyclopedia.com/elizabethhawes, Hawes firmly believed that men and women were clothing conformists. She explained that the system worked

against the consumer. She disliked seeing women in particular, wear uncomfortable clothing which cost more than they are worth. Hawes believed that clothing should be an expression of fantasy and personality. She felt that the most important thing was to dress to please yourself. She inspired and motivated men and women to dress according to what they love instead of clothes that were dictated to be fashionable.



CITATION PAGE

1- Website- Metmuseum.org / Article Name- "The Moonstone" / Author- Elizabeth Hawes / Published 2009

2- Website- Tandfonline.com / Article Name- Fashion Is Spinach, but style is politics / Author- Sarah E. Cornish / Published Nov 14, 2017

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4- Website- stylestakesproject.wordpress.com / Article Name- The Style Stakes and Other Research Projects / Author- StylesTakesProject / Published Jan 20th, 2014

5- Website- fashion-history.lovetoknow.com / Article Name- Elizabeth Hawes/ Author- Melinda Watt / Published Nov 17th, 2015