

THE SEMIOTIC DIMENSION OF SOME OF THE FUNCTIONAL AND ESTHETIC VALUES OF THE WOMEN'S COSTUMES IN MODERN ERAS

Safia Abdelaziz Kotb Saroukh

Prof. Dr., Textiles and Clothing, Dept. of Home Economics, Faculty of Agriculture,
Alexandria University, EGYPT, safiasaroukh@hotmail.com

Abstract

The women's costume has gone through a number of different stages during modern eras, starting from the seventeenth century until the twentieth century. Women's fashion has evolved and moved through the modern eras in Spain and then to France which are the leaders of fashion until the present time. The fashion then moved to England later. This evolution in the fashion of women's outfit has a semiotic dimension that appeared through the look of the outfit and specifically here in this research - the shape of the clothes, and this is reflected in the meanings and symbols displayed by the shape of the clothing influenced by social and economic conditions..

Based on what the women's fashion shows of implicit symbols, meanings and connotations, it was necessary to highlight the semiotic dimension of the clothes to get to these silent linguistic meanings. The research problem lies in the fact that the way the women dressed, throughout the history, was closely tied to its symbols and connotations that gives a semiotic dimension to functional values, which are represented in modesty, and esthetic values, which are represented in adornment, that led to the need to highlight the semiotic dimension of fashion to get to meanings and silent linguistic connotations that women's fashion reveal through the analytical and historical study on the way the women dressed throughout modern eras.

The research aimed to study the unique characteristics of women's clothes in modern eras and elucidate the symbolic connotation of the way the women dressed in modern eras and its relation with the functional values, which are represented in modesty, and the esthetic values, which are represented in adornment, through a semiotic perspective. The research sample represented four clothing styles for each of the four centuries in the modern times; starting from the seventeenth century until the twentieth century and this research adopted the historical and analytical method.

The research results showed that the concept of modesty and adornment has changed over the modern times, and demonstrated in the first centuries the meanings of luxury, well-being, opulence, wide open spaces in the palaces and the good economic situation. Also, it defined the modesty as a way of covering the whole body. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, it represented the meanings of freedom and working women. Modesty was viewed as a way of covering the chastity and adornment. The semiotic was manifested in the attractiveness of the exposed areas of a woman's body. At the end, it is clear that no one wears fashion but they wear the meanings behind this fashion.

Keywords: Semiotic dimension, women clothing fashion, modern eras, historical costumes.