FASHION: AN OBJECT AND A PROCESS

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ABSTRACT: Fashion is a culturally endorsed form of expression. It belongs to a particular material or non-material phenomenon, which is discernible at any given time and changes over time within a social system or group of associated individuals. In contemporary pecuniary culture "fashion" is an influence to major consumer purchase decisions in products such as automobiles, furniture, home furnishings, and housing architectural design and foods selections. The dissemination and acceptance of ideological movements, educational practices, scientific pursuits, and emerging lifestyles are forces of fashion directly influential to the fashion acceptance process. The central objective of this study is to define basic constructs and structured concepts which delineate a contemporary theory of fashion. Fashion can be conceptualized both as an object and as a behavioral process. The critical characteristics of fashion include fashion as an object and a process, are defined according to the selected study setting. The study setting was the 16th Century during a period that intensified Sri Lankan Indo Portuguese exchanges depends a lot on uncovering some of the various impulses that energized fashion and its process. The study reveals that the fashion process may be mechanistically characterized as a process of social influence and diffusion. The conceptual basis of the fashion process mechanism is developed based on perspectives from the classical and contemporary literature.

INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF FASHION

An evaluation of the generalized concept of fashion suggests that fashion may be conceptualized on two separate dimensions, the fashion object and the fashion process. These dimensions have separate and distinct connotations: The fashion object, in consumer behavior theory, may be a specific stylistic product, and in some cases a technological/product functional innovation or a consumer service. As a non-material "social" product, the object might be any behavioral practice or ideological philosophy. The fashion process is a mechanism of stages by which a potential fashion object moves from its creation to public presentation and public acceptance. In the fashion process, a potential fashion object is introduced to the members of a social system, it is adopted by certain leading individuals frequently referred to as innovators, and is ultimately diffused to other social system members to a certain level of acceptance. The fashion process represents a dynamic mechanism by which the object ultimately emerges as an accepted or rejected fashion. Sproles (1974)

METHODOLOGY

Data for this research was gathered from many original historical literary records, texts, and pictorials from temple murals and museum exhibits pertaining to the period. The study starts with a systematic sequence of observational studies of qualitative research method. Validity of data were confirmed at the beginning of the study by cross checking the recorded visuals and compared with the existed

literature. Gathered data was sorted and analyzed in a systematic manner. The qualitative method was adopted for the research. Sequence of observational studies with temple paintings, wood, ivory carvings, and sculptures along with the continuous literature review with use of documented manuscripts, records, published research and inscriptions were used to gather and sort data. Validation was confirmed with cross checking with literary sources and random interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IDENTIFICATION OF THE "FASHION" OBJECT AS A SPECIFIC STYLISTIC PRODUCT

Five major stylistic characters were identified in the research such as volume, knot, pleat, fold, and drape. The dresses of royalties and elite were stylized with ample volume .The ample volume emphasized extravagant dress silhouette (dress shape) by using two methods. The first method was usage of considerable amount of layers of fabrics by wrapped around the lower body. The elite male lower body dress known as *mul anduma* is a creation of amalgamation of several fabric layers. The *thuppottiya* is a white cloth of eight or nine cubits long made two pieces neatly joined up the middle: single widths are called *paday* and measure six or seven cubits in length and four to six spans in breadth.(Ranathunga 2015,63p)The second method was that some of the items of dress were an intentionally created in large scale manner such as the sleeves of King's upper body dress (*Juan Hette* or jacket) and elite male upper body dress (jacket). The queen's lower body dress comprises of many layers of fabrics created enormous volume at the rear of female body.

The special dress item known as kerchief or *mottappiliya* (kind of a shawl) which covers the whole body of elite female and queens created extra volume to the body enhances feminine abstract silhouette. Knots are seen as common stylistic elements of royal and elite unisex fashion which highlighted apparent height of the male and female body significantly. Twisting and coiling ends of fabric of long lower body dress of royalty and elite make varieties of knots to the silhouette.

Pleats create textural effect to the surface of the long lower dress of royalty and elite. It also added value to visualization the form of dress. Multiple ripples of pleats validated ultimate delicacy of fabrics. Pleats applied to the middle below the navel of the both sexes enhance horizontal axis of the body. Firm creases of pleats flows downwards by gradually increasing the gap of each line of the pleat. As the wearer moves the body the pleated section expands and created extra space to the body.

In addition to a deliberate attempt at design, the form and the structures were changed and organized by internal explicit design units as folding. The folding method incorporated by frilling, and tucking. Folds depicted in fashions of dress show how it manipulates the fabric to express creative forms within the fabric. Fold constitutes a move from effective to affective spaces; folding is a description of activity, intended to flow smoothly and continually with no evidence of ambiguity of interruption' (Bradley Quinn, 2003) Styled folds that have been identified as uncommon beauty of King's and queen's costumes. The folds can be classified according to the length in three ways; long, medium and short fold.

Draping is a stylistic specific method of arranging the lower body cloth which fit to the human body. Coomaraswamy (1913, 195) states that 'needless to remark, there is much art in wearing garments which are not fastened by any stitch, pin or knot". In reality the relation between the classical female body and its drapery is somehow always more complex. The gracefulness or the impressiveness arises because of the tension created between the plumb- downward drapery of the costume and absolutely straight posture of the upper body of the females.

THE FASHION OBJECT HAS SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY, EGO GRATIFICATION, STATUS SYMBOLISM, AND OTHER PSYCHO-SOCIAL QUALITIES.

The object of fashion is seen to be endowed with certain timeless qualities. It pursues social acceptability, ego gratification of the wearer, status symbolism, and psycho social qualities. King Wimaladharmasooriya 1(1592- 1604AD) the first King of Kandy was gained much social acceptance from the westerners (Portuguese) by wearing upper body stitched coat and the inhabitance of country by wearing an unstitched long cloth for the lower body even though he was fascinated full of western concepts and lover of western culture. (Paranavithana1997, 30) His unstitched cloth of lower body signified status symbol of a true Buddhist King. In the meantime the King was bond to follow the dress traditions in the society as he always obeyed the Sinhalese tradition which testified his sovereignty. The social characteristics of the fashion object may constitute the critical motivations for object acceptance. According to Paranavithana (1997, 39) King Wimaladharmasooriya 1 was fond of collecting Spanish chairs tables and decorated tapestries. The King arranged his great hall according to the western manner. Prince Wijayapala 1634- 1654 Prince of Matale (Brother of Rajasinghe 11) was self-satisfied with his adaptation to the Portuguese way of life. He dressed as a westerner and lived as a westerner. His personal appearance has been preserved by an eye witness, Captain Joao Ribeiro's statements proved that psycho social qualities of Prince Wijayapala. Pieris (1927,31) states that "Fransisco Negrao who taught me read and write, under his instructions I learned very good customs and etiquettes and some special habits which royal person employ Though I'm a Chingala by blood , I'm a Portuguese in my ways and my affections." In any given period of time, the "current" or "acceptable" fashion objects are subject to defined by public "tastes." Also the fashion objects of any given time symbolize the "collective tastes" of social system members who have adopted the fashion object.

FASHION BECOMES "EXCLUSIVE"

When initially introduced, the fashion object is characterized by conspicuous newness and novelty, and therefore becomes "exclusive" when compared to existing and accepted fashion objects. The fashion line of the royalties during 16th Century accompanied luxurious textile materials such as brocade, velvet, silk and fine cotton for their dresses. Ferguson (1907) also mentions about the king's dress during the sixteenth century. He says that the "king was clad in a silken *bajo. Bajo* is a fashion of a closed jacket and girt with a cloth likewise of silken which reached to his knees…" Queyroz (1930, 179) in reporting the Portuguese Ambassador's first audience with the Sinhalese King in AD 1505 the royal attire of king Dharma Parakramabahu IX (1489-1513 AD) is described thus; 'he was girt with a cloth of

silver, the ends of which fell on his feet, which were shod with sandals studded with rubies.' Very often the King utilized silk material in terms of different purposes related to his dressing purposes. It is noted in "Vijayantatantraya" that when the king is crowned a length of white silk cloth is used to wrap the knot of hair on his head. (Jayasooriya 2001, 262, v 97) Its length should be 12 cubits. The two descriptions have been given by Pieris (Pieris 1992, 39) and Queyroz (1930, 181) and need to be considered in parallel with the indications given by the Vijayanthathanthaya shilpa text. Pieris noticed that the king wore a kind of *mitre,* studded with gems and large pearls whereas Queyroz has described the same crown as a brocade *mitre* with precious stones with large pearls and two gold horns. These two descriptions show some differences regarding the outer appearance of the crown while showing some similarities regarding inlayed stones.

Figure 1.   *Figure 2.*   *Figure 3.*

Figure 4

 King Joao of Portugal Prince Dharmapala King Mayadunne King Raigam Bandara Of Kotte Of Seethawaka Of Raigama

UNDESTANDING THE PROCESS OF FASHION

The emergence of an object as an accepted fashion in society is a complex and multi-faceted behavioral process. Furthermore the fashion process considered as an interacting behavioral system which characterized by basic elements. The adopters or the individuals accept the fashion object in their day-to-day life-style or behavioral patterns.

ADOPTERS NEED MOTIVATIONS FOR ADOPTION.

The motivations for adoption may range from a variety of psycho-social satisfactions which are achieved by object adoption, to a perception of the object's superior functional quality. It is visible that the process of influencing western dress by the

Kings of 16th Century as an impact of social satisfactions. The very subtle manipulations of some western dress features that were aesthetically blended with Sri Lankan sartorial sense are highly remarkable. Direct representations of different dresses and details are not much, instead the King adapted to the Portuguese long coat or *Cabaya*. King Wimaladharmasooriya and Prince Dharmapala adapted the Portuguese style jacket and long jacket called cabaya with the so- called Sinhala long piece of cloth. Wearing a long *cabaya* or the jacket in the context of Portuguese adherence is a sign of both their societies, but also visible to their participation in a cultural tradition.

Figure 1 shows that King Joao wore long trousers as a lower body dress. These trousers were called *calcao* or breeches. He wore a pair of shoes with stockings. His shirt had long sleeves and he wore a long cloak. Figure 2 shows Prince Dharmapala wearing a long coat over a long piece of cloth after he was crowned as being similar to that of the Portuguese king. He is swearing an oath of loyalty to the Portuguese crowned he was clad in an over-coat to resemble and obey the Portuguese crowned. The edge of the coat is decorated with some beads. It was said that there was an exchange of *cabaya* and a type of a headdress of Portuguese dignitaries with the Sinhalese delegation. Before the coronation took place, "the Sinhalese delegation had to compliment the king's gesture exchanging their usual costumes for crimson *cabaya* and white *toucas.* The word touca refer to the turban. (Pieris 1992, 51) Figure 3 and 4 shows two grandfathers of Prince Dharmapala .King Raigam Bandara and King Mayadunne. They wore long sleeved jackets for the upper body and wore long cloths with pointed edges for the lower body. Both jackets have simple circular neck line and open in front. They wore some heavy earrings and wore turban styled headdress.

CONCLUSION

The dimensions of change over time, the manifestation of which is the presentation of new alternative fashion objects to a social system of potential adopters, ultimately resulting in a shift in popularity from the existing fashion objects to the newly emerging fashion objects. Change is implicit and critical to the fashion process. Changes which occur over time include change in the object, change among the individuals adopting, and change in the level of acceptance of the various competing fashion objects.

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