

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH COSTUME

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The Greeks and the Chinese believed that Man first covered his body for some physical reason, particularly to protect himself from the elements, while the Bible, ethnologists have invoked psychological reasons: modesty in the case of the ancients, and the ideas of taboo, magical influence and the desire to please for the moderns. Costume at any rate, must have fulfilled a function beyond that of simple utility. Costume helps inspire fear or impose authority: for a chieftain costume embodies attributes expressing for his power, while a warrior's costume must enhance his physical superiority and suggest that he is superhuman. Costume also came to be an expression of social caste and material prosperity. Finally, costume can possess a religious significance that combines various elements: an actual or symbolic identification with a god, and the desire to express this in earthly life, the desire to increase the wearer's authority. When we consider the causes of emergence of these functions of costume, we see that they appear as the result of essential elements of these civilizations, which gradually took shape out of an interplay of opposing forces, progress on the one hand, and on the other, reaction or simply stability.

The principal causes behind the rapid, diversified development of English costume were the constant exchanges that mark the development of the general economy in England.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century the evolution from medieval to modern costume began to take place in England, as in all Western Europe. At this time the prestige of Spain had then reached its highest point and continued until almost the end of the century. Under Elizabeth I, 1558–1603 and James I, 1603–1625, extremely luxurious, richly decorated garments still remained under this Hispanic influence, which gave them a stiff, artificial appearance. Women wore very tight bodices with tight sleeves and excessively wide skirts. English costume historians judge that towards 1570-1580 women's costume, more elaborately worked and tending to be made in fresh spring colours, may reflect the Queen's efforts to recapture her fading charms. Men dressed extravagantly with plumed toques, very high collars and wide sleeves.

When Spanish influence declined in elegant society, fashion turned towards other foreign modes. Among all these modes, French fashion seems to have been the most widely followed at court and among the upper classes.

However, these borrowings from abroad and imports must not make us forget the clothing produced by England herself. England imported only luxury textiles intended for the wealthy classes, while ordinary people dressed in local products.

During the first quarter of the seventeenth century we see the predilection for subdued colours, the increasing use of lace, the higher position of the waist and, in general, a less rigid outline. The knitting machine, invented by the Rev. William Lee, had been refused by Elizabeth and tried out unsuccessfully in France by Henri IV; Lee died in poverty in Paris in 1610. However, this industry began to develop in the Midlands. It was in order to support English industry that, towards 1666 Charles II agreed to abandon the over-luxurious French fashions in favour of a new purely national style of clothing. But this attempt failed.

In eighteenth century English costume evolved under the influence of customs, ideas and industrial and trading conditions that reflected an advanced economic development. The taste for the countryside, the passion for hunting and shooting and the general practice of outdoor games were more widespread there than in other countries. As early as 1731 newspapers criticized the «rustic mode» of women who, according to them, «desired to insinuate the idea of innocence and rusticity». Gentlemen did their best to resemble servants and coachmen. Later, we see even Charles James Fox launch casual clothes in political circles, and foreign visitors gained the impression of «informal dress» at the House of Commons. On the whole, eighteenth century English costume presents a clearly national character, reflecting a climate of opinion which refused to admit French superiority in any field, even in fashion.

Towards 1810 we see the influence of Romantic literature which brought Walter Scott's Middle Ages and Renaissance into fashion. Numerous fashion engravings show evening toilettes with more sharply defined waists and fuller backs; they fell less straight than did French models, and even had short trains. This change resulted from the reappearance of the corset in 1810.

British taste scarcely underwent any modification until the zenith of the *crinoline* adopted by Queen Victoria. Taine, during his stay in London, made this rather severe judgment: «...colours are outrageously crude and figures lack grace. Crinolines are too heavily hooped, hats are overloaded and hair is too shiny, the general effect bad, ill-made, ill-arranged and badly worn...»

It was in England that the crinoline met with the most violent opposition in its early days; a curious «anti-crinolinists» reaction joined with an attempt to introduce the rational reform of women's costume by replacing the full skirt with long, full trousers, tightly belted at the waist as bloomers, took their name from the originator of this reform, the American Mrs. Amelia Bloomer. Women even wore bloomers in the streets. This initiative caused considerable agitation in England, where it was considered an attack on the sanctity of the home and liable to lead to the emancipation of women and the degradation of men. Mrs. Bloomer, with the support of doctors, replied by asking why the

idea of women in long trousers, since it was generally accepted that many men north of the Tweed wore skirts, some of which were ridiculously short. Mrs. Bloomer's experiment, which failed in the face of ridicule, was merely premature. It should not be forgotten when we recall the various attempts to «masculinize» women's costume.

In an extremely condensed and simplified form it can be said there that the major influences on the 20th century have been the two world wars. During the Second World War the women suddenly found that they had to do men's jobs, so women began to wear trousers. After the shortages and rationing of the Second World War the 50th and 60th were a time of prosperity and fashion flourished. The 50th were followed by the 60th fashion for long hair for men introduced by the Beatles. Then came a hippy movement of the 70th. But these phases were comparatively short-lived. And what about the late 80s and 90s? We can wear what we like! Long skirts, short skirts, long hair, short hair. Does anybody really care any more? It has become impossible to make a distinction between styles that will last, trends that will grow, and the passing fancies of a season. Yet fashion will always remain both a changing and an eternal form of human expression.

ПРАВОВОЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ КОММЕРЧЕСКИХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЙ С ИНОСТРАННЫМИ ИНВЕСТИЦИЯМИ. ПРИНЯТИЕ ЗАКОНА ОБ ИЗМЕНЕНИЯХ В ИНВЕСТИЦИОННЫЙ КОДЕКС РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ

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Ввиду особого статуса, правовое положение коммерческих организаций с иностранными инвестициями определяется совокупностью льгот и гарантий, которыми они обладают на территории Республики Беларусь, являясь одновременно в соответствии с белорусским законодательством белорусскими юридическими лицами.

Необходимо отметить, что в современных условиях иностранные инвесторы при регистрации коммерческих организаций с иностранными инвестициями обращают внимание главным образом не на выгодность, а на стабильность предоставляемого им правового режима.

Несмотря на значительное число организаций с иностранными инвестициями, действующих на территории Республики Беларусь (в 2004 году приблизительно 3159), следует отметить, что по так называемому индексу инвестиционной привлекательности, основываясь на мировой практике – Беларусь занимает в этой области недостаточно высокое место среди так называемых инвестиционно-привлекательных стран. По-