

ABSTRACT

Early humans were relatively naked, thin skinned and hairless and thus were quite defenseless against any kind of harmful elements. He lived in caves and under rocky cliffs which provided protection but were stationary; moreover, in early stages they depend on food and shelter rather than clothes. This paper serves in unveiling the fashion concepts, the journey from the prehistoric man's clothing needs and theory to the current fashion trends globally. The paper will be an eyeopener to fashion graduates yearning to understand the beginning of clothing. This also provokes many fashion graduates to understand and follow the fashion cycle and research scholars to identify the potential areas for designing and product development.

Keywords: body modification, body coloring, tattooing, origin of clothing, theory on clothing.

I. INTRODUCTION

Three million years ago, Neanderthal man was seen with clothing materials that are made by recycling the hides of animals post hunting. (Fig 1) Beautification and accessorizing was done aesthetically using the leftover parts, animal hair, skin, parts of animals, nails and tooth, fresh leaves and dried nuts. Clothing in the beginning was seen as a medium for protection against harsh climatic conditions, animals and insect bites along with being an expression of modesty. As civilization evolved clothing was set as a standard for classism (regionality) and social status. [1,2]



Fig 1. Clothing of Neanderthal Man

II. BEGINNING OF COSTUME

The development of new materials for use as covering or ornament has played a major role in the history of clothing. In early prehistoric times, the range of materials for clothing was small. Until about 10,000 years ago, people used animal skins for clothing. Single skins were worn as capes thrown around the shoulders; two skins fastened together at the shoulder made a simple garment. Fitted clothes, such as trousers or a parka (an outer garment with a hood - something like a jerkin with hood), were also made from animal skins. Simple needles made out of animal bone, found in many sites in Europe and Asia, provide evidence of sewn leather and fur garments from at least 30,000 years ago. However, only with the development of textile technology did greater variety become possible.

Tens of thousands of years ago, early humans learned to obtain fibers from wild plants, such as wild flax, hemp, and nettles. Such fibers could be spun into thread and made into cloth textiles. People began to weave fabric

during the Neolithic Era, a period that began around 8000 BC. Evidence of early weaving comes from fragments of flax fibers found in Switzerland. In some cultures, people made cloth without weaving, by pounding sheets of bark to produce a soft, flexible textile. The development of agriculture led to the domestication of fiber plants, such as cotton, hemp, and flax. The production of textiles requires the ability to process fibers, spin them into thread, and make cloth from the thread. Cloth can be made in a variety of ways, such as knotting, knitting, and braiding, but most cloth is made by weaving.

Weaving is usually done on a loom that holds long threads (called the warp) under uniform tension so that other threads (the woof or weft) can be inserted over and under them. Many different types and patterns of weaving are possible, depending on the fibre used and the arrangement of the threads. Ancient Egyptians wove their earliest textiles from flax, which produced linen; in southern Europe, the earliest textiles came from wool; in China, from silk; and in India, Peru, and Cambodia, from cotton. From the earliest recordings of history, it is evident that they had made use of the local sources such as animal skins, leaves, twigs and vegetable dyes which are still in practice in some of the tribal regions of the world.

Some of the inventions of stones age include draping animal hide (skin) clothing, washing of garments, detergent, dyes, bleaching, tanning (cleaning) hides, shoes, the needle, the awl (needle like), sewn animal hide clothing, domestication of livestock, cultivation of crops, spinning, hand weaving and woven plant-fiber cloth. Some school of thought believes that blood marks created during hunting was the basic for men to paint their bodies. This added beauty and identification to one self. Later family living in an agricultural period when flocks and herds were reared and thus the weaving of wool and flax came into existence. [3-5]

III. BODY ORNAMENTATION

The impulse towards dress was derived from body ornamentation. Various people in many parts have been worn a bit of bone, wood or stone run through a hole in the lips, nose or ears. During the war, the leader wore necklace made of teeth, bone or polished stone and his waist belt made of skin. It is the after this the art of weaving was explored and thus tunic, waist jacket was all developed. It is in this manner that waist belt made of feathers and bones were gradually developed into apron which later got transformed into modern skirt. The protective dress namely wearing of skins, fur and bark for protection came after ages of decoration and ornamentation. [6-10]

IV. BODY MODIFICATION

Historical evidences it proves the fact that the earliest method of clothing was changing one's physical structure. This was considered as a means of beautifying oneself and a very common practice among the tribal community. The custom of wearing large circular lip plated by the Kichepo women of Sudan. (Fig 2.a) Reshaping of the soft skull of the infants by compressing it between two wooden planks, resulting in a long oval face. The Chinese had a very famous body modification practice termed as Lotus foot. This ancient custom which is considered as the ultimate feminine beauty and eroticism. The foot of female infant is tied tightly resulting a manmade artificial heel, called as "lotus foot". (Fig 2.b) [11-16]



*Fig 2. (a) Lip Plate of Kichepo Women (South Sudan)
(b). Lotus Feet – body modification technique of Japanese*

V. BODY SCARIFICATION

Sooner, another form of body decoration found expression in the form of cutting edge and knife blade made of bone, thorn, flint and other stones with fine points. It was considered as an indication of status and community among African tribes. Elaborate incisions in a delicate pattern are made in certain parts of a person's body and natural skin irritants rubbed into the skin causing scars and raised pater like marks on the body. (Fig. 3) The primitive fashion leader amused himself by cutting and slashing his skin in form of patters. This was followed by tattooing a method of marking the skin with slight incisions and adding color to it. This form of decoration expressed itself in elaborate pattern. [17-18]



Fig. 3. Body scarification of African Tribes

VI. BODY TATTOOING

Decorating body with inks and puncturing nerves to create a dark tone on the skin was a practice ever since the Neolithic times. (Fig. 4) Mummified bodies have shown evidence of the art and its elaborate designs used. This process is a well-known means of body decoration in almost all tribes irrespective of their nationality. It involves a permanent change in body base and color which creates a permanent mark on the skin. The custom is very common among South sea Islanders, the Burmese, the Chinese and Japanese who are very specialized in creating various elaborate and intricate designs in tattooing. It began as a sign of barbarian culture and showcasing the images of folk heroes. As a sign of penalizing Greeks used tattooing on their prisoners. [19-22]



Fig 4. Tattooing

VII. BODY PAINTING:

This was the most common type of body decoration used which is considered as the earliest costume. painting or coloring of the body was done out using clay, wood powder, oil and colored pigments from parts of the plant, some tribes painted their bodies with blood. The days of crude face painting does not belong to the primitive part. However, the people who lived in those times had a practice of decorating the face using the colors of white ochre, red and yellow ochre as small spots on their body on special occasions.



Fig. 5. Body Painting

They painted their body in pale green during mourning (death ceremony), white for festive occasion, yellow as indication of hi-fashion and rhythmic patterns of yellow, red and blue during war. Girls of the Congolese tribes oil themselves all over and dust on red powered cam wood. Japanese “Geisba” girls paint their face with rice powder and apply rose petal rouge on their cheeks and lower lips. Savage of Australian apply white, red, yellow dots on his face daily and apply it all over his body on special occasions. During mourning the Adamese of Andaman Islands paint their body in pale green as a sign of the occasion. During the war, the leader wore necklace made of teeth, bone or polished stone and his waist belt made of skin. It is the after this the art of weaving was explored and thus tunic, waist jacket was all developed. It is in this manner that waist belt made of feathers and bones were gradually developed into apron which later got transformed into modern skirt. The protective dress namely wearing of skins, fur and bark for protection came after ages of decoration and ornamentation. [23-25]

VIII. THEORY ON EVOLUTION OF CLOTHING

Tracing back to some historical evidences, anthropologists (people who study on humanities) and few more scientists framed the theories on Origin of Clothing (Fig 6.) and factors that affect clothing [26-27] In a brief they are discussed below:



Fig. 6. Theory by A.H. Maslow on Theory on Origin of Clothing

- 1. Protection theory (or Climate theory)** – which is that human beings invented clothes in order to accommodate themselves to climates they encountered. They wore various amounts of clothes depending on climates. Animal skin – warmth and insulation, leaves or barks to cover genital sex organs, skin tied at feet for warmth and comfort during long walks. Shells and other items were placed close to sex organs in belief that it would prevent sterility and pain.
- 2. Modesty theory (or shame theory or the fig leaf theory)** – defines that need for clothing arose when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit (from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden as quoted in

the book of Genesis) which arose the feeling of nudeness and thus the sense of shame which made them cover with few leaves and barks around them.

For example - The women of Botocudo tribe are ashamed when seen without wooden plug in earlobes and lower lip but are unaffected if their breasts are left exposed. Also among the Australian tribe aborigines it is a great shame when seen eating but are perfectly ok if seen naked. In Arab world, history quotes a fact that the women's face must be veiled (covered) but the other parts can be left uncovered also. In western world there has been period in history where it was sinful to expose from ankle to shoulder, while later it was socially accepted that an unmarried woman can expose her breasts rather any part of her body.

3. **Adornment (or decoration theory)** – which is that human beings started to wear clothes in order to express their desires to show how beautiful they are by clothing themselves. Body painting and tattoos done by African races and some tribes in the African continent. It logically states that even before man discovered fashion, apparel he always enjoyed decorating himself for various reasons like social status, Self-beautification or self-image, Sexual attraction and many other aesthetic factors. Among American Indians, braves wear 1 or 2 feathers in his hair and chief will adorn with a elaborate head piece consisting of many beautiful feathers.
4. **Combined need theory:** suggests that clothing evolved as a result of the combination of various needs like safety, protection, self-esteem (your status in the society), self-actualization (clothing as a reflection of what you are) and belongingness (to merge with peer group)

IX. CONCLUSION

The article is a compilation of various body ornamentation techniques adopted by the early men and ends with the theory on origin of clothing. This could be an eye opener for students to understand the fashion and its cycle. It can be compared that today's tattooing, body painting and piercing on ear lobe, brow line and lips are a result of fashion cycle, just like the saying "what goes around, comes down". It can be viewed that it has taken so many painful processes by mankind to evolve into this modest way in which we are today. This advanced civilization should have been the result of pain, tolerance, death and sacrifice along with experimentation and curiosity that has led to everything matter around us comfortable.

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