

## **DRESS IN CULTURE AND CULTURE AS A SIGN SYSTEM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The culture of any society embodies its ideas, customs, and social behavior, often evinced through the arts and other intellectual manifestations. One aspect that is frequently overlooked is that of dress. One of the distinctive features of the dress is that a group of people share a particular pattern or style of dress. The overall style of a dress is a consequence of the culture of that society, and the traditions of that people. The way people dress and adorn the body with a variety of jewelry and the method of arranging cover to the areas of the body is part of the culture. Individuals share the ideas and beliefs in their culture and participate in the social arrangements which guide their lives through the transmission of culture. The objective of the study is to explore the relationship in between dress and culture and to understand dressing a type of human symbolic activity, the creation of signs and a way of giving meaning to everything around. The research reveals changes in contextual boundaries of culture will impact the systems of signs in order to understand the culture which predominates dress communication. The research employs depth observational studies of visuals collected from various sources such as mural paintings belongs to 15<sup>th</sup> Century, wood and stone carvings and visuals from travelers records. To validate data utilized many original sources of information including secondary sources of original records of travelers, research papers and books. Cross-checking with sequence written data with similar visuals established the reliability of data. The study is inductive and utilized qualitative method.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Dress, Culture, Sign, 16th Century*

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### **Article History**

**Received: 20 Jun 2018 / Revised: 30 Aug 2018 / Accepted: 08 Sep 2018**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Culture is a kind of speech embodying messages corded in various forms and requiring decoding, furthermore the meaning of signification may be analogous for those who produce and those who consume signs. Signs act asymmetrically becoming ideological, linked to the maintenance of power. Culture is a framing and communicative medium involved in social practice, It can be used for transforming, storing or preserving social information. It also forms a symbolic medium for social practice, acting dialectically in relation to that practice. It can be regarded as a kind of a text, a silent form of writing and discourses quite literally a channel of reified and objectified expression.

The word culture comes from the Latin word *colere*, meaning to inhabit, to cultivate, to protect and to honor with worship. From this word the word *cultura* developed. For Tylor (1971, 1) Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'

Williams (1981, 13) identified, “Culture is the signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored”.

### **Brief Political History Before and Early Phase of the Portuguese Occupation**

In the early years of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the Portuguese first visited Sri Lanka the island was divided into three major political units and a number of lesser principalities. When the Portuguese had first contacts with Sri Lanka, the kingdom covered the south-western lowlands. In the previous century Kotte exercised effective suzerainty over the rest of the island but since the days of Parakramabahu VI (1411- 1466), it had been gradually losing control over various parts of the island. However, even in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century, it remained the strongest kingdom in Sri Lanka and the King of Kotte still claimed to be the overlord of the whole island. During that time the central highlands of the country were under the rule of a separate monarch. Sometimes after the arrival of the Portuguese, the capital of the hill country was transferred from Gampola to Senkadagala (Kandy). Throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and early 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the primary political objective of the King of Kandy was to secure his independence from the ruler of Kotte. Kandy was less populous and poorer than Kotte and always the King sought foreign alliance or the aid of rebels within Kotte to maintain his position. 197 year's reign of the 8 Kings of Kotte ended with Dharmapala (1551-1597) grandson of Buwanekabahu VII ruling for 46 as a puppet King in the hands of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese first visited Sri Lanka in the East mainly to trade. After that, they visited Sri Lanka and built a fort in Colombo in 1518 and secured a more favorable position by means of a treaty of alliance with the Kings of Kotte. (Silva 1972, 2) In the year 1521 the kingdom of Kotte was partitioned through a revolt of the three sons of King Vijayabahu (1513-1521), Buwanekabahu (1521-1551) Mayadunne and RaigamBandara against their father and put him to death. The eldest Buwanekabahu ruled the Kotte kingdom while at the other two; RaigamBandara ruled Raigama and Mayadunne (1521-1581) ruled Sitawaka. Mayadunne's first attempt to gain power over Kotte in 1526 onwards Buwanekabahu VII was saved by the arrival of the Portuguese expeditionary forces from Goa. Buwanekabahu wanted his grandson to become his successor and made the necessary arrangements with the alliance with the Portuguese. Silva says that (1972, 3) ‘However he never agreed to the complete destruction of his brother's power, or to give up Buddhism, the faith of his people, in order to accept Christianity.’ The young Prince Dharmapala, who was proclaimed King by the Portuguese on his grandfather's death in 1551, was induced to accept Christianity.

### **Foreign Communities Absorbed into the Society**

Bandara or *Pandarans* were immigrants and they merged into noble families of the Gampola kingdom. From the end of the fourteenth-century inscriptions and literary records use the word Bandara (Devaraja 1988, 55). A group of *pantarans* (later known as *Bandara*) came from Kerala in the reign of Bhuvanekabahu VII of Kotte and received land and grants from the King. There were many South Indian elite families who were absorbed into society during this time and it was a common phenomenon. They had close ties with royalty. There were many examples found during the sixteenth century. The prince Sapumal, the adopted son of Parakramabahu VI (1412- 1467) who succeeded to the throne of Kotte in 1467 AD under the name of Buwanakabahu VI (1469-1477) was, according to tradition a son of Pannikal of a princely offspring of a warrior from Malabar (Pathmanathan 1986/87, 78-112) and married a Sinhala princess of Kotte. Serving in the Kings court he had two sons and one daughter. The former prince Sapumal and Jayaweera (1466-1469) (prince Ambulugala) were adopted by the King as his own children. *Brahmins* were also consulted on matters relating to astrology and their help was sought by the rulers for the study, translation and preparation of manuals on

astrology as the work of Pocaracar also called Tenuvaraiperumal suggests as also shown by the evidence from the Devundaradevalesannasa (a grant) issued by Vijayabahu VI (1513-1521) of Kotte in the early years of the sixteenth century. The Shilpa text *Vaijyanthathantra* ( manual ) described the duties and many responsibilities of Brahmins at the consecration ceremony of the King. (Jayasooriya 2001, 261) The description of the coronation of King Buwanekabahu VII was given by Pieris (1992, 66). The King is ready for the consecration; his two queens and the chief *purohita* remain in the area. At the same time, 16 *Brahmans* stand outside the enclosed area. They should intone the mantra. Other Brahmins should carry the fivefold royal insignia. The 16 Brahmins should take up the 16 auspicious weapons. The King should be consecrated by the *purohita* and the chief queen. The *purohita* should place the crown on the head of the King and later give the sword”.

### **Prevailing Culture during the Sixteenth Century before Portuguese Occupation**

The *Salagama*, *Durawa* and the *Karawa* were the three caste groups that emerged during the fifteenth century and absorption into the caste structure of the littoral marked the emergence of a new caste system in Ceylon. Their position in the caste hierarchy has varied with the times. They came to the island in this period, in successive waves of migration which continued well beyond it into the eighteenth century. In the poem *Janawansa* written during the fifteenth century, the *Salagamas* are referred as weavers, but with the passage of time, their caste occupation came to be that of peeling cinnamon and preparing it for the market. (Silva 1981, 91) Furthermore, the Sinhalese literary work *Janavamsa* lists 26 different castes. Silva (1995, 48) mentions that associating caste with a given occupation as done in the *Janavamsa* would be to be uncritical. During the 16<sup>th</sup> Century the temple dance was performed as a feudal service before the king or at the temple. Dancing in honor of a god was considered an act of worship; religious dance performances were held at Hindu temples in the Kotte kingdom. They belonged to the *oli* caste and received many grants from the King. In Medieval society, dancers belonged to the *oli* caste (Coomaraswamy 1956, 23) and they performed ceremonial dances in the processions. The word *oli* (Pieris 1949, 44) has been derived from Chola (Pieris 1949, 222) a South Indian Dravidian term.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

For this study utilized varieties of range of materials including written documents and visuals. Utilized original sources of information such as chronicles, books, original records of foreign travelers, published research pertaining to the area, inscriptions, temple murals, sculptures, stone, wood, and special ivory carving two boxes at present kept in Munich Treasury, Germany used for gather and sort data. The systematic data analysis reveals many new meanings created, which influenced transmission of its “context”. A qualitative method has been adopted for this research. The process of the research is inductive; the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, and theories from details. Reliability of the data was much concerned during data gathering and analysis. Therefore validity was confirmed with cross-checking literary sources along with random interviews with selected scholars, artists, village headmen who were aware of the history of such places and incidents, high priests of the selected temples with gathered images. The study began with in-depth observational studies of temple murals, cloth paintings, wood and stone carvings, sculptures and ivory carvings.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

It was identified that Kotte had a feudal society and the dress was one of the most significant codes govern in culture seems relatively stable, being able to convey the social identity of the wearer firmly and unambiguously. Codes are forms of social knowledge which are derived from social practices and beliefs. Clothes, gems, and jewelry symbolized

power and as imperial gifts by the King to courtiers, princes, foreign delegates. (Barnard 2008, 21) Literary sources record many presents given by the King to his courtiers and foreign delegates. Kings had practiced the gifting of valuable clothes, gems, and jewelry as a medium expression of good-will. Some of the royal grants (*sannas*) mention the presenting of clothes, clothes, and jewelry. The royal grant (*sannasa*) of Perappanmulla mentions that prince Madagoda Duggannai Hiti Bandara of Madampe received a *derisanak* (a special necklace) to be worn around his neck. He also received *samakkattu* (Bell 1920, 36) or robes of honor, and a sheelephant called *Randelias* an appreciation from the King Dharmaparakramabahu IX (1508- 1513AD) of Kotte. A *derisanak* is a valuable special necklace, which hung almost to the waist. It is important to note that this type of necklace was normally presented by Kings as a mark of favor. (Pieris 1992, 44) The *Bombiwela* grant mentions that Jayakadu Senadara was granted ornaments, dress, slaves and many other rich presents. (Bell 1920, 53) During the reign of King ViraParakramabahu VII (Prince Ambulugala 1484-1508 AD) was satisfied with the girl from a royal goldsmith clan from Dambadiva who promised to make the Kings crown as she obeyed the King's order and executed it herself and was presented with *samakkattu* cloths from the royal treasury (*gabada*) to carry out her marriage. Sometimes the King gave precious stones as presents to people. (Paranavithana 2002, 74) During the period of King Buwanekabahu VII (1521-1551 AD), Karawe Warnakulasooriya Pathbandi MuhandiramIllemaide was appointed as MahaMuhandiram and granted an umbrella studded with presents of pearls and another insignia of honor were gifted to him (Sri Lak Indo Studies 30) Furthermore, the King had given several presents not only to local people but also to the foreign Kings and queens. According to Couto, (Pieris 1992, 114) King Buwanekabahu VII (1521-1551 AD), of Kotte to appease the new viceroy whom he had offended, sent him a present of 15,000 parados the viceroy and a large present of jewels to be conveyed as a present to the queen of Portugal. The presents included a large collar of gold set with pearls & rubies with 3 crosses of precious stone pendants with a large stone in the center, a collar of gold set with pearls and cats eyes having in the middle a large cats eye surrounded by rubies, three bracelets of gold set with precious stones, a large ring set with a cat's eye surrounded with rubies and a handsome unset cats-eye. (Pieris 1992, 114) During King Buwanekabahu VII's reign the fleet of Samorin of Calicut, Captain Antonio Barretto, captured a beautiful casket of crystal mounted with gold & gems of Ceylon and containing valuable presents for the queen of Portugal from the King of Ceylon. (Pieris 1992, 76) King Mayadunne sent his four-year-old son to the Portuguese on the neck of his foster mother, accompanied by six men and eight women, with a rich present of the bracelet of gold set with 4 rubies and valued at 80,000 cruzados to appease the King. (Pieris 1992, 84) while the King had given presents to the locals as well as to the foreigners he also received valuable presents from foreign Kings. The Kalyani inscription contains details of the precious fabrics of China which were among the presents sent by the King of Pegu to King Buwanekabahu VII in 1475 AD. The presents are mentioned below: (Pieris 1992, 221)

- 3 pieces of thick embroidered China cloth of white & dark blue
- 2 pieces of plain thick white China cloth
- 2 pieces of green thick embroidered China cloth
- 1 piece of plain green thick China cloth
- 2 pieces of plain black China cloth
- 1 piece of yellow thick embroidered China cloth
- 1 piece of red thin embroidered China cloth of delicate texture

- 20 variegated silk cloths called Patti
- 200 mats wrapped in leather cases

While the Sinhala King received presents from foreign Kings and diplomats, he also received some presents from the local elites too. It is stated that King Buwanekabahu VII received a silk shawl of six cubits in length from NallaAdappaya of Puttalam. The King has expressed his appreciation appointed him Raja Vanniar of Puttalam and presented many villages and allowed him to receive tax from that land and presented gems & tusks of the elephant. King Buwanekabahu VII also received a bluish shawl from KuruKauwarPadawopalashita Ari Maradana Karana Kumara who arrived in Ceylon from kanchipuram. (Sri Lak Indo studies 1977, 30)

Adorning jewelry is part of dressing and many symbolic values contain each item. It is believed that jewels and gems have a vital relationship with the subjects of fortune and health and could harness or influence the powers of nature and the divine. As an individual or social and traditional practice of wearing certain varieties of gems by Kings prevailed throughout history. However, not only the Kings but also other royal members of the court, several categories of people, the common people of the court and elite also followed the same practice and continued the tradition of using jewelry for decorative purposes within their socially prescribed limits. In every culture, jewelry had great importance. It was not used merely to beautify the body, but acted as a store of wealth, marked rituals of life, signified status, conferred respectability and marked the wearers' identity and social rank. Poetical literature has ample examples of using a variety of jewelry on different occasions by different people. The King used special ornaments to adorn the body parallel to his clothing in order to articulate dress styles. The King used two sets of ornaments, personal ornaments (64 ornaments) and the royal insignia. (The Dictionary of world art vol 24; s.v. jewelery) (Perera 1914, 36) The five insignias are considered as treasures to be carefully protected and are sandal (*pakuda*), chowrie (*chamara*), sword, (*khadga*), parasol (*chatra*) and the king's throne (*turban or diadem*). (Ariyapala 1968, 68) It is said that "when the King SakalakalaWallabaRaja (Bell 1920, 36) was summoned to take charge of the army, he sent his parasol and white shield the emblems of royalty and the magnificent jeweled collar, the *derisanamale*, which he wore round his neck. This last the conqueror tied in contempt as a *Virakkala* round his foot and then placed it about the neck of MahantheEkanayakeMudaliya, warned the rebel against trespassing on his Suzerain's forbearance again. (Pieris 1992, 45) *Virakkala* is Tamil in origin for "warrior's anklet" (Bell 1920, 45) This is similar to the South Indian ornament called *virakazhal* which is a bell suspended on a string worn over the calf or just below the knee representing bravery. (Sthapathi 2002, 147) According to this description, that *derisanamale* is quite big and as well as a kind of jeweled collar. Such a *derisana* belonging to King Keerthi Sri Rajasinha has been placed at the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy. The Crown is one of the most essential parts of the king's dress and it comprises several pieces made up of gold and precious stones. Interesting pictorial references to the crowns discovered by the king of Kotte differed from each other. The crown played an important role as a silent metaphor in the language of royal fashion. It expressed social stratification, power, wealth, personal desires, aspirations, origins, and continuation of tradition. 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 *Vijayanthanthayashilpa* text (manual). 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 in-layed stones. The Kudumirissa inscription also mentioned the King's crown. (Gunasekara 1887) According to the pictorial references the kings used categories of crowns. He utilized all the crowns one by one in order of the legitimacy of arraying himself rather than his personal choice.

In the meantime, the King was bound to follow the dress traditions in the society as he always obeyed the Sinhalese tradition which testified to his sovereignty. It is evident that the King had to follow several dresses and details to the body spaces with articulated styles of adornments according to fashion and the tradition of the society. The 64 ornaments comprise five-fold varieties of each of them. Those are arranged from big toe rings to crown, as ankle bands, calf bands, waist girdles, abdominal bands, a variety of necklaces and a crown. (Jayasuriya 2001, 218) Each one of the above-described ornaments has a specific part of the body to adorn and is specified by their length, breadth, circumferences, forms, the quantity of gold and precious stones which required for each. It is mentioned that there are twenty-five ornaments to be worn by the King at the time of the preparatory rites, prior to his consecration (*abhiseka*). (Jayauriya 2001, 252) The silpa text Vijayanthanthra states how the ornaments should be specific to each body part, (Jayauriya 2001, 218) The King should wear 21 ornaments from big toe ring up to the waist, 21 ornaments for waist up to the ear and 22 ornaments for two arms respectively. (Jayauriya 2001, 238) The rings are more prominent ornamentation used by the earlier Kings. According to the Vijayantatanraya right hand (*Dhakshinamudrika*) and the left hand (*Vamahasthamudrika*) were adorned with a variety of rings. (Alwis 1976, 35) According to the silpa text the king should wear twenty-five ornaments (Jayasooriya 2001, 239) during preparatory rites. It is noted in the Vijayntatanraya as a necklace of 16 auspicious symbols called Sodayudhamala, an earrings form of *vajra*, a *vajra* bracelet, a pendant called *candrakarsapana*, a gold thread *svarnasutra*, *sankasuthra*, a seed necklace *sarsapahara*, *siddhartharaka*, metal bangles made of five metals, five weapons of *vajra*, a conch, an elephant goad, sword, hatchet, five bracelets of wood, two toe rings of gems set in the middle, *navagraha* ring, a necklace called *kantaka*, turban called *panchanga*. Among the arm ornaments the King wore a symbolic bangle made up with fifteen heads representing the fifteen sub-kings' earlier referred to over whom he dominated. (Alwis 1976, 35) Using flowers for enhancing female beauty had been practiced by the females of Asia since ancient times. Fixing of flower wreaths to the hair has always been popular. Fashioning the body with natural flowers is very often to suit the occasion and the wearer's status and occupation. (Encyclopedia of world art, s.v, Dress) Poetry reveals that dancers used different kinds of flowers with different fragrances to decorate their hair. According to poetical description dancers utilized flowers for hair décor in different ways. These can be identified as flower sprays, springs, and garlands and as full-blown flowers separately attached to the hair. Wearing of flowers is said to impart an intoxicating feeling or mood of contentment and pleasure to its wearer. (Untracht 1997, 32) as fresh flower garlands are always of prime importance in the Indian ritual. (Shukla 1994, 20- 32) It seems that their hair arrangements looked very elegant. Dancers adopted a variety of hairstyles and wore headdresses according to their wishes, contemporary fashion trends, tradition, and in keeping with the accepted social standards. Very often they used *Jasmin*, *Maligiya* and *Madara* flowers. In Hindu mythology, *Madara* is considered to be a flower of the coral tree, one of the five special trees of heaven. If it so, the court dancers would have used it in their performance in front of the King, because the King also is known as the *Indra* of the earth. It is clear that using flowers by a dancer for hair decoration is a cultural habit that prevailed since ancient times up- to- date.

### Using a Shawl to Cover the Upper Body

There were some unique dress details followed by royalty and elite women during the sixteenth century. One of the special dress details is identified as a shawl. Literature reveals that the Kings used different types of shawls. The poetical work *Kavyashekaraya* (Liyanaarachchi 2007, canto 33) mentioned that the King used a shawl on several occasions and that he used a clean '*uththarasataka*' or shawl when he was in the chamber. The same literary work describes that the King used a flower- decorated shawl. The *ParakumbaSiritha* (Paranavithana 1997, canto 34) (panegyric poem) states that

the King's shawl is decorated with gems. The elites also practiced the same dress detail. *Kavyashekaraya* (canto 30) refers to the gem – set ear ornaments and the shawl worn by the Brahmins who served the King. The same literary work mentions that a Brahmin woman was not been allowed to go out of her house without the permission of her husband and also without having a shawl on her shoulder. (Ibid canto 331) Furthermore, it is said that an elite woman should not reveal her navel when wearing the lower dress. It is also stated that the lower dress should reach the ankle and that she must cover her breasts with a shawl. (Ibid, canto 19)

### **Changes in Society and Dress of the People after the Occupation of Portuguese**

After the demise of King Parakramabahu VI (1411-1466AD), there was a struggle within the royal family to gain sovereignty. When the Portuguese arrived in 1505AD the upper strata of the Sinhalese society was fast becoming Hindu in outlook. (UCHC VolPt 2 1960, 767) Sometime later in 1557 Prince Dharmapala and his queen were baptized with the names of Dom Joao and Dona Catherina. The Portuguese names were the fashion at court. Baptism became to a rebirth under a foreign name and every female royal convert was dubbed as Dona. To denationalize the race was not the missionary's object, and yet such was the inevitable consequence of the course he pursued, for with baptism came a rebirth under a foreign name and every royal convert was dubbed a Dom. One missionary with condescending enthusiasm wrote of a youthful prince "his thoughts are not those of a black, but of one who greatly desires to copy the Christian Kings both in his manner of life as in all else" for he says that when he becomes a Christian he will not have in his house but Portuguese". (Pieris 1992,7) Perera said that Dona Cathrina's example was followed by all the ladies of the court and by some of the nobles of the kingdom, whereupon a great number of the people asked for baptism. (Perera 1920, 29) After the Portuguese occupation, it was noticed that juxtaposing of certain dress details within the contextual boundaries of Sri Lankan culture tended to change the meaning of the dress signs. This was mostly visible in the dresses of the Kings who ruled the country in the second half of the sixteenth century in the Portuguese encounter.

The first example is seen in the attire of Prince Don Juan Dharmapala. (1551-1597). He was baptized and adopted Portuguese dress styles and ruled as a puppet King in the hands of the Portuguese. He was crowned in Lisbon. From his childhood, he grew up under the protection of the Portuguese. After his conversion to Christianity, he embraced Western dress styles. He wore long coat or *cabaya* as for the upper dress and the long piece of cloth as the lower garment. He borrowed appearance cues normally associated with the European cultural contexts (long coat) and juxtaposed these cues with traditional Sri Lankan cultural connotations (traditional jewelry with long lower cloth) and created a new appearance context. Thus his appearance as a whole required a new framework or set of rules of associations, for purposes of interpretation. Individual cues (long coat) moved across contextual boundaries into a new appearance context calling for a new mode of perception. After that King Wimaladharmasooriya followed the same dress styles by borrowing similar appearance cues as (long-sleeved jacket with a collar) with traditional dress details of the long lower garment. He was (1592-1604) earlier known as KonnappuBandara the son of WeerasundaraBandara, the first King of the SenkadagalaPura. King Vimaladarmasuriya I's (1591-1604) long-sleeved jacket was known as '*Kameesahettaya*'. From the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards the royal dress changed to a long sleeved jacket and the long lower cloth depicted in wall paintings and sculptures of the period. It is obvious that the new dress style merged well into the tradition of the county. By seeing King Wimaladharmasooriya's dress one could derive the idea that a system or a structural context exists and precedes the emergence of a particular sign or symbol. The long- sleeved jacket was part of the Portuguese (Western) royal and elite attire appearance-context even before King Wimaladharmasooriya (1591-1604) used it. The long- sleeved jacket itself, then served to represent a general royal or elite dress context, and Wimaladharmasooriya used it for the same

purpose, as a dress component part in his own appearance. After he devised his own visual context, some new associations emerged for the long sleeved jacket. After this, the long sleeved jacket could be seen as being associated with a new set of appearance elements including other dress types. Successors of King Wimaladharmasooriya followed the same long-sleeved jacket with trousers or pantaloons and they became a fashion style. Kaiser (1998, 222) would have called these created appearances as programmes. By developing such programmes, individuals can derive a sense of personal style or make fashion statements.

## CONCLUSIONS

Culture is a concept that enables us to understand the meaning and collective representation through fashions of dress. If dress and communication are cultural phenomena that culture may itself be understood as a signifying a system and a process as to the ways in which a society's experiences, values, and beliefs are communicated through practices, artifacts, and institutions. Culture on the other hand, is the documentary model and, it is conceived as a set of 'edited highlights' from that process (Barnard 2002, 35). As Williams (1961, 57) pointed out this concept, culture is a body of intellectual and imaginative work.

In this case, a fashion of dress is an artifact, practice, and institution that constitute a society's beliefs, values, ideas, and experiences. According to this view, dress is a way in which people communicate, not only feelings and mood, but also the values, and beliefs of the social groups of which they are members. They are the ways in which society is produced and reproduced: it is not that people are first members of groups and then communicate their membership, but that membership is negotiated and established through dress communication.

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