

## History of Textiles and Fashion: Gender Symbolism in the Context of Colour

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**Abstract :** Historically, the color-coded attire demarcated differences, for example, differences in social position and differences in gender, etc. Distinctive colors are worn by different classes in medieval England. By the twentieth-century Western society, certain colors were firmly associated with the specific gender; as pink for girls, and blue for boys. The color-coded gender phenomenon was a novelty at the turn of the twentieth-century and became widely practiced after World War II. Prior to that era, there were no distinctions or differences in the dress of younger children, in relation to their gender. In the nineteenth century, pink suits were highly acceptable for gentlemen's attire. Frenchmen in the eighteenth-century wore colors with an infinite range of hues like pink, plum, white, cream, blue, yellow, puce and sea green. Nineteenth-century European male austerity, primarily caused by the usage of sombre colors such as black, white and grey, has been described as an element for dignity, control and morality. In the nineteenth century, there were many color-associated distinctions, as certain colors were reserved for the unmarried, the single or the aged. Two luminous colors in one dress was 'vulgar' and yellow was generally regarded as unladylike. Yellow was the color utilised for most correctional attire. Orange was prohibited for the unmarried. Fashionable dressing in the nineteenth century was more gender-differentiated than in previous centuries. Masculine austerity, emphasized a shift in class relations. As a result of that shift, male attire became more uniform, homogeneous and integrated (amongst the classes), than its traditional hierarchal approach.

**Keywords :** textiles, fashion, gender symbolism, color

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