

Artemis goddess, victorian corsets



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Jenny Liu FAS 109 – 14. 00 03 December 2007 Essay: Artemis Goddess, Victorian Corsets, and Its Contemporary Revivals “ Fashion has always had a love affair with history, old themes worn as new details. ” - Judith Clark, curator of the Spectres exhibition at the V&A. Although costume and fashion are too often considered the same, they are two different concepts.

Costumes are in history and set as a foundation for revival and contemporary fashion. It expresses the way of life of those living in particular places, time periods, and the social classes, in example the elaborate dresses the Queen wears.

The kind of lives that people are expected to live are reflected by the costumes worn. The origin of costumes is usually due to the expectations their society sets and what materials are actually available. Costumes set as a symbol of holidays and festivals, such as Santa Claus during Christmas, the Easter Bunny for Easter, and vampires for Halloween. Revivals in fashion are constantly referring to historical costumes for inspiration through its ideas, designs, textiles, art, etc. Fashion is a contemporary word used to define what is popular by the majority of the public.

Newest and latest trends are often associated with fashion. It is desired by society to provide personal expression and send a message. What characterizes fashion is constantly changing and evolving. People usually associate fashion to designers, haute couture, celebrities, New York, Milan, London, and prestigious magazine Vogue. Fashion has a reputation to re-establish one’s personality, status, and style. The costumes that I will focus on will be the image of Artemis, the Classical Greek goddess of the hunt, and the other will be of the Victorian corsets of the Victorian Era (1837-1901).

Artemis, also recognized as Diana by the Romans, was the daughter of Zeus and Leto, twin sister to Apollo, and was associated to light. She was an athletic version of the Classical Greek goddess. Dolce and Gabbana, among numerous other designers today, have used Artemis and other Greek goddesses as their muse for design collections. The use of Victorian corsets during the 19th century was more of a mandatory piece of undergarment than an expectation. The lower-, middle-, and working-class women of this century had to live a competitive life due to competition in the career field, as well as the incredibly high ratio of women to men.

Because of the situation these women were in, compared to high-class women who were defined as beautiful because of their high rank and financial status, they had to compensate by willing to do just about anything to achieve a desirable figure. The Victorian corset waist made a significant revival in spring of 1947 by Christian Dior's 'New Look' collection. Dior took the public by surprise after World War II with a collection that brought back fashion to women. Women were again, focusing on achieving a tiny waist and full bust.

The first costume would be the dress of Artemis, a Classical Greek goddess that originated from Greek mythology was an example of a historical goddess. She was a virgin goddess of chastity, fertility, light, hunt, wilderness, and according to Callimachus, the "Goddess of the tunic." (Llewellyn-Jones 2002: 55) "Artemis is blonde and has beautiful locks of hair, according to Homer and Euripides." (Llewellyn-Jones 2002: 55) This Greek goddess was not only beautiful but was a swift, strong, athletic and competitive character.

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She was very protective of her virginity and therefore was able to ward off anyone that would danger what she very highly valued. Her hunting skills and athletic ability, although unlike other feminine goddesses, were the assets that made her different amongst the usual perception of a Greek goddess. Her clothing was simple and devoted mostly to draping with minimal cutting or sewing. (Cosgrave 2001: 43) There was usually only one piece of rectangular cloth used as a complete garment. Because of her need to hunt, the material draped on her body did not end at her feet but rather a foot shorter.