The change of coloring of evening gown in fashion plates
Costumes Parisiens in 1800’s.

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Abstract: The mode magazine JOURNAL DES DAMES ET DES MODES (JDM) is important to know the fashion in 1800’s, especially design of evening gown is highly evaluated among critics at that time. The aim of this study is to clear the color preferences of the clothing in fashion plates Costume Parisiens, and to show how JDM delivers color information. Costume Parisiens is the pictures that visualized a mode more concretely at that time and is useful to study change of colors of evening gowns. We measured the colors of 417 Costume Parisiens between 1800 and 1838 by the spectrum colorimeter. Their evening gowns were considered to have the same TPO. Results showed that there was a trend toward light pale colors for the evening gowns and a character of the hues. White color was the most fashionable color during about 40 years. But each item drawn in fashion plates had each color trend too. The colors analyzed about the selected Costume Parisiens reflected the color preferences of the mode in those days. And the time of a change of colors accorded with the turning point of the style of mode. This finding is a valuable viewing point that has not been pointed out so far.

Key words: color information, mode magazine, fashion plate, 19th century

1. Introduction
The mode magazine, Journal des Dames et des Modes (French version, hereafter “JDM”), is representative of the diverse range of magazines written about the mode in Paris during the 19th century, and was published for around forty years - between 1789 and 1839 - an exceptionally long run compared with other magazines published at that time. Moreover, the abundance of information carried in the magazine, combined with its very short publication cycle of 5 days, can be seen as one of JDM’s most prominent features. A total of more than 3,600 Costumes Parisiens (hereafter “CP”), the fashion plates attached to the JDM, were created, constituting valuable visual resources in clothing research which especially demonstrate the morphological characteristics of the contemporary mode.

We authors had already used the JDM to make a study of the relationship between the mode and the image on women, as well as of the media function of the JDM[1-3]. However, during that study, we very rarely referred to the colors used. One of the appealing points of the fashion plates in the 19th century is the palette of rich colors created through hand-coloring; for the same is true for the CP. Although colors form a very important design element in dressing, the analysis of the popularity of colors in the mode of those days, along with research into the coloring of fashion plates, remains insufficient. Moreover, in our previous treatise, we referred to the importance of “MODES”, the column on current events on JDM. In “MODES”, there are some descriptions of recent special events in high society, as well as concrete information about the contemporary mode related to clothing and social life. We have confirmed that there is no direct connection between its contents and the design of the CP for the corresponding numbers. While the CPs have already been used as visual materials showing the mode of that period, we questioned whether the coloration in such CPs can really be seen as color information that reflects the mode of the day.

That is why we have decided to carry out research on colors used in the CPs, published in the roughly 40 years between 1800 and 1838, in order to solve the above questions related to the JDM. We will examine whether the colors found in the CPs can be considered color information representative of the mode of this period, and at the same time try to find the characteristics by period of the mode at that time, judging from the colors used and their secular change.
2. Method

As part of the color research on CPs, we will carry out colorimetric investigation using a spectrophotometer. At the same time, in order to examine whether colors used in CPs really reflected the colors used in the contemporary mode, we will compare them with the color information found in “MODES” the column on current events, which plays a central role in JDM editing. On this point, due to the enormous volume of resources published during the period, it is impossible to carry out research all at once. Thus, we have limited the time span of our research to the year 1830. This is because we attach great importance to the fact that the share of “MODES” among the entire content of the magazine began to increase significantly in this year.

2.1 Methods for the color measurement

We have measured the colors of the illustrations in order to analyze the characteristics of the colors of the clothes drawn in CPs. For the measurement, we used a spectrophotometer (MINOLTA CM-2600 d). We investigated 648 CPs placed in JDMs which appeared between 1830 and 1838. To examine the tendencies of color utilization for clothing according to time and occasion, we have classified CPs as following: (A) décolleté clothes with exposed breasts, (B) non-décolleté clothes, (C) clothes for horse riding, disguise, as well as mantles for which we cannot find expressions. Moreover, in addition to this classification, we have also distinguished (a) short sleeves, (b) long sleeves, and (1) without hat, (2) with chapeau, (3) with capote, (4) with bonnet and (5) others, according to the type of hat.

Next, based on these classifications, we decided to measure the colors of patterns that have both a large number of examples and appear to have been used at generally the same time, place and occasion. Thus, we decided to adopt 417 examples with fall within the classification (A) - (a) - (1) as samples for our investigation. Figure 1 showed an example of (A) - (a) - (1). These samples are designed as evening dresses, item was robe. The color of the sample was measured by measuring the color occupying the largest area in the skirt. And we measured another item “redingote” as comparison data. We measured colors five times for each section and obtained the average of the three measured values by excluding the maximal and minimal values.

2.2 extraction of the color information on “MODES” and the methods for analysis

Since its foundation, there were articles entitled “MODES” in each issue of the JDM. In 1830, the proportion of such articles increased, and although there is some variation depending on the number, one page, which corresponds to around one eighth of the entire content of the magazine, was assigned to “MODES”. We have extracted articles of “MODES” which explain coloration to be used as text color information. Then, we classified articles according to (1) color name, (2) item name, (3) whether the color comes from the item itself or the decoration, and (4) usage. After classification, we calculated the incidence of each color for each item, and examined preferred colors.

3. Results & Discussions

3.1 Colors on CPs

Table 1. shows the details of the samples. As for the coordinates of (A)-(a)-(1), white dresses appear very often, representing 66% of all such samples between 1800 and 1809, 69% between 1810 and 1819, 49% between 1820 and 1829, and 34% between 1830 and 1838. It is known that white dresses were in fact popular during the First Empire period under the rule of Napoleon, as well as in the Romantic style of the early 1830s. The popularity of white in the former period is considered to be connected with the popularity of thin materials such as muslin. As for the latter period, the material used is not uniform; we assume that the popularity arose from the desire to create supernatural images, including ephemerality and fairies, which are cherished themes in the Romantic ethos.

Next, we examined the secular change of colors used in evening dresses. We completed this research based on the results obtained from the survey of chromatic colors, excluding white samples. The average L*-value was 75.2 for the period 1800-1809, 76.2 for the period 1810-1819, 68.4 for the period 1820-1829 and 76.9 for the period 1830-1839, thus showing that overall, light and clear colors tended to be used. Figure 2 showed the distribution of the a*b* value for the samples, one common feature for all these periods was that R was the most

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Sample total</th>
<th>White samples</th>
<th>Chromatic colors samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800~1809</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>63 (66%)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810~1819</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38 (69%)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820~1829</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>55 (49%)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830~1838</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>53 (34%)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 An example of (A)-(a)-1
frequent color tone. Moreover, as for the color tone, compared to the periods 1800-1809 and 1810-1819, we can observe the expansion into the ranges G and B during the periods 1820-1829 and 1830-1839, but colors corresponding to PB or P remained unused. In the Restoration era, the competition in the area of mode grew stiffer due to the rise of the wealthy bourgeoisie, which led to the constant pursuit of new elements. We suppose that the diversification of color tones from the 1820s onward was caused by the fact that such phenomena also influenced colors. Figure 3 showed the comparison of robes and redingotes. There was different trend in it. We could see it clearly in 1830 data.

3.2 Color information in on “MODES”
As for the color information extracted from “MODES”, we classified the color names into 9, using a “Great French-Japanese Dictionary” and a French-English dictionary, and based roughly on color tones: red, yellow, green, blue, purple, others (brown), as well as non-chromatic white, gray and black. We carried out our analysis based on this classification. Note that such a classification may differ from the color tones generally recognized at that time, as our method consists of analyzing the color names used in 1830 with today’s sense of color. The color information that can be found in “MODES” is mainly related to chapeaux, redingotes and robes, and we have confirmed around 80 different color names. While the words which indicate green, blue and gray are limited to “vert”, “bleu” and “gris” respectively, we have found several words representing red, yellow and purple. In particular, we have found the largest variety of words corresponding to red, including “cerise”, “grenat”, “ponceau”, “rose”, “rouge” and “rubis”. This multitude of words for red indicates the necessity in the mode of those days to understand and distinguish different types of red colors, demonstrating contemporary sensitivity to red.

Figure 4 showed the frequency of each color for each item, we have found different trends for different items. In the case of chapeaux, white appears in around 30% of all items, followed by red in around 24%, black in 14%, green and blue in 8%. As for redingotes, white accounts for around 30%, black appears in around 26%, green 22% and blue 9%, while other colors make up only 5%. White accounts for about 40% of all colors appearing in robes, followed by red (about 20%), blue (about 10%). Black, yellow and green appear with almost the same frequency, which is about 7%. Table 2. showed the examples extracted color information. By examining the frequency together with them, it is possible to conclude that the frequency of colors and the popular colors in the mode are almost identical.
Table 2. The examples extracted color information on “MODES” in 1830

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Article text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>At a dance, the people saw white, cherry, blue, and rose color, particularly vivid rose and white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>At a dance, we saw an elegant lady wore the robe of thin textile pêlêline, the color was blue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>At the dance of the duke Orléans, there were many new robes one of them was thin textile of Turin which color was vivid rose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>We saw many white robes and coats at the place where the elegant women gather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>A few days ago we saw the elegant people who wore robes of the Naples silk, and one of them was very light bleu de ciel color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>At first Miss Léontine Fay appeared in a gray silk coat-dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>The mode shop masters suggested the color coordination black and rose, black and blue recently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Some elegant people wore the black coat-dresses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>There are two color souci and serin as the newest color of satin used for a hat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Comparison of colors used in CPs with color information on “MODES”

We found that white makes up the largest proportion in both of them. Frequent color tones are almost universally common to both. Red appears most frequently of all chromatic colors, and we can see that red was a preferred color for night dresses, which are the coordinates of (A)-(a)-(1), judging from the information obtained from “MODES”. Considering the room lighting at the time were candles and lamps, the light was a tinge of red and weakly. We suppose that white and clear color were outstanding in there, red was popular as a color that could beautifully suit the room atmosphere. The color information of the robes described in the text data contains that of both day and evening dresses; therefore it is impossible to compare it directly with the result of the colorimetric investigation for the Costumes Parisiens, which concerns evening dresses only. However, the results obtained from both studies are share a great deal in common. As a consequence, we can conclude that the colors used in CPs reflect the taste for colors in the mode. Thus, we have solved the remaining consideration, at least for the color hue, which is the reflection of colors in the mode as required for original illustrators.

In the CPs, although there are some descriptions about colors in the attached captions, they remain succinct, with most of the color information expressed in dress colors. On the other hand, color explanations are more clearly described in “MODES”. We consider that color information was transmitted from both of them, and that CP helped understand the information on “MODES”.

4. Conclusion

We have found out that white remained the principal color during the period of this investigation, and that among chromatic colors, light and clear colors tended to be used in general for coloration. R remained a principal color hue throughout this period, but comparing the first and second halves of the forty-year, there was some change in preferred color hue. This timing of change corresponded to the turning point of the social system and of the mode style. Based on the color information for the year 1830, we have made it clear that different colors were preferred for different items, and that white, red and blue were mainly popular for evening dresses. It is also clear that the colors used in the dresses depicted in CPs and the color information on “MODES” have a common point in terms of the content. JDM transmitted color information by means of both CPs and its texts, and that in the case of the coordinates of (A) - (a) - (1), CPs can be seen as more concrete visual information that reflected the taste for colors in those days. And the color information on JDM was the record of a real mode change.

We have clarified part of the characteristics of the Paris mode in the 19th century by focusing on color information that had yet to be sufficiently treated. Although the extent of our research has been limited, we hope to obtain additional, useful knowledge for the study of clothing by enlarging the extent of our research in the future.

Acknowledgements

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References