Mere Lines—They Make or Mar Our Costumes

Anna Prang
Iowa State College

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Recommended Citation
Prang, Anna (1921) "Mere Lines—They Make or Mar Our Costumes," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 1 : No. 12 , Article 4.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol1/iss12/4

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DID YOU SEE that adorable green frock at The Paris? I was so sorry that I could not try it on for they had only a size sixteen, but then I can have my dressmaker make an exact copy of the design in my size. I wear a forty-two and green is not very becoming to me, but the dress is so adorable that I can’t resist having it made up for myself.

Can you imagine this woman in her new dress originally designed for a much smaller figure and a very different complexion? The picture presents a real tragedy. However, the most tragic part of all is, that such things happen day after day.

In this age of ready-made clothing, so frequently a catalog, and because it is chosen and worn by the wrong type of person. Often a dress is chosen from a window display or perhaps from a picture in a catalog, and because it makes a good appearance there, it is too good for the wearer. It will be equally as suitable for anyone who can manage to get on the inside of it. No matter how perfectly fashionable a dress may be, unless the lines, materials and colors are suitable and harmonize with the texture, and color of the woman, it is ultimately not a success.

Just how can a woman or girl tell what to look for when she buys ready-made garments, or when she makes them? What is a becoming costume? The answer is simple. A becoming costume is one that harmonizes with the personality of the wearer, and emphasizes her best points in line, texture and color. By doing this the less attractive features are obscured. The question to be answered next is, “How can I design such a costume—how shall I begin?”

In the first place the woman who wishes to design a becoming costume, must analyze herself as to: line and proportion, texture, color, and personality.

The lines gained together with a knowledge of art principles, will serve as a guide in the right selection of lines, materials, color and style, which make up the costume. There is no definite set of rules that would be altogether practical in each individual case. However, in addition to the woman’s general knowledge and feeling for the things that are in good taste, the plan of making a classification of types based on line and proportion as herewith given has proven very helpful. The costume is here considered chiefly from a standpoint of line. Space does not permit a discussion of color and personality.

Study your own lines—then decide what lines contribute most to your individual attractiveness. Desirable lines of face and figure may be emphasized by a repetition of the same lines in the costume or by using lines of contrast.

By line in costume is meant, first of all, the general outline or silhouette of the whole costumed figure—then such details as seams, creases, folds, pleats and tucks; such trimmings as rows of braid, lace, or buttons; and pattern of material, such as stripes, plaids or figures. In general, stiff materials produce straight lines, soft materials produce curves.

Many women have not really seen themselves as they are seen by others. They use a mirror so small that only the head, or perhaps the figure down to the waist or hips can be seen. Why should one be indifferent about the rest? Others consider it a sure sign of vanity to look into a mirror, and pride themselves upon the fact that they seldom look into one. Such a woman is either so well satisfied with herself that she thinks it impossible or unnecessary to make improvements or she does not have the courage to look facts in the face.

In order to get a true conception of the lines and proportions of the figure, so that a proper choice of lines in costume can be made, it is necessary to make this study before a mirror large enough to reflect the whole figure at once.

Are your predominant lines straight or perhaps angular? These lines suggest strength, dignity and positiveness. In costume they may be repeated and emphasized if desired. Example: the strictly tailored, mannish suit and the straight sailor frock.

Often the lines of a costume are so inconsistent and varied that no definite thought is expressed except that of weakness. This is often the case with the extreme and ultra-fashionable type of dress. Such a costume has no meaning and can have no real beauty.

Not every woman represents a definite type, but it is very much to her own advantage to know what her lines are. The lines that help most to express her as a beautiful personality, should be repeated in the costume and thus emphasized. Defects may be obscured by leading the attention elsewhere.

Study the proportion of your figure. To serve as a definite working basis, a study is here made of four types of figures: the ideal; the tall slender; the short stout; and the angular. In order to make the classification more exact, three extreme types have been chosen.

The classification of the first three types is a matter of both line and proportion. The fourth type is merely dependent upon line. Since there are no two persons exactly alike in appearance, there will, no doubt be as many variations and combinations of these types as there are people in the world; but with a definite knowledge of what is best suited to these
extreme types, all others can easily be understood and their problems solved.

A list of suggestions follows that is based upon the laws of repetition and contrast, together with concrete examples of bad and good lines as well as materials for each type.

The Ideal Figure

Of a woman is said to be eight heads high. The average figure is a little less. The eight head figure is here discussed. You may be large, small or median in size and still be of ideal proportion—that is, the length of the head would go into the whole figure eight times; three heads to the waist, the hip six to the knees and eight to the sole of the foot. The width of the shoulder is 1 1/4 heads, and the hips are a little wider. Study your own figure. Do you think that approximately you could be placed in this class? The woman of average or ideal size and proportion, naturally has a wider choice of styles than has any of the other types given. The style of dress and the kind of lines may be left to her personal preference. However, this does not mean that she has no problems at all to solve—those of posture, color, texture and personality must not be overlooked.

The Slender Figure

In this case we will consider one that is taller and much thinner than the average, with narrow oval face and long thin neck. What will she wear?

In general she should choose curved lines which lead the eye from side to side. The decoration, if used, should be kept at the side or arranged in horizontal lines. In this way roundness of face and figure may be emphasized and width suggested. Vertical lines that lead the eye upward increase the illusion of height. 

A round neckline repeats and emphasizes roundness in the face. A high collar which covers a thin neck, or a rolling collar which shortens the distance between shoulders and hair line, makes the neck seem shorter and not so thin. The hair may be worn full at the side and brought down a little over the forehead. The general outline of the hair should suggest roundness.

A becoming type of hat is one with a low crown and a soft, drooping brim medium in width. This shortens the distance between the hat and shoulders and makes the face seem wider and more round. Soft materials such as velvet, dupiony, fur; and trimmings such as ostrich feathers, lend softness and fullness to the face. The hat also may be of contrasting color, which helps to decrease the appearance of height.

The long-haired furs, such as fox, raccoon or wolf, are in general most becoming, not only because a large fur piece will cover a thin neck, but also because its softness will give an added look of fullness and softness to the face. The short-haired furs may be equally as attractive—much depends upon the style in which they are made up.

The Short Stout Figure

The type considered here is shorter and stouter than the average with round face and very short neck. What shall she wear?

She should choose vertical and straight lines. Decoration if used, should be arranged vertically and kept near the center of the figure. This causes the eye to travel up and down, giving an impression of height.

Tailored suits, dresses and hats are very becoming, because with these it is possible to introduce straightness of line, and they are void of the frills and fluffs that suggest bulkiness of figure. She should be well corseted. This includes the brassiere, which is an absolute necessity.

Garments should fit easily and comfortably. A dress that is too tight makes a woman look decidedly larger. It makes one feel that she probably bought the biggest thing she could get, but still she was too big to feel comfortably on the inside of it. On the other hand, if the material stands out from the figure and is so loose that it seems bulky it is equally as bad.

Materials of average weight and softness may be used, such as serge, tricotine, crepes and linen. Stiff materials like taffeta, organdie, are too bulky and must be avoided. The stout woman must also deny herself silks and satins with a high luster, for the high-lights present a series of lines which tend to call attention to width and roundness of figure. Neither can she wear large checks, plaids, figures, or all-over designs for such materials would exaggerate her size. Plain materials, of neutral tone and dull finish are much more suitable. They are inconspicuous and will not place emphasis upon size.

Simple designs should be chosen. With the larger part of the costume of plain material and simple lines, it is possible to add a few touches of interest and make them mean something. The interest.

(Continued on page 6)
The Iowa Homemaker

Mere Lines—They Make or Mar Our Costumes

Cont. from p. 3

should be kept near the center as much as possible, and the flow of line should be vertical. This may be accomplished by means of a V neck, or collar which comes to a point, or a vest, or a bit of embroidery, or an appropriate pin. If there are any decorations on the skirt they should also be kept near the center. Pockets on the hips, tunic, accordian pleats, or tucks in the skirt must be avoided. Skirts should be long. Long sleeves are better than three-quarter length or short sleeves. Wide or contrasting fabrics are dangerous to the meal planner realizes that the large number of ways of serving fruits and the large variety of cereals, allows no excuse for monotony in serving breakfast.

Some families want a more substantial meal in the morning, or often one or two members of the family need more food. For them a simple protein dish of eggs, bacon, sausage, or ham, creamed potatoes, or fish. It is wise to serve chops, steak or a similar meat for breakfast since meat is usually served at dinner. Eggs are most desirable because of the ease of preparation as well as because of their value as tissue builders for the growing children.

There are a number of ways of serving eggs. The soft cooked, poached, scrambled and creamed eggs on toast are the most reasonable because of being so quickly cooked.

For the very heavy breakfast, potatoes in some form are used. There are usually potato cakes, hashed brown or creamed potatoes. The great danger in this kind of a breakfast is that the fruit will be omitted. This is true of many farm menus where the first meal of the day consists of oatmeal, bread and butter, "fried" potatoes, salt pork and coffee. To the strenuous labor of the farm requires more fuel foods, as bread, cereals, potatoes and fat, yet it is equally necessary to include minerals, fruit acids and the vitamins to insure the proper functioning of the body.

To serve a breakfast of apricots, cream of wheat, bacon, eggs, creamed toast and coffee, it would be best to make at least two courses of the meal. This would allow one to clean the pan or pot on the warm plates. One cannot over emphasize the desirability of serving hot foods hot and not in a tepid condition.

For such a meal the first two courses, that is the fruit and cereal, may be combined as suggested in the menu with the grapefruit and oatmeal. The toast should then be eaten, and not removing the tureen containing the cereal and then removing the cereal and fruit dishes, beginning with the hostess. Next bring in the warm plates and place in front of the host, with the serving silver necessary. Bring in the platter of bacon and eggs for the host to serve. The cups, saucers, cream and sugar are already placed at the plate of the hostess. Lastly, get the hot toast, or if there is an electric toaster, the toast can be made at the table and served really hot.

Variations in the above menus may consist of jam, jellies, honey or syrup to be served with the hot breads. Some families like doughnuts or cookies at this meal.

Griddle cakes and waffles as a regular part of the diet are possible only for the more sturdy digestions. They are an interesting variation in the menu, but should be served only when time and service allow. If a grown son or daughter can "bake" for a while and so let the menu cut at least part of the meal, they may be allowed.

But no mother should be a slave to the whims of her family to the extent of serving at any time, any food that keeps her away from her rightful place as the hostess. Lastly, get the hot toast, or if there is an electric toaster, the toast can be made at the table and served really hot.

A hat with a soft crown and soft, medium-sized brim is becoming. It is possible that a turban of soft lines might be worn. A slightly drooping brim, especially one with a facing of a light, becoming color is good, because the reflection of light and color upon the face gives a suggestion of fullness. The trimmings need to be soft, such as soft silks, feathers, fur, graceful bows or light-weight materials, or ribbons, or bunches of small flowers soft in color and texture. The severity of the tailoring should not be apparent. The trimmings such as quilts, pointed bows should not be used, because they emphasize the undesirable lines of the face and neck and are repeated and therefore emphasized.

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An angular line gives a softening and rounding effect to the face may be chosen. The hair might be puffed a little at the side, making the whole outline of the face round. The width of the brim of the hat will not be noticed so much if the hair is dressed low on the neck, and a part or all of the ear is covered.

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son at the slightest weight consistent with the most perfect health of which he is capable." A witty person once said that a good cook is more to be feared when one is well than a bad doctor when one is ill. Simple living, good hygienic habits, and proper food are all essentials for a ripe old age. We need our older people. Why not have them live to be a hundred? In his report on the autopsy of Thomas Barr who lived to the age of 152 years and nine months Dr. Harvey attributed his death to the change from a simple diet of cheese, milk and whole wheat bread to the rich living which he received in London and to the change from good wholesome air of the country to the dusty air of the city. He had always lived the carefree life of the peasant.

Dr. Langworthy gives the following table for the food requirements in old age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Average weight</th>
<th>Calories needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>144.1</td>
<td>1654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>138.7</td>
<td>1591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>134.7</td>
<td>1531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>117.2</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The requirement is slightly less for women than for men.

**MERE LINES—THEY MAKE OR MAR OUR COSTUMES**

(Continued from page 6)

...especially becoming. However, collars and neck pieces of seal or moleskin may be equally as appropriate if made up in such a way that they come up high on the neck. The small or thin woman cannot wear a heavy-looking fur piece or coat. These would make her look small and weak by contrast.

The thin woman or girl with angular lines has to be especially careful in her choice of jewelry. Heavy-looking beads and chains, or sparkling jewelry is not becoming—it makes her look weighted down, and unless she is unusually vivacious, an array of sparkling stones and glittering gold, is likely to outshine her. Something smaller, less pretentious and less conspicuous, beautiful in line, and of definite color value is much more appropriate and becoming.

The color of her footwear need not

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necessarily be the same as the color of the dress or suit. Gray, brown, black or tan may be worn with almost any color of dress, provided there is harmony. Gloves, quiet in tone, and inconspicuous are best. White gloves with a dark costume are very trying, especially if the hands happen to be large or in any way unattractive.

It is not sufficient, however, to have the costume becoming in line. The matter of texture in material, of color, and of personality as expressed by the costume, are of equal importance. These subjects will be discussed in later issues.

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(Continued from page 1)

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