

A Study on Sexual Identity Expressed in Modern Fashion

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I. Introduction

The fixed idea of the traditional sexual role and the concept of the sexual role which changed after the feminism movement in the 1960's have been more changing entering the multi-cultural era of the 21st century. The fixed concept of the sexual role which had been classified as a different thing between opposite sexes was considered to be a very optional and limited concept. The traditional sexual role affected clothes wearing and classified clothes according to sex had been worn in compliance with the tradition and custom for a long time of period. However, the modern fashion designers are showing various fashions without a border between sexes and many customers enjoys the fashions.

This study purposes to examine the background of the sexual concept and femininity, masculinity and sexual role in the fields of social psychology and cultural anthropology and investigate the traditional sexual role and the fashion's changes according to its role and the examples of the masculinity and femininity expressed in the modern fashion and finally analyze the gender identity expressed in fashion.

II. Theoretical Consideration for Sex

1 Sex Concept

The term of sex is a translated word for the terms of English sex and gender which are used to classify males and females. Sex means the biological differences such as sex for reproduction, the differences to seen by an eye in genital organs of males and females and the differences related to the birth function and gender is understood as a cultural matter to mention socially and culturally composed sexes and the social classification for the masculinity and femininity.

Anatomically, When an individual indicates males and females, the sexual characteristics or

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sexual identity is applied and when a individual does masculinity or femininity commonly used in the social and cultural area where he or she belongs, the mental gender identity is applied.

The formation of the sexual identity is commonly from the environment, in particular, the course of socialization with parents and peers. This means how they see themselves according to various sexual roles established in the social and cultural area. Therefore, Some partial members in any ages or social and cultural areas may show the mental sexual identity which deviates from common categories.

2 Masculinity & Femininity

Since the creation of Adam and Eve, the dichotomy of 'woman is nature, man is culture' has been overwhelming our society until now. In addition, women have been symbolized as the earth and men as the sky so that men have enjoyed the predominant position of ruling women for a long time of period. For several centuries, women have been recognized as beings which are passive and subject to be subordinated to men. It has been recognized that by dichotomy which was the basis of the metaphysical idealism, mentality, supersensuousness, permanence and men are the interactive upper structure and body, sense, tentativeness and women are the interactive lower structure.

Among the studies to reveal the factors of femininity and masculinity, David Bakan, 1966 claimed that masculinity coincides agency and femininity does communion. The agency is expressed as individual preservable characteristics such as self-protection, self-assertion, self-expansion, independency and impulse to rule and the communion is described as interactive characteristics such as contact, openness, combination, shortage of independence and cooperation without contract. In general, while the agency is related to the individual advance, the communion is related to mutually harmonious relationship with individuals and local communities. Second, the study proposed by T. Parsons and R. E. Bales conceptualized masculinity and femininity as the terms of the instrumental action and the expressive action. The instrumental action is goal-oriented and reflects the cognitive emphasis on goal and achievement and the expressive action reflects the interest in other's welfare and care including the supportive and emotional reaction.

III. Look & Sexual Identity

In recent, the basic hypothesis of the sexual difference between males and females has disappeared and the new hypothesis which focuses on individual differences not based on the distinction of sex. Over the notion like clothes for women and those for men, a new and multi-dimensional look which includes the characteristics of two sexes has appeared.

Regarding the term of look expressed related to the sexual identity, in the 1920's Garconne Look was initially showed which was expressed as the virilism of the style of a dress through the combination with the improvement of female's political and economic position and the

thought of the equality fo sexes and free love. This showed the inside intention of women to be equal to men and this intention changed women's style of a dress more functionally. The Garconne Look doesn't end as a temporary phenomenon but transcending an age can discovers the movement from a man's dress to a woman's dress based on the functionalism which is the coordinates of the current woman's dress.

Masculine Look sometimes is told to be Mannish Look and was expressed as the fashion design of mannish image embossing functional and active aspects which appeared in the women's style of a dress along with the women's liberation movement in the end of the 19th century. Along with the advent of feminism, its developing process went in gear with women's advance to the society and was reflected to the clothes bisexualization as it is and this meaning place a cultural meaning on the body and is natural essence of a culture.

And next, Unisex Look which appeared in the end of the 1960's started from the phenomenon of men's and women's wearing of similar clothes such as jeans, T-shirts, casual jacket and sports shoes and transcending 'feminine butuy' and 'masculine beauty' was a revolution which broke from a sexual notion as a phenomenon which shared onsite sex's elements. This kind of a tendency degenerate from the latter half of the 1970's and became various to change and develop to neutral sex, androgyny, non sex and mono sex.

Androgynous Look which appeared in the 1980's means the integration of femininity and masculinity which is the same meaning with 'androgyny' in itself. Not denying its sexual characteristics individually, the Androgynous Look means that women aim at the masculine image in men's clothing or men do at the feminine image in women's clothing. By exchanging the style of a dress and wearing which shows apparent differences as exclusive possession, it is differentiated from Unisex. In the Androgynous Look, the differences of the sexual role disappeared and the reality was reflected to show a new human's image as characteristic and free existence transcending sex.

Genderless Look can be considered to a look with a notion to wear clothing freely even in fashion transcending the border of masculinity and femininity differentiated socially and culturally.

Feminine Look which means the women's clothing names generically clothing expressed as the factors of 'feminine, lovely, cute and elegant' with men's factors excluded in color and design. In recent, the feminine image of the style of a dress to the men's fashion, various colors, smooth touch, hot pants, tailored suits with smooth lines and tender gesture shows the phenomenon of a feminine look which appear similar to women.

IV. Conclusion

The traditional sexual notion and role of males and females have been changing more with the modern times coming and in fashion, the sexual image is expressed variously and freely. These phenomena is not the level which imitated the clothes of the opposite sex in order for

a male to be looked like a female or for a female to be so like a male but whatever they are, it is changing to a thought that they can wear any clothing they want to wear. The image changes which appeared in the modern fashion can be considered to be Garconne Look, Masculine Look, Feminine Look, Unisex Look, Androgynous Look and Genderless Look.

The Garconne Look caused lots of changes to masculinity in the 1990's along with the changes of femininity. With the effect of feminism, Many females wore clothing which had been thought as male's clothing by the appearance of Masculine Look. The major formation reason of Unisex Look can be regarded as the attitude change of the society toward to females and a meaning which doesn't want the differences of the distinction of sex to appear any longer as a characteristic external factor is implied. Through the addition of more feminine characteristics to masculinity, masculinity was expressed as various sexes in social and cultural reemergence through the mass media.

As Anne Hollander said "The thing we think at present as a new androgyny is the women's cognitive operation to imitate Masculine Look rather than parallel movement toward to the middle point between masculinity and femininity", it shows that the notion toward the androgyny was focused on the women's imitation of Masculine Look. Even though today's fashion appears sort of androgynous, it cannot go over the gender's steady border but it may be thought that the pursuit of individual freedom from a certain limitation has stronger persuasive power to the moderns.

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