

Metro Sexual Formative Beauty Expressed in Men's Fashion on the 21C

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the formative beauty of metro sexual expressed on the 21C men's fashion. In 21C, metro sexual is being accepted as an object to lead the world consumption culture, and it is said to be most appropriate to the definition as a model that can determine the most modern men. Moreover, with well being life style, it shows characteristic that expresses chic sense through fashion.

The results of the study were as below.

1. In recent men's wear, sensory feminine that looks young and trendy is being presented through clothes, rather than the image of men who are strong. Therefore, by wearing splendid flower print, bold color and gorgeous accessories, men send off their attractions.

2. The recent body king syndrome gave new aesthetic value on men's body. Therefore, men's body is becoming cultural icon of metro sexual as another face that shows social status and cultural taste.

3. The men's image of metro sexual that is felt from softer skin and hair than women, and well-built body is appealing more through body conscious look. Here, men's body silhouette is being sublimated aesthetically through design with various materials such as see-through and leather etc., and this is body conscious image that can be seen only in metro sexual.

Like this, metro sexual fashion sense was expressed by feminine softness sometimes, and beautiful body silhouette sometimes by expressing one's sexiness enough, being away from conceptual masculine. Therefore, the appearance of metro sexual can be understood that men's body exposure is becoming a social virtue that expresses beauty.

Key words : metro sexual, body conscious, feminine, masculine, exposure beauty

I . Necessity and Purpose of the Study

Metro sexual as a trend in 21C is newly appeared by the image of pretty but strong man instead of the image of just pretty man that have been

popular among woman as ideal man. Moreover, as marketing targeting on metro sexual style that is explosively popular is raised, increasing number of young man envies and follows it. Fashion, beauty, hair and accessories are not exclusive things for only women anymore. Like women make up themselves every morning, taking care of their appearance is considered to be natural in metro sexual.¹⁾

In the culture that male-dominated culture is strong, men performs important works at important position with great capability. Otherwise, women live being ready to suffer the disadvantage that culture regulates in the situation that is subordinated to men. It is easy to prove the belief that men should be stronger, more active and intentional than women.²⁾

However, men and women living today are experiencing chaos of identification in several areas of life, as some men would like to display male character as rash tool even though they cannot find out the idea of modern men and some women look for role model from active female rather than living in peace at home. It means that the thought of healthy women and men should change the paternal capitalism society structure that threatens the life and male-dominated culture to equal culture that men and women can coexist as equal human being. Therefore, we should pursue change in several social systems as well as the language that should newly create value of manhood, humanlike life, peace, and equality.

In some point of view, they say that metro sexual trend is a falsehood to created new consumer target. This point is true when we think about the men who never spend their money and time for the fashion but this is a process that oppressed men's desire and character.

For example of our country, because of having a perfect body shape trend with a well-being life style, the trend of focusing manly beauty is now in fashion. In the other word, every men hope to show their individual and comfortable images, and many fashion items which are able to express refined modern sense are now widely used.

So, the purpose of this study was to fully understand the formative beauty of metro sexual. There-

fore, it was proposed in this study to focus the characteristics of the men's fashion of the 21C. We can find the researches in our daily life easily, and there is no researches related to men's fashion. So, the result of this study has a special meaning because it can be used as reference information in the similar study field. The methodology of the study was done by documentary information such as Internet, publication, and fashion magazine. And the area of the study limited its study field about men's fashion from year of 2000 to now.

II . The Concept and Social Background of Metro Sexual

1. The Concept of Metro Sexual

By the time of 21C, some people begin to say that a period of politics and religions are gone, and science and rational world has started.

This new generation men have intellectual style, refinement and self-cognition, and they don't sacrifice their life to affiliate of keeping traditional manly style. In the "independent" magazine in 1994, these people are named as a "metro sexual" by Mark Simpson, the author of England.³⁾

The real metro sexual is the men of new generation that knows respecting other people is the way to be respected, and talks about generosity and equality.⁴⁾

That's the most reasonable definition of judging the model of modern men as a metro sexual. New York Times chose the word "metro sexual" which is one of the newly coined words that will lead 2004. And U.S.A, the leader of consuming culture of the world accepted the metro sexual trend rapidly. Before that, it was common to emphasize the strong character of men and targeted them to buy tobacco, car and alcohol product. However,

instead of masochism, and they advertise metro sexual trend nowadays. New men's image from smoother skin than women, well-treated hair, well built body shape is appealed to both of men and women, and it becomes a new trend in the advertisement.⁵⁾

Whether it is fashion or car, modern ideal has been changed continuously in the society that is moved by the power of strategic capital. And it is also applied to the ideal body shape of modern people. Of course, new 21C metro sexual ideal body shape must be natural without needless fat. The time of bumpy muscle even with using a hormone injection has gone, and more healthier and thinner body is popular nowadays.⁶⁾ Also in our country, the popularity of metro sexual reminds us about "Missy fashion trend" boom in 1990.⁷⁾

2. Social Background of Metro Sexual

A man of feminine spirit and a girl of masculine spirit are everywhere. In spite of men's resistance and uneasiness, society of controlled men faces with crisis.⁸⁾ Feminism men feels nervous about the men who has the attitude of the men with struggle of emotional competition in order to protect themselves. On the other hands, non-feminist men has a complaint that feminist men are changed to be like women, and it damages the power of men. They are not suffering from the hard competition, but the weakened power of men. Here, the meaning of the men's power is understood as powerful, no talkative, and independent.⁹⁾

In the image of our general culture, the principle of men is constructed in variety. In 1990, Robert Bly mentioned about the manly model of USA in his book of <indomitable zone>. The men in the 1950 took serious about temperance and knew men's responsibility. But they were unhappy because

they were in a track mind very deeply.

The men in the 1960, with the influences from Vietnam War and women's movement, they found the feminine part inside them, and tried to treat women differently. Therefore, men became more thoughtful and soft but lost their freedom at home.¹⁰⁾

The problem of the men after 1970 was that their son asked help to women because they couldn't find the true model of the men from their father. As a result, they saw their own men's image through the women's point of view because they learned all emotion from their mother.¹¹⁾

So, Bly made an assertion in 1980 that men should show manly power such as to be quick in decision, tough, aggressive, strong, and dominate, not like the period of 1970.¹²⁾ It became a key to national and exotic culture formation, but it wasn't recognized or steady.

Through the time of 1980, we can enjoy the rejuvenated 'peacock' in the media and the public. They considered their body as the sexual tempted object that can be increased by choosing clothes and the way of wearing those. The changes of men's fashion custom brought the result of changed manhood. And it changed men's body as an object of the level of vision, exhibition, and decoration.¹³⁾

Recently, the body is taking the position of topic of conversation in the cultural discussion.¹⁴⁾ It means that people started to think about human body of not only simple biological part but also psychological, ideological, historical thing. 'Young' and 'thin', which are the human body's abstracted value, are object to envy for everybody in this age, and the body itself is now commercialized as the object of consumption by diet, surgical operation, health food, aerobic, health center, and Latin dance etc. Not like the past age, human body and fashion are being idolized to the object of consumption with

active meaning of taking care of and maintaining for themselves. Unlikely from the past that considered appearance was considered to be fixed at the time of birth, human body becomes fantasy including exchange value called as beauty and health by being invested and corrected towards the standard of ideal beauty in this age. Especially, this beauty and health are posted in magazine and advertisement endlessly, and makes fantasy about body and fashion by attracting or forcing customers.¹⁵⁾

Attractive person was considered to be more happy, successive, interesting, warm and aggregative. Also, even researches on lots of surveys about appearance and recognition of human are considering that the biggest factor consisting the fixed mole 'the beauty is good' is social pride of being socially capable, aggressive, popular and winning favors, and adaptability.¹⁶⁾

In the painting of the early 21C, sexual expression of male was not direct and opened. By transforming sexual conflict into 'higher' dimension of art by using so intentional and unique 'aesthetic' choice such as ultimate omission and distortion of shape and color, insist of male sexuality was sublimated and changed to the expression of artistic control, and the marks of aggression disappeared.¹⁷⁾ Like this, male sexuality has been changed variously in social recognition even through 20C, and in recent days, it is being discussed in aesthetic viewpoint through all formative arts.

III. Analysis of the Meaning of Metro Sexual expressed on the 21C Men's Fashion

1. Feminine Beauty in Masculine

Metro sexual that is called as the future image

of men has characteristics to follow the female behavior type traditionally in some kinds of core area. Metro sexual pursues masculine beauty as well as feminine beauty at the same time, and one of the characteristics is pretty face, city chic, well-built body, accessories and make-up, feminine or stylish hair style and fashion etc.¹⁸⁾

In the late 1990, guy who is handsome like pretty girl was boomed, but recently, metro sexual is being spotlighted as the newest concept of men in USA and Europe. The existence began to be recognized, as this sensible men group was named as 'Metro group' in UK. It means that men are becoming the world trend, and men's fashion changes into more luxurious and innovative. And interior only for men etc. is being interested greatly. Now, chic men means the man who has male and female characteristics at the same time, and takes good care of the inside and outside.¹⁹⁾

David Beckham, a football player of UK is the representative metro sexual. He has masculine feature as football player, and wears earring, changes hairstyle frequently, manicures, and likes diamond. In the feature of metro sexual that stimulates the instinct to protect rather than strong masculine character and has soft image, feminine taste can be felt.²⁰⁾

Marian Salzman, the strategy team head of Euro RSCG says that male in the class of vested rights explored female field, not losing their male character in 1990s that movement for the equality of the sexes was at its best.²¹⁾

Men who wear flower-printed clothes or gorgeous accessory and send forth their sexy mood in full are now making presentation as global trend. Men who have been pressed their character and senses in decent color such as black, gray and beige started to refuse to be locked in the frame of



<Fig. 1-1>
Kenzo 01,02/FW



<Fig. 1-2>
Yoji Yamamoto 03,04/FW



<Fig. 1-3> Rykiel
Homme 01,02/FW



<Fig. 1-4> Jean-charles
de Castelbajac 01,02/FW



<Fig. 1-5>
Gucci 03,04/FW



<Fig. 1-6>
Moschino 03,04/FW



<Fig. 1-7>
Hermes 04/SS



<Fig. 1-8>
Missoni 04/SS

other's eyes or fixed mold. Recently, men's clothes are using bold colors reminding passionate character of Spain, such as hot pink, dark purple, green or yellow that is strong as much as the sun etc. and even the bright and vivid colors such as red or orange etc. So it can be said that there is no taboo in the color of men's wear now.²²⁾

Considering of works of fashion designers, <Fig. 1-1> is a work of Kenzo that was shown with the start of new millennium. It is men's wear that feminine mood is full in brilliant flower-printed material. The work of Yamamoto in <Fig. 1-2>

shows soft feminine mood by applying bright and splendor flower-print material too to men's casual wear, and traditional masculine beauty is not seen. The work of Rykiel in <Fig. 1-3> is knit wear of vivid and passionate color such as hot pink and scarlet etc. and it suggests casual wear design that applies the color and material that have been considered as taboo in men's wear for the time being. Also, recently, various kinds of accessories are being in trend among men, and men's sense is being sent forth to female taste by wearing accessories such as muffler etc. without limiting the

expression. These senses can be acknowledged in the work of Rykiel that applied accessories such as muffler etc.

Like this, men's casual wear market is changing rapidly by the demand of age that pursues metro sexual, and this trend is shown more clearly through silhouette as well as pattern, color and accessories in men's wear. <Fig. 1-4> is the work of Jean Charles de Castelbajac, and men's wear design of tight jacket and tight pants silhouette with splendor color and pattern. This work is also implicating free and feminine image not strong image, being away from the hard and moderated muscular beauty of men only. The work of Gucci in <Fig. 1-5> is men's wear design that simplicity and brilliance of black & white are coexisting, too. In this design, it can be seen that V-zone, which had been shortened in the end of the age, became longer, and the number of button became various too. Most of all, it shows feminine silhouette through jacket that emphasizes the silhouette of waistline. Moreover, as more men do not wear tie, tight t-shirts are broadly used in men's wear, and these images are emphasizing feminine sexy mood naturally.

In the past, wide shoulder was the sign of men, and narrow shoulder was the sign of women. The wide shoulder of men is one of the secondary sex characters that start to be developed in adolescence. Because of this symbolism, men's shoulder has been exaggerated artificially with various methods for the width.²³⁾ However, the appearance of metro sexual is changing this idea to prejudice. Therefore, in recent days, narrow shoulder and slim bodyline are being raised newly, even though wide shoulder and hard style were main trend in men's wear of the past. It is needless to say that bodyline should be slim to digest this kind of style. Therefore, it means that modern women do not want muscle of

men any more in digital age, while muscular men were popular in the industrialized age that physical labor was main. Also, as the economic power of women is improved, society is rearranged centering on women, the range and image of women and men are overlapped, and masculine in female and feminine in male are raised, contrary to the past, goods that uncovers the sense of men are rapidly increasing. In the work of Moschino in <Fig. 1-6> that is men's casual wear that seems to revive women's wear silhouette of restoration mood, feminine beauty is sent forth. In case of <Fig. 1-7>, recent work of Hermes, it is sportive look that pursues freedom and comfort and gives naturalism and feminism by applying flower-printed natural material. And the recent work of Missoni in <Fig. 1-8> presents an ultimate feminine design with fitted silhouette and bold color of knitted upper garment. Like this, in recent men's wear, sensory feminine that looks young and trendy is being presented remarkably rather than strong masculine image, and it can be considered that the influence of metro sexual is dominating. Moreover, the style that waistline is exaggerated with bright and light color is popular among men because of the influence of metro sexual. And the flower-printed splendor material that used to be seen in women's wear is being used in men's wear broadly, and widens the range of choice for men.

2. Exposure Beauty

With the boom of health, exercise, and well being as it becomes 21C, exposure became bold as 'body that would like to show'. Every body is in the mood that boosts 'trained body' and accepts exposure as natural to some extent.

What would be the reason why the desire to expose does not disappear even though tabooing



<Fig. 2-1>
Moschino 00,01/FW



<Fig. 2-2>
Hannibal Laguna 01,02/FW



<Fig. 2-3>
d' Squared 01,02/FW



<Fig. 2-4>
d' Squared 03,04/FW



<Fig. 2-5>
Dior Homme 03,04/FW



<Fig. 2-6>
Luca Lanzoni 04/SS



<Fig. 2-7>
John Richmond 04/SS



<Fig. 2-8>
Antonio Miro 04/SS

exposure basically? Body exposure was self-satisfaction as well as the expression of beauty. Frugel said that clothes have ambivalence that hides body and would like to be show for human being. He even insisted that this ambivalence is the method of attractive temptation, and human exposes the inherent sexual desire through clothes, and human would be exterminated in the end if human lost curiosity on the body of the other sex by continuing the naked life.

In the social unconsciousness related to king of body, body does not mean organic body. Therefore,

the king of body is a cultural symbol of the age that body shape creates value and power. Another characteristic of body king syndrome is that it grants new aesthetic value even on men's body. So men's body became another face that shows social status, cultural taste and the level of self-management. These people who can represent new male attraction is sometimes recognized as cultural icon of metro sexual.²⁵⁾

They like the fashion that opens several buttons of jacket. As the interest on body is related to the pursuit of healthy beauty, social phenomenon or

body king syndrome that are difficult to evaluate is the expression of interests on beautiful and healthy body. Bust line is not only for women, and men are expressing their sexy character with neckline and collarbone line etc. Sexy is considered as a key word to show healthy life and well being philosophy rather than sexual feeling.²⁶⁾

Considering of these trend in fashion design, it was shown in the work of Moschino of <Fig. 2-1> by exposing neck and bust line, in the work of Hannibal Loguni of <Fig. 2-2> by indirect exposure through see-through material, and in the work of d'squared of <Fig. 2-3> by exposure of arm muscle and belly in sleeveless and hip-bone slacks design. Therefore, body exposure has been changed variously through design of men's wear in the history of fashion, but with the appearance of new millennium metro sexual, men's exposure of body through clothes became settled as trend, and also the recent characteristic is that various parts of body are being exposed naturally.

Jeong Do Eon,²⁷⁾ the professor of Seoul National University explains one of backgrounds of men's mind to exposure as a change of cultural trend and phenomenon that emerges from scholar culture that hides and moderates, and then shows and boosts oneself became a social virtue.

With the appearance of metro sexual, lots of fashion designers showed shirts with deep V-zone in men's wear collection of this season. The greatest characteristic of men's cleavage look is not to show muscles on the chest even when exposing the line, and it is connected to the attribute of metro sexual.²⁸⁾ Cleavage means the depressed part between the collar of chest, and cleavage look used to be known as valley look as the valley between bosoms is seen.

Originally, cleavage look is the clothes that exag-

gerate bosom silhouette of women, and it means chest that have used to symbolize women's power and sex appeared in men's fashion now. Therefore, in the past, fashion that exposes chest has a meaning that it commercializes sex and it is shallow. But this style that is so popular in recent days is recognized as positive style that exaggerates softness and sexual that men has, not being a simply shallow fashion. Now it is being accepted as a meaning to express self-pride and sexual health by exposing men's chest that has been hidden because of social common idea.²⁹⁾

The work of d'squared in <Fig. 2-4>, the work of Dior Homme in <Fig. 2-5> and the work of Luca Lanzoni in <Fig. 2-6> are the representative designs of cleavage look. The material, pattern and style are more feminine in recent days rather than in the early millennium, and it can be seen that the level of exposure is also becoming bold. Also the work of John Richmond in <Fig. 2-7> shows upper body as it is through netted t-shirt, and the casual wear work of Antonio Miro in <Fig. 2-8> is expressing metro sexual formative beauty with cleavage look with accessories such as feminine necklace and belt etc. Lee min-seon³⁰⁾ said that the factor of clothes that induce eroticism of men's fashion expressed through media is exposure and decoration, and this trend can be considered to be relieved in metro sexual trend.

3. Body Conscious Look

Body image is how people evaluate their body and feel how others see them. Body image changes endlessly, and it is transformed by biological growth, external wound and aging. Also, it is changed by pain or pleasure, and influenced by environment too. And the standard of idealistic beauty is determined by cultural standard, and it influences greatly



<Fig. 3-1>
John Bartlett 00,01/FW



<Fig. 3-2>
Versce 00,01/FW



<Fig. 3-3>
Yves Saint Laurent 00,01/FW



<Fig. 3-4> Iceberg 03/SS



<Fig. 3-5> Bally 03,04/FW



<Fig. 3-6> Dior Homme 04/SS

on the progress of body image. Self-concept of women is deeply related to the physical attraction and the self-concept of men is more related to the physical muscle.³¹⁾

Especially, the body conscious look that is shown in fashion works as metro sexual trend has characteristic that is more bold and feminine, and expresses body silhouette more artistically. Body conscious look is seen in the work of John Barlett of <Fig. 3-1> by knit wear of upper garments, in the work of Versace in <Fig. 3-2> by lace blouse, and in the work of Yves Saint Laurent in <Fig.

3-3> by leather material design. All these works exposes body silhouette that balances with art of clothes, not just exposing body silhouette. In addition, the characteristic of metro sexual is to express strong and rough image of leather material as soft and feminine. Especially, the work of Iceberg in <Fig. 3-4> is men's knitwear and was expressed as so feminine image. It can be considered as a design intended to exaggerate the beauty of men's body silhouette. The work of Bally in <Fig. 3-5> and the work of Dior Homme in <Fig. 3-6> are suggesting body conscious look by applying see

through material. Both works are all concentrating on feminine mood, but in case of the work of Dior, more splendid material is showing the recent men's wear trend, and it shows softness and feminine character with body silhouette.

As metro sexual is being popular and tight design bangs fashion industry, men's innerwear is also reborn with tight sexy design in chic color as much as reminding outer. Drawers that tightens hip and thigh line are also being settled as favorite item to makes outer style better among young men.

In recent days, body is the most important subject of cultural discussion. In early days, human body was considered as crime as subject and object of sexual desire, and clothes were created to suppress and interrupt the subject of this desire. However, for a long time, clothes have been described as a form of literature by being connected to sexual desire and eroticism of human. And clothes have been expressing this eroticism naturally according to the liberalization, socialization and commercialization of sex.³²⁾

For ages, fashion has been functioning as an index of cultural attributes and social status in all societies. The important thing in metro sexual is that should announce difference from others consciously according to self-will, not attracting other's eyes with clothes. That means, expressing sense by diversifying small point is more impressive rather than decorating too much.³³⁾

Therefore, as thin men become idealistic figure of new age, it can be seen that men's fashion is changing focused on them. As narrow sleeve or slacks, tight shirts and slim-line jacket are preferred, now men are trying to have slim and slender body shape.

IV. Conclusion

In the 21C, as metro sexual that has pretty and strong image of men appears newly, marketing targeting on them is rising. Metro sexual is being accepted as an object to lead the world consumption culture, and it is said to be most appropriate to the definition as a model that can determine the most modern men. Moreover, with well being life style, it shows characteristic that expresses chic sense through fashion.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyze the formative beauty of metro sexual expressed on the 21C men's fashion. The results of the study were as below.

1. Feminine character in masculine: In recent men's wear, sensory feminine that looks young and trendy is being presented through clothes, rather than the image of men who are strong. Therefore, by wearing splendid flower print, bold color and gorgeous accessories, men send off their attractions. Here, the image of men that have been tied in the frame of fixed male was already broken and feminine sexy was exaggerated.

2. Exposure beauty: The recent body king syndrome gave new aesthetic value on men's body. Therefore, men's body is becoming cultural icon of metro sexual as another face that shows social status and cultural taste. Even in fashion, men's body exposure that is presented as a part of costume design not as a simple exposure in the past was being expressed aesthetically as exposure of waist, hip, shoulder, and indirect exposure with see-through material were becoming more bold.

3. Body conscious look: The men's image of metro sexual that is felt from softer skin and hair than women, and well-built body is appealing more through body conscious look. Here, men's body

silhouette was being sublimated aesthetically through design with various materials such as see-through and leather etc., and this was body conscious image that can be seen only in metro sexual.

Like this, formative beauty of metro sexual was diversified by having fashion taste that delivers inner message consciously according to one's will, not showing oneself with odd clothes that can make others eyebrows furrowed. Therefore, their fashion sense was expressed by feminine softness sometimes, and beautiful body silhouette sometimes by expressing one's sexiness enough, being away from conceptual masculine. Therefore, the appearance of metro sexual could be understood that men's body exposure was becoming a social virtue that expresses beauty.

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