Study on Anti- Lookism An analysis through Modern art and Fashion

So Eunjeong* · Kang Heemyoung
Candidate for Ph.D, Dept. of Fashion Design, Dongduk Women’s University*
Lecturer, Dept. of Fashion Design, Dongduk Women’s University

Abstract

In modern society, humans’ misdirected aspirations towards ideal beauty are discussed and criticized. This research utilizes a paradox to express the modern standard of beauty and the society’s homogenization of it through plastic surgery. An empirical analysis was conducted of the artist’s works that reflect anti-lookism. The works were classified as provocation, aesthetic, symbolic and paradoxical depending on the variety of the artists’ approaches and expressions. Also, this part looks at anti-lookism cases in modern fashion industry that were given lascivious expressions. They characterized various types of human beauty. Anti-lookism is a movement that goes against this social trend. It seeks to awaken modern citizens from blind submission to homogenized beauty and commercialization of humans.

This study intends to offer an image of ideal beauty that should appreciate and the concept of an ideal female body. The author hope that further researches are done in social, political, cultural and other levels of the society to establish anti-lookism.

Key Words : Lookism, Anti-lookism, Ideal beauty, anti- fashion, anorexia

I. Introduction

In modern society, as social and cultural interests grow, appearance is considered more important than any other standards in judging people. Although a standard of ideal beauties exits in every era, the standard for beauties, in modern times, is getting unified because beauties are overly emphasized. A sociocultural standard for outward beauty was perceived as it was spot lighted in various mass media, and it also internalized an unrealistic, fascinating image. That is, outward looks that mass media show are not reflecting realities but wrapped by body managements, make-ups, and the like.1) Photos are made up by perspectives, mechanical manipulations, etc., and moreover, objects are constituted from a special stance and images of human body are artificially processed.

Corresponding author: So Eunjeong, Tel.+82-10-7476-3532
E-mail: eunjeong.so@gmail.com
Lookism examined in a previous study is a new social trend that appeared together with capitalism, and studies on it have not been done a lot so far. Especially, lookism is a social phenomenon, most of the studies on it have done from subjective perspectives rather than objective perspectives. Although art works reflecting anti-lookism have been created multi-laterally in the field of modern arts, diverse studies to emphasize seriousness of the current social trends in mass media, such as fashion magazines, have been done tenuously. By observing from various perspectives anti-lookism that appeared in the modern fashion, I will reconsider the roles of human bodies in the society of appearance for appearance’s sake, and, at the same time, by suggesting various images of beauty, I will be able to reconsider self-identity about beauty which was lost because of unified ideal beauty.

Method of this study is compare to expressive feature of anti-lookism phenomenon appearing in modern art and expressive features of anti-lookism appearing in fashion design. By analyzing from various perspectives the lookism phenomenon in modern society, this study intend to realize anti-lookism with the thought of the times, ‘ontological stabilities’, that a body is a direct area where self-identity of a commercialized body can be recognized. I classified anti-lookism works in the modern art and fashion industry

as provocation, symbolic, and paradoxical in terms of expression modes. Significance in that it can realize anti-lookism conveying important messages of a current social phenomenon by researching theoretical grounds and various shapes of human bodies and by researching profound works.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Definition and Concept of Lookism

Lookism is a compound word of Look and ism, and this represents appearance for appearance’s sake or appearance discrimination which people, believing appearance divides superiority and inferiority among individuals and segregates success and failure, cling to. Pointing out ‘appearance’ as one of the causes that brought inequality in the human history together with race, sex, religion, ideology, and so on, he defined lookism as a trend or a social fashion that people believe appearance determines superiority and inferiority among individuals and success and failure of lives and that they excessively stick to it.

2. Cause of Lookism Occurrence

Social structural causes of the lookism occurrence are technological innovations in visual media rapidly growing in the latter modern society, extensions of capitalism markets targeting the young, rapid growth of the beauty industry and beauty techniques in the consumer society, and so on. And its social influence is that the beauty industry is consistently growing and an obsession with beauty will be greater.

Along with visual media rapidly growing in the latter modern society, the expansion of lookism is not a problem of only the western societies. Lookism that implies inaccurate judgments or valuations, prejudice, and discrimination, all coming from physical appearance or outward images, may more foster the disintegration and conflicts of our society together with ideology and sex. To examine fundamental problems, I researched the causes of the lookism occurrence.