

A Historical Review on Aesthetic Characteristics of Male Elegance in Dress

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Abstract

Elegance in dress has been mentioned as an important term for explaining a beauty of dress and a fashion image through the times in the history of dress. Nevertheless, it has been spoken indeterminately without analyzing the accurate meaning. In addition, almost all the scattered discourses of it were very limited to womenswear.

The purpose of this study is to provide a framework for a better understanding of the concept of elegance and its aesthetic characteristics expressed visually on dress from the holistic viewpoint, focusing on male elegance in dress. To obtain the purpose, the documentary study and the practical analysis were carried out.

Elegance in dress is based upon the idea of aristocratic taste cultivated by good breeding. It is expressed visually through not only the carefully contrived dress but also a sort of aura of dressed body with skillful ease. Its aesthetic values consist of luxury, nobility, refinement, femininity, harmony.

Though male elegant styles had already existed throughout the history of dress, it was Mannerism in the 16th century which expressed 'studied elegance' for the first time. On the grounds of both the classification of periodic styles and the periodic values, they can be defined and categorized into Mannerism Elegance, Salon Elegance, Modern Elegance Since Dandyism, Aestheticism Elegance. In the late 20th century they can be recognised as Classic Dandyism Elegance, Soft Casual Elegance, Elaborate Heroic Elegance.

Although male elegance in dress has been visualized in different ways depending on periodic values, it has essentially been a refined beauty of high class which was valued until recent years. Its common plastic features appear as soft shapes, subtle

colors and delicate fabrics modulated with exquisiteness and well-adorned appearance, graceful behavior make elegant styles completed. All of elegant styles have in common with refinement, harmony as main aesthetic values.

Key words : male elegance in dress, plastic features, aesthetic values, refinement, harmony

I . Introduction

Elegance in dress has been mentioned as a term for explaining a beauty of dress and a fashion image. Elegance, a good taste cultivated in appearance, attire and manners etc. by good breeding(*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989; 733), has often been stated as a luxurious image in fashion trends since 1990s.

Nevertheless, it has been spoken indeterminately without understanding the accurate meaning. Moreover, the idea of analyzing it has been generally ignored by scholars. So far there have been some discourses that deal with elegance within the limits of chic, dandyism(Jang, 1975; Cho, 1989), or that explain it as a fashion image, or that provide a guide for well-dressed men in conduct books. Even such scattered discourses were very limited to womenswear.

Recognizing the necessity of research into it, Eicher(2001) argued personal elegance as a carefully contrived outfit with skillful ease that seemed effortlessly assembled. It focused on a case study of male elegance in the 20th century and cross-cultural applications. But it could not be enough to present a more systematic concept of elegance as a beauty of dress and its aesthetic characteristics.

Accordingly this paper focuses on clarifying the concept of elegance from a holistic viewpoint and chooses to approach the history of elegant styles more extensively to find out their visual aesthetic characteristics. As Eicher pointed out that women were not the only ones who had been interested in elegance, it is thought that male elegance in dress should be considered to cover its concept thoroughly.

The purpose of this study is to provide a framework for the concept of elegance in dress, to understand its sociocultural meanings and to interpret the phenomenon of elegant dressing represented in modern fashion. This will provide a better understanding of a beauty of dress, a visual form of a refined and harmonious beauty embodied in each periodic style. Furthermore it will give an introspection of both physical and mental culture such as styles, tastes, moralities, attitudes. For the purpose, the documentary study and practical analysis have been carried out by means of various

sources related to aesthetics, sociology, the history of dress, the aesthetics of dress.

II. A Holistic Review of the Concept of Elegance in Dress

1. The Meaning of Elegance in Sociocultural and Aesthetic Contexts

To draw a definition from *Webster, Oxford, Empas, Yahoo dictionary*, elegance is refined luxury, taste, manners, grace expressed in human's attire, appearance, behaviour, attitude or in artifact by means of elaboration and restriction based upon good breeding, good taste, which leads to pleasant attractiveness as a excellent beauty.

The meaning of good breeding, good taste involving elegance is hierarchical concept implying a noble birth. In such a context, Bourdieu(1997; 20~21) argued that one's cultural practice depending on habitus, life style reflecting his taste tended to reveal hierarchical characteristics, acquired in his family or through educational systems since childhood. A good taste exclusive as an index of class has been preoccupied with high class holding cultural hegemony.

In that sense, for him, an aristocratic taste as a good taste could be investigated as a luxurious refined taste distant from coarse and vulgar instinct or physical necessity, which showed the luxury of abundance of expensive and rare product, the embellishment of every practice, the ethos of aristocratic grace. Unlike a popular taste, it reflects the aesthetics of high class implying understated intellectual pleasure, aloof superiority. Therefore it could be connected with elegance.

Elegance as one of aesthetic categories has been argued as a refined beauty of natural grace presented by virtue of the training of skills and a feminine attractiveness of delicateness, fragility, softness opposed to masculine sublime. And it means a beauty of moderation, harmony of 'beautiful souls'(Schiller, 1999) in other words, harmony between rationality and emotion. But as a lovely and pleasing beauty, it is often described vaguely in that it would be expressed as various forms and do not necessarily follow the rules.

After all, aesthetic values of elegance can be featured by 1)luxury related to preciousness and rarity of high price, high quality 2)Nobility connected with formal ethos of manners, rules, cleanness, self-controls opposed to instinctive pleasure, popularity 3)refinement by means of training of skills 4)femininity of fluidity, subtlety, delicateness 5)harmony signifying moderation between rationality and emotion. Particularly refinement and harmony appear to play an important role in elegance, and share with the other aesthetic values.

2. The Concept of Elegance in Dress

Generally to observe one's attire is to notice his dressed body techniques such as countenance, gesture, attitude as well as dress. The way of controlling the dressed body is to be acquired by education, therefore it can be a sign representing class. The most important thing of clothing behaviors of high class is to display their lifestyle based upon enough leisure not involved with physical labors.

Elegance in dress can be interpreted as a refined aristocratic taste on the basis of habitus, lifestyle displaying the freedom from physical labor, the aristocratic idleness and leisure. It centers on intellectual familiarity and refinement related to many years' learnings by virtue of plentiful time and money.

From a closer look at the meaning of refinement, there are two important elements coexisting. The one is 'elaboration' meaning to embellish opulently and complicatedly with delicateness and the other is 'restriction' meaning to make refined and reduced into a pure state. As a result, elegance has much to do with intellectual connoisseurship. Davis(1992; 39) adapted Victorian womenswear and menswear to 'elaborate code' and 'restricted code' which Basil had used in a study on the linguistics of class. As well, they can be adapted to refinement in elegance.

Just as the term 'elaborate code' can not be excluded from elegance which needs the refined techniques to deck up, neither can 'restricted code' as Nuzzi(1980) told that the elegant person should not wear anything conspicuous or extreme and is the one who make himself by means of discretion.

Because elaboration and restriction, both of them are rather interactive than contradictory, it can be regarded that elegance is a kind of equilibrium between them. To have priority is a matter of the way of expression depending on each style. The visual form of expression can be thought to be classified into an elaborate code which is not so much self-indulgence as restricted elaboration, a restricted code which is not too acetic, and fused code which combined with each other.

A true elegance in dress is visualized as both fastidious contrived attire and body technique with aristocratic ethos which seem effortless by the way of expression elaboration and restriction. We should take notice of the concept of elegance as an aura of harmony involving dressed body techniques as well as dress(Dariaux, 1964; xiii). A truly elegant woman allows her entire personality to shine forth, not by exaggerating one detail. Every aspect of her is related to her other aspects, and consequently, all parts of her must be harmonized in her appearance(Lincourt, 1999; 292).

It is necessary to discuss the aesthetic values as internal meaning as well as

external visual characteristics. Adapting aesthetic values of elegance to the specialty of dress, luxury features the rarity and opulence of materials, the craftsmanship for excellent qualities, genuineness. Nobility, related to the lady and the gentleman, can be explained as neatness, decency, modesty, and appropriateness for formal occasions. Refinement involves artifice, sophistication, maturity, and subtleness. Femininity reflects the characteristic of feminine attractiveness such as the dainty, the florid, the sweet. Harmony means organic unity, matching with body, moderation opposed to exaggeration.

Expressed as an aura with attractiveness regardless of the rules, elegance in dress may not be visualized as one regular style. But it is certain that elegance is a luxurious beauty with refinement and harmony suggesting the taste of high class and that elegant styles estimated in public through the history of dress have existed .

Just as the universal aesthetic consciousness of every period has been visualized in every cultural style including appearance, dress, so have elegant styles. In next chapter, a practical inquiries on aesthetic characteristics of elegant styles described through the history of dress from a stylistic view will be carried out. For an analysis of plastic features of elegance embodied as an aura, appearance and body techniques as well as dress will be dealt with.

III. A Historical Review on Male Elegance in Dress

Elegant styles have developed from a civilized culture of human being.(Lincourt, 1999; 294) But it was Mannerism in the 16th century which expressed 'studied elegance'(Diassailly, No date; 7) for the first time. On the grounds of both the classification of periodic styles and the periodic values, elegance styles can be defined and categorized into Salon Elegance, Modern Elegance, Aestheticism Elegance since Mannerism.

There was an inclination to cultivate dress, behavior, manner, influenced by observers' review and validation in court in the 16th century. It could be defined as Mannerism Elegance. In a salon of baroque of the 17th century and rococo of the 18th century, aristocrat pursued good taste, niceties influenced by contemporary art. It could be named as Salon Elegance.

Since French Revolution, menswear changed into modernity as a restricted elegance of dandyism, which is the origin of modern menswear. It could be explained as Modern Elegance. Aestheticism Elegance was proposed against ascetic plainness of

dandyism by a group of artists and highbrows who had cultural capital. At last this chapter will discuss elegant styles expressed in more various forms in the end of the 20th century.

1. Mannerism Elegance

1) Plastic Features of Mannerism Elegance

Every artificial endeavors for appearance were taken in the 16th century. In particular, Henry III(Diassailly, No date; 78), Henry IV had been told to be interested in their cosmetic and hairdo. In addition, wearers' behaviour, attitude were polished to make elegance complete. According to *Il Cortegiano*, Castiglione(Contini, No date; 140~142) discussed gentlemen's graceful behaviors in details. Here, elegance meant 'spontaneous grace(sprezzatura)' which seemed effortless in the consequence of many years' discipline, as an index of distinction of aristocratic superiority.

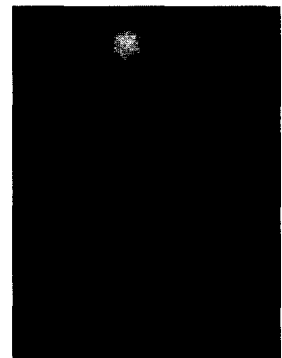
Mannerism Elegance was 'studied elegance' from head to toe. The aristocrat in court tried to change their dresses and spent much time adorning themselves everyday to display their superiority.

Intellectual experiments of Mannerists started from manipulating the forms for subtle effects which could not be made only by harmony. The shapes of dress were distorted against natural body contour and resulted in more geometrical and abstract ones. Men's pointed doublet consisted of stiffly swollen chest and slim waist by tight lacing, making their body more elongated.

With an extreme daintiness, various artistic skills were adapted to colors and fabrics. Noble black matching with white details was used more refinedly. Also the refinement of other subtle tones resulted from shadow effect when various materials such as satin, velvet, taffeta, fur were combined in one clothes.

2) Aesthetic Values of Mannerism Elegance

In the 16th century, showing the turnover to humanism, to keep the dignity of human body, luxury and nobility in the background of its refinement and harmony was featured. For luxury, rare expensive jewelry and luxurious materials were opulently used. Qualities and beauty of materials were valued much of. Besides, there was exquisiteness of academic efforts in details. For example, there were very exquisite surface embellishments, showing excellent craftsmanship, such as pink,



<fig.1> Sir Raleigh
(Ashelford, J., *op. cit.*
p. 38)

pane, puff as well as embroideries, jewels, braids<fig.1>. In addition, exquisite luxury like clean linen handkerchiefs for courtly etiquette, perfumed gloves was popular.

Mannerism Elegance was endowed with the aesthetic refinement, not seized by extravagance, although it was costly elegance filled with opulence and splendor. Most materials were used in dark, subtle tones, creating more delicate effects for courtly grace.

Some items restricting wearer's movement like ruff, skin-tight hose, boots reflected the aristocratic superiority and nobility, with gentlemen's graceful behaviors in details.

2. Salon Elegance

1) Plastic Features of Salon Elegance

Gentlemen in the 17~18th century took pains in not only appearance like slim limbs, cheerful complexion, smiling face, fluid movements, but also artificial grooming as powdered hairdo, make up. Because of the periodic needs for refined etiquettes, manners, there were too many rules of behavior in details(Griffin, 2002; 213~214).

According to Mme de Stäel(Contini, No date; 182), gentlemen should strive to select their attires with professional merchants and craftsmen and to pay attention to every detail every morning<fig.2>. Regarding opulent details of dress and exquisite accessories, they sensed gorgeousness and luxury as refined grace. Specially exquisite wigs and hats, as an extreme symbol of formal manners, prevailed.

Hence, Salon Elegance is featured in a rhythmically flowing feminine curve, subtly fused shape, delicately muted tones, such as lilac, mauve, Nile, maize, rich fabrics revealing aristocratic grace such as satin, brocade, velvet.

2) Aesthetic Values of Salon Elegance

In a salon, elegant styles were very luxurious ones full of aristocratic idleness and leisure which was essentially urban, refined and artificial. Main values were refinement, harmony, femininity and luxury.

Each of most refined style, by means of minute inquiries on line, color, material and various details, revealed perfect skills modulated with exquisiteness and completed gorgeous fantasy and fluid effects as a kind of art work.

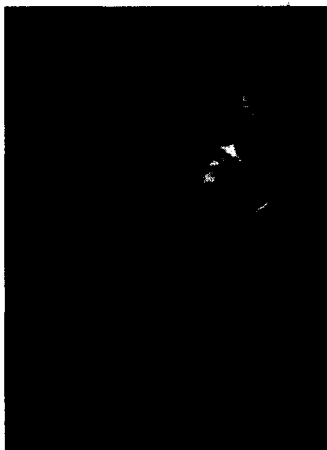
Soft and sweet styles of feminine curve, subtle colors, delicate fabrics showed up rather fine feminine feelings than magnificent and spectacular beauty. Such a harmonious refinement was completed up by the way of dressing studied by arbitrator of elegance<fig.3>.

On the elegance of this period, the change of hierarchical system through redistribution of wealth, had a influence. Contemporary aristocratic society enjoyed the attractiveness of luxury and sought for elegant lifestyle. As a visual symbol of class, if it was more exquisite contemporary dress, it meant higher in the status. Under the belief that the splendor of surface stands for higher class, there were a lot of surface embellishment, such as gold and silver embroideries, lace inset, spangles, foils. In addition, luxurious details were outstanding, such as diamond-embroidered buttonholes and velvet lining.

As luxury went to extremely skillful and brilliant, the society corrupted more and more. Aesthetic superfluity of extreme elegance could be found out in Macaroni, Muscadin(Lipovetsky, 1999; 118). Macaroni's attire of extreme luxury introduced in 1764, which was extreme hairdo, fitted formal coat, sharply-toed shoes with big buckle was originally based on luxurious, graceful elegance of ancien regime and made a political statement that it differentiated from simple dark suit of rich merchant and gentry<fig.4>. However, their aristocratic avant-garde style were deviated from moderation of elaboration in elegance.



<fig.2> Endeavor for Elegance(Contini, M., *op. cit.*, p. 190)



<fig.3> 17c The Way of Dress(McDowell, C., *op. cit.*, p. 34)



<fig.4> Macaroni (McNeil, P., *op. cit.*, p. 426)

3. Modern Elegance

1) Plastic Features of Modern Elegance

The turnover into modern restricted style had sprung from dandyism right after

French revolution in the 18th Century and the early period of industrial revolution. Dandyism means aristocraticism of tastes in attitudes as well as attire. Its aristocraticism was represented from scholastic endeavor forward excellence and originality like excellent connoisseurship, skills of styling, courtesy, etc. Dandy always was well groomed and well-mannered with exquisiteness. He did not sell their bodies like courtesans and never made ill of others(Wilson, 1985; 182).

Menswear since dandyism had tended to display 'studied plainness' of woolen suits of subdued colors, skin-tight boots, top hat. Although menswear since the 19th century had been argued as 'the great male renunciation', but men of high class had worn various styles in fashion. The luxury and ostentation of the previous century had been replaced by a deliberate asceticism(Craine, 2000; 28). Namely, they had demanded a change of style not a rejection of elegance(McDowell, 1992; 36).

Male fashion has taken the revision of modern tailoring of dandy. Generally, male elegance since dandyism has been represented as body-conscious line, dull tone and flexible wool which is appropriate for revealing along the body line, aiming at simple naturalness. It has concentrated on the qualities of materials and fit.

2) Aesthetic Values of Modern Elegance

The important aesthetic values were refinement, harmony and nobility. Dandy's project, the aesthetic creation of an original persona, was in itself a work of art (Wilson, 1988; 229). A ceaseless effort for perfect and refined attire was exposed through developing the way of dressing in each detail. It indicated explorations of beauty, conspicuous leisure, discipline of connoisseur taste.

Inconspicuousness has played a great role in refined styling since dandyism. Luxury on modern menswear lay not so much in abundant richness like gorgeous materials and ornamentation as in excellent qualities for exquisiteness like fabric of good quality, perfect tailoring, impeccable grooming. Accordingly Modern Elegance added subtle originality to itself. Especially, carefully contrived fit was essence for dandies, therefore they were told to have pride in their skin-tight breeches[Fig.5]. It was to create basic grace of human body, deviated from surface embellishment. As a Modernist, Mallarme(Lehmann, 2000; 96) knew that the impeccable habit noir was all expressions of the purist aesthetics and it should be judged in term of simplicity and cut not by its decorative value alone. That meant aspects of ornament, aesthetics of form, rather than ornamentation(Tatarkiewicz, 1992; 197). Elegance of purism showed effortless exquisiteness, refined grace, harmony with human body, quite different from snobbish bourgeois.

Refined inconspicuousness since dandyism also was revealed through appropriateness. Loos considered, "the correct way of dressing implies wearing the right clothes for the right occasion and to be dressed correctly, one should go unnoticed in the center of culture."(Lehmann, 2002; 156, 158, 181) Accessories such as top hat, silk tie, gloves, watch, cleanly-arranged umbrella became important. In spite of weakening of formal wear since World War I, appropriateness has still been important<fig.6>.

The cleanness of perfect grooming implying nobility was an index of male elegance. For gentleman, his servant maintained his clothes, accessories in pristine states. Shaving and hairdo led to neatness. Especially the cleanness of white linen shirts symbolized his exclusion from physical labors<fig.7>.

Since the middle of the 19c, aesthetics of restricted dandyism corresponded to the rational, acetic ideal of bourgeois under Victorian patriarchy. As a good form, tailoring suit became a uniform. For Mallarme, in beauty and usefulness, usefulness in its own, if the purpose is mediocre, could express only in elegance.(Lehmann, 2002; 60) Modern Elegance had essentially been a proper combination of both of them, but philosophy of bourgeois monotonous suit had not. Against it, aestheticism were introduced.



<fig.5> Fit
(Boucher,
p. 353)



<fig.6> Gentlemen Dressed Properly
(Mendes & de la Haye, *op. cit.*, pp. 44~45)



<fig.7> Neatness of
Shirt(落合正勝,
p. 223.)

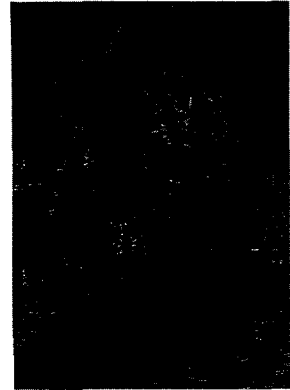
4. Aestheticism Elegance

1) Plastic Features of Aestheticism Elegance

Aestheticism means a belief on beauty of which ultimate goal places on aesthetic

enjoyment(竹内敏雄, 1989; 510). Aestheticists, members of sophisticated groups like artists and highbrows, showed a noble and uninterested attitude as well as a contempt against philistine bourgeois searching for industrial materialism.

Aestheticism Elegance appeared against monotonous unity of contemporary men's fashion. It had retro tendency of velvet jacket, knee breeches, loose tie. Wilde<fig.8>, supporter of Aestheticism, were wearing curvy hair style of elegant hairdo, coat with large satin lapel, knee breeches, well groomed shoes. His lapel with lilies, sun flowers, the symbol of elegance, had been remembered and he had been well-known as a fop wearing silk stockings in his breeches. He insisted on expression of personality in one's taste which had been an original ideal of dandyism. It was most deplorable for him not to use fanciful color tones any more(Lee, 1989; 49~50).



<fig.8> Oscar Wilde
(Lee, J.M., *op. cit.*,
p. 70)

2) Aesthetic Values of Aestheticism Elegance

Main aesthetic values were sophistication and harmony. In 1884 Wilde, lecturing on dress, told "One should either be a work of art or wear a work of art."(Watt, 1999; 228). Endeavor for refined taste and beauty took intellectual eclecticism of sophisticated approach to form. Regarded contemporary simplified fashion as vulgar, it was suggested to use more refined, fanciful tones and gorgeous fabrics instead of dull tone and simple fabrics. Here, decoration meant fused code as relatively elaborate one. Refinement, harmony were discovered from endeavor for impeccable grooming and refined dress up as well as involved colors of the hothouse(Watt, 1999; 229).

This elegant style against contemporary philistine taste, was one of subculture with cultural capital whose ultimate goal was a recherche for true beauty of good taste. If the previous elegance had been for distinction through luxury, nobility, this intellectual elegance was absorbed in only refinement, harmony as genuine aesthetic values. In spite of it, contemporary fashion could not adopt it, on the grounds of its homosexual effeminacy.

5. Male Elegance in Dress Since the Late of 20th Century

1) Classic Dandyism Elegance

Elegance of modern tailoring suit originated from purism of dandyism has been

prevailed regardless of fashion as traditional standardized classics of conservatism (Anspach, 1967; 249). The stability of classic results from originality of its excellent quality and timeless design. Classics are favoured of because men tend to choose their dress conservatively based upon patriarchy.

Especially traditional tailoring of Savile Row has shown formal attire with appropriate accessories displaying impeccable tailoring of dandical Edwardian line. For Rutherford (Conekin, Dec.2000; 458), a fashion editor of *Playboy*, the formal suit of well-dressed man was to be supposed to be conservative and elegant and to have distinctive details of styling and complete grooming. One of the greatest achievements of male classics-apart from "making some beautiful", though often over priced clothes- was to extend the range of various men's accessories of the 'gentleman's wardrobe' such as handkerchiefs, watches, socks, fountain pens, cufflinks, belts, scarves with which to dress up one's classic became available in a variety unprecedented (Ash, Wilson, 1992; 46).

Wearing in suits is no more than a kind of habit, however one's attitude is the product of refined learning, involving repetitive exercise for it. The elegance of Prince Charles attired in traditional tailoring has no blame in it (fig.9). This thoroughbred English tradition can be described as an authentic fashion made of natural fabrics of high quality such as cashmere, silk, which emphasize ethical superiority and nobility of high class more than economic priority.

2) Soft Casual Elegance

In the late of 20th century, Italian ready to wear of clean cut became well-known for refined luxury. Particularly influential was Armani's. The aesthetics of Italian suit is interpreted as a understated elegance which seems effortless. Italian suit does not follow the rules strictly, but emphasizes aesthetic individuality. Buss argued that the concept of 'made in Italy', hitherto the guarantee of fine materials, excellent workmanship and good taste (Steele, 1992; 106).

In keeping with the more dressed-down mood of the late of 20th century, many men discarded their power suits in favor of softer, more subtly tailored garments with sloping shoulders and a long, lean fit (Mendes & de la Haye, 1999; 256) Armani understood although consumers were rejecting formality in favour of more casual clothing, they didn't want to give up elegance (Mendes & de la Haye, 1999; 24). His soft casual styles as an easeful elegance (*Elle*, 1993.3) had attracted the persons who had intention to look cultivated and serious. He introduced, without padding and stiff inter-linings, a unstructured look with easeful and softer line. He added softer warmer

shades such as beige, taupe to menswear's palette and used softer, more easily draped 'luxury' fabrics such as lightweight cashmere, silk and wool blends, which have a greater tactile appeal than the tightly woven wools more typical of men's suit<fig.10>. If the tailored suit had long signified businesslike respectability, now it also has projected an image combining sensuality and physical power.(Steele, 1992; 132).

Main issue of recent male fashion lies on relative relaxation although it can not have been accepted in the sense of correct dress up. There have been some tendencies that after business hour more relaxed styles are favored than strict formal wear such as at least pullover, softer tones, lightweight materials.

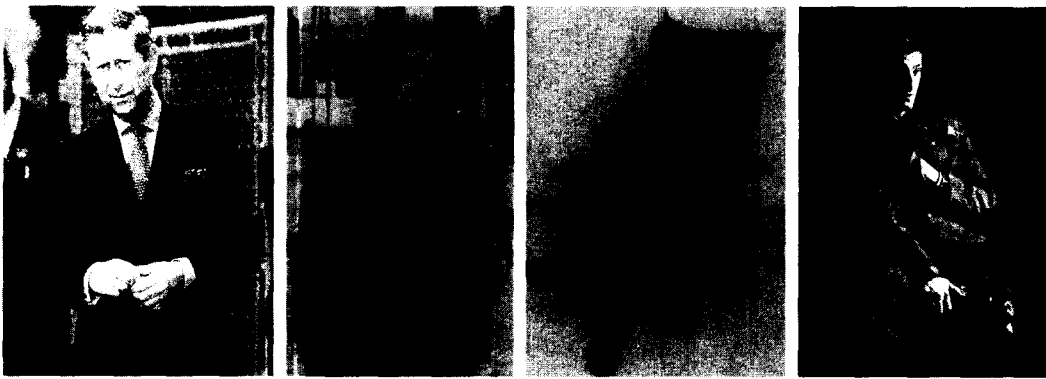
Relaxed elegance(Boston, 1998; 112~131) is the ability to take a fastidiously contrived clothing ensemble and make it appear effortlessly assembled, by choosing garments that fit perfectly, conveys a sophistication but never register as constricting or dandy-overdone. Quality fabrics express the high level of taste, as do the casual, fluid drape of the cloth, perfect fit and appropriate details<fig.11>. By combining the classic elements of traditional menswear with the forward aspects of contemporary sportswear, it means less buttoned up than a suit, but not as casual as jeans and sneakers. The fit should be generous but not sloppy. And there are fine gauge sweater, exposing feet its common courtesy to keep them pedi-cured. In soft casual elegance, refinement and harmony reflecting casual modes of modern society, can be considered main aesthetic values.

3) Elaborate Heroic Elegance

As in a new society, business suit has gotten an important place as power dressing. A desirable man is no more an aristocrat than an active and competent businessman. Therefore dark business suit with rational functionalist beauty means 'dress for success' representing professionalism and credibility. For a new man, male fashion tends to think little of elaborate qualities of dress and admires body itself. Despite of it, male beauty has not gone out. Menswear collection, according to Voucher, a fashion journalist of Esquire, is predicted as 'return to Heroic Elegance' (Ashelford, 1996; 217~218) which used luxurious fabrics, particular details, french cuffs and exquisite cufflinks, impressive accessories, and is described as return to refinements, elegance, nobility, richness<fig.12>. The aim of these clothing is to express heroism intending to bring adoration to its wearers. It is typical male privilege never out of date and is a clear statement on power, and placing a main value on luxury.

The extravagant and fanciful tendency of male elegance comes from what

Aestheticism was. The phenomenon of extravagantly dressed and decorated men was labelled 'peacock'. Since Macaroni of the 18th century, Aesthetic movement of the 19th century, the peacock male had been a fop rather than a dandy in the sense that the dandy originally exemplified a restrained male elegance(Evans & Thornton, 1989; 37). It has developed into a street style. Feminine and expressive details such as flower prints, ruffles, pastel tones, handkerchiefs of subculture like New Romantics has been symbolized a gay culture(Evans & Thornton, 1989; 193). This aestheticism since 20c has meant a deviation from elegance, related to homosexual cultures, as did the previous aestheticism.



<fig.9> Classic E.
(落合正勝, *op. cit.*,
p. 39)

<fig.10> Casual
E.(Mendes & de
la Haye, *op. cit.*,
p. 260)

<fig.11> Relaxed E.
(Boston, L., *op. cit.*,
p. 129)

<fig.12> Elaborate
E.(Farid. C. Jean
Paul Gaultier, p. 24)

*E는 Elegance의 약자

IV. Aesthetic Characteristic of Male Elegance in Dress

1. Plastic Features of Male Elegance in Dress

Aesthetic characteristic of male elegant styles appeared differently, depending on periodic values. But if they are put together, it is discovered that they have soft lines, subtle colors and lights, delicate fabrics, refined with exquisiteness in common. Soft and fluid curves, delicately fused outlines are characteristics and each matches with organic unity. The range of colors has reached to soft and subtly muted tones as well as white whose symbol is exclusion from labor, and black which suggests refined restriction. These colors and lights have been combined with refinements. Aristocratic

materials of high price, high qualities such as silk, chiffon, velvet, fur and fine wool, luxurious cashmere of good finishing have been used, making delicate harmony by exquisite combinations and rich embellishments.

Elegant appearance and refined behavior, aristocratic natural grace as well as dress make elegant styles completely. Physical qualities supposedly conformed to the laws of elegance (Steele, 1988) Fine, elegant man looks differed from a thick, peasant man-relatively short torso indicating that his ancestors had ridden horses, not walked, small and frail hands and feet.

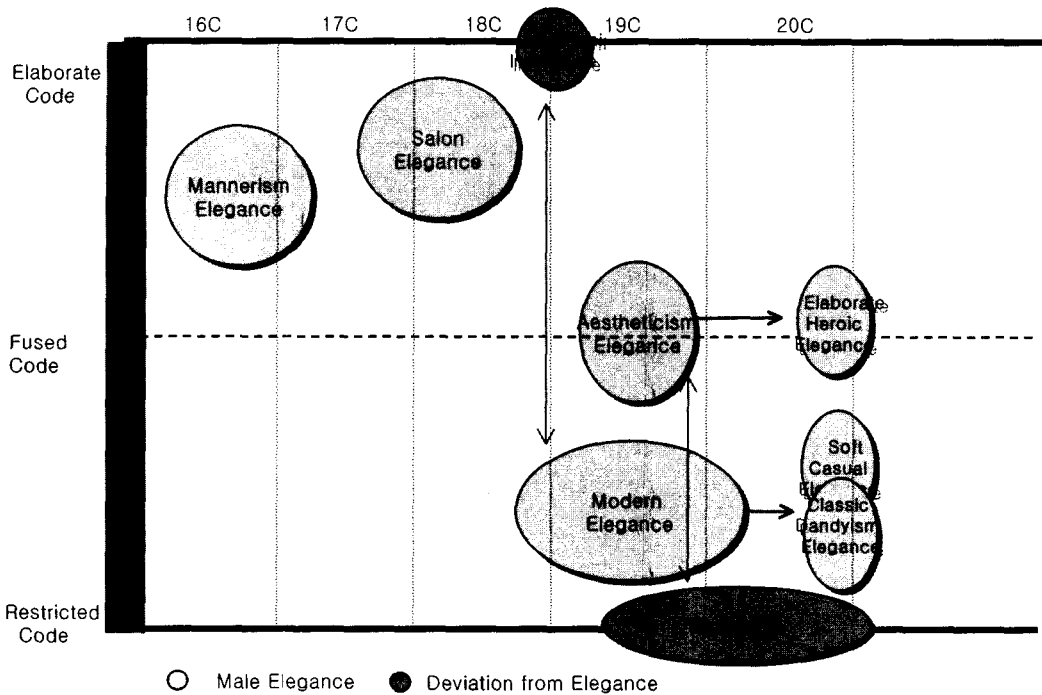
Here, the concept of expression code in visualization of elegance should be worth noticing. From a historical review, a certain turnover from elaborate code to restricted code could be discovered in Modern Elegance. Elegance of elaborate code is to seek for ostentatious luxury of costly extravagance. On the other hand, elegance of restricted code reflects a moderated nobility with understated distinction of subtle luxury. The historical change of expression codes in male elegance in dress is as follows <fig.13>.

Aestheticism Elegance has tendency to be more elaborate than Modern Elegance, but in similar contexts to dandyism, so it can be considered taking fused code.

Modern Elegance of restricted code has continued in male dress until now, undulating with aestheticism elegance which is seeking for a more fanciful expression against the uniformity of restriction.

2. Aesthetic Values of Male Elegance in Dress

Except refinement, harmony as main aesthetic values of elegance, each of elegant style has depended on its periodic values. But the common characteristics have been as follows. Luxury, valued in Mannerism Elegance and Salon Elegance, had been represented as costly elegance which is indispensable to preciousness and rarity. Nobility related to moral, mental aspects was important in Mannerism Elegance and Modern Elegance. Femininity by means of rhythm with cheerful and delicate curve, and subtle fuzziness with outer space, could have been outstanding in delicate and sweet Salon Elegance.



<fig.13> The change of expression codes in male elegance

V. Conclusion

Elegance in dress could be defined as a taste of high class and a refined beauty in dress and behaviour. Centering on refinement, harmony, aesthetic values consist of luxury, nobility, and femininity.

Though elegant styles had already existed throughout the history of dress, it was Mannerism in the 16th century which expressed 'studied elegance' for the first time. On the grounds of both the classification of periodic styles and the periodic values, elegance styles can be defined and categorized into Salon Elegance, Modern Elegance, Aestheticism Elegance. In the late of 20th century, they can be classified into Classic Dandyism, Soft Casual, and Elaborate Heroic Elegance.

Although male elegance in dress has been visualized in different ways depending on periodic values, it has been a refined beauty of high class which was valued until recent years. However in the end of 20th century it seems to start to fade in post-modern phenomenon such as mass fashion, youth culture, casual fashion trend etc. Rather, it can be thought that elegance will have been expressed as one of the

aesthetic values in dress, and favored by the established old guard, since it has the value of high class as well as conservative stability on the basis of moderation.

This study might pass over some delicate details of elegance on account of its enormous resources since the 16th century. And it could have some limits to be estimated as writers' subjective analysis.

Relatively in modern Korean fashion, formal business suit prevails. Accordingly to understand Korean cultural specialty of elegance would be contributed to understand Korean aesthetic consciousness.

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