

The Development of Fashion Design, Based on the Symbolism of the Color White

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ABSTRACT

As an essential factor of plasticity in fashion, color reflects socio-cultural trends and has possessed different symbolism in its historical development.

This study aims to search for an academic approach towards finding out how the concepts and symbolism of the color white were expressed in actual clothing. This will be realized through the investigation of the various meanings this particular color possesses. The secondary purpose of this study is to give shape to the results of above said academic investigation by proposing their integration into actual fashion design.

The methodology employed in this study and results are as follows. First, the symbolism of the color white abstracted from the research of literature on this subject was classified into six categories; purity, grace, abstinence, sublimity, decorativeness, and avant-garde. Second, for empirical research, six designs were developed and produced into white dresses. The development of these dress designs was realized by presenting the symbolism of the aforementioned six categories into images, and the formative constructions of these images by applying various design details, expressive techniques, and characteristics of the materials.

Through an investigation into the color white, which has been excluded from previous chromatics research as a major color, integration of the symbolism and chromatic image of this color into the actual fashion design process is made possible. The significance of this study is in that it proposes multifarious possibilities in fashion design, and also in extending the horizon of chromatics research in fashion through the realization of the above process.

Key Words : *White, Symbolism, Color, Fashion Design*

I. Introduction

In modern societies, the role of color is focusing

on giving expression to sentiments, and its domain is gradually expanding. After the Industrial Revolution, starting with the advancement in technology and the introduction of color TV, the interest in color developed into a way of communication and expanded by taking charge of a huge role transcending the age and race of broad living condition

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today.

As an essential factor of plasticity in fashion, color reflects socio-cultural trends and has possessed different symbolism in its historical development. In that, the color white has been accounted of pureness and sanctity, and recently it has been interpreted in various ways in different collections. In transmitting costume's image, the color white has been effective with its positive image more than the negative. Also, it has consistently kept its image as something that can easily come across one's mind throughout all the changes it went through over time. Such consistency of the color white can be seen as a symbolical image because one can apply certain meanings to the color's image.

Even though the color white has been building up various aesthetic values, because of its rather intense symbolic image compare to other colors, its limited application has been mainly for wedding dresses, funeral garments, and religious garments, etc. for special occasions, and white shirts inside a uniform for everyday use. However, designers started to present the color white in various ways in their collections as fashion key word recently, and the power of its influence has been gradually increasing among the general public.

This study has prepared an academic basis for the symbolism of the color white, and proposed the application and integration of this symbolism in actual fashion to recognize the importance of the color white as costume color.

Reference to study documents and positive research have been performed simultaneously to examine closely the concept and symbolism of the color white as it is expressed in actual clothing. As for the research of literature on this subject, related previous studies and books have been used for reference to examine the symbolism of the color white

in costumes. Analysis of photographs, fashion magazines, and collection literature were used for the case-study of how the concept of the color white has been presented in costumes. In point of historical examinations, the periodical range runs from Ancient Egypt to present-day. For the investigation on how the six symbolisms abstracted from the research of literature integrated into actual fashion, foreign collection publications from 2005 to 2007 have been used. Also, in selecting photographs, Ivory, Off-white, Snow-white, and Pale-white were considered to be white, and ones with white tops and bottoms were selected appropriate to the symbolism.

For empirical research, possible applications for the symbolism of color white is presented by designing and producing six dresses based on the results of the study. The purpose of producing the dresses is to materialize the symbolic values that color white represents; in order to effectively present the symbolism of white through the dresses, distinctive materials and various details are implemented in producing.

II . Theoretical Background

This chapter aims to establish the theoretical foundation of the research. First of all, the characteristics of costume color and the color image of white are studied. Second, the basis of research on the symbolism of white is formed through historical investigation.

1. The function of color in costume

Every object around us possesses color. Human perceives color easily, reacts to it instantaneously,¹⁾ and remembers it for a long time. Human perception on color is not simply a visual reaction; it is

influenced by individual experiences or psychological state. In human society, color is used as a popular means of effectively conveying and expressing meanings. This importance of color in human life also influences on what people wear. The desire of human beings for embellishing themselves not only has constantly demanded changes in shapes of costumes but also has made a great contribution to the development of various colors.

Certain eras are remembered by specific colors of costume: 1920s as the 'Shocking Pink' Era, 1960s as the 'Ginger Color of Mary Quant' Era or 'Psychedelic Color' Era.²⁾

Likewise, color plays an essential role in conveying images. A research, which was targeted to retailers and manufacturers of thread, textile, and clothing, shows that consumers primarily reacts to color than any other factors of products.⁴⁾ The color of costume not only expresses a consumer's individual character, preference, fashion sense, and cultural background, but also is the main factor that influences the consumer's choice of costume.⁵⁾ Therefore, it is important to consider the following factors in choosing color of costume: color-match, consumer, function, fabric, and social environment. The color of costume is unique in a sense that it

<Table 1> Open the trademark color of Americans Faber birren³⁾

Color	General Impression	Psychological phenomenon	Immediate Association	Objective Association	Subjective Association
Red	Radiant, loud, opaque, dry	Hot, fire, heat, blood	Danger, Mother's day, Christmas, flag, Independence day, Valentine's day	Passion, excitement, violence, active	Intense, anger, greed, fierce
Orange	Bright, shiny, incandescence	Warm, metallic, autumn	Chronic, the eve, Thanks giving day	Gaiety, vividness, vitality, strength	Delight, abundance, satiation
Yellow	Sunny, white heat, radiant	Sun light	Caution	Happiness, inspiration, vigor, sanctity	High-minded, health
Green	Clean, moisture	Cool, nature, water	Clean, St. Patrick's day	Silent, fresh, peaceful, the initial stage	Pure, illness, fear, sin
Blue	Clear, wetness	Coldness, sky, water, ice	Volunteer, flag	Restraint, depression, meditation, composure	Melancholy, fear, intimate
Purple	Profound, soft, atmosphere	Chill, mist, darkness, shade	Sorrow, Easter	Dignity, arrogance, sorrow, mysterious	Solitude, despair, self-abandonment
White	Well-lighted room	Cool, snow	Cleanness, flag, Mother's day	Pure, transparent, honest, youth	Positive spirit, normal
Black	ill-lit room	neutral, night, emptiness	sorrow, inauspiciousness, death, oppression	funeral	negative spirit, death

easily and promptly expresses the psychological state of human beings. Margaret Walch, the chair of American Color Association, said that color preference is directly related to the national economic condition of a country.⁶⁾

The color reflects the economy. Especially, the costume's color has a distinct feature of being able to represent human's mental state easily and promptly. When the economy is in a prosperous condition, bright and neat colors are popular, and when in depression, dark colors are prominent.

In late 1960's, pop-art and psychedelic's influence caused colors such as pink, red, green, and blue jeans' blue to prevail. In 1970's, awareness of economic depression and environmental issues made natural colors like brown and beige to become popular. This phenomenon is closely related to the image color possesses. People usually try to express their mental state and situation through the images suggested by color. The color for costumes can give different impressions according to their materials.⁷⁾

Every color is associated with different state of feelings and images, which is formed subjectively through personal experiences, memories, attitude, and impression. While color association could be personal and multifaceted, it also could be collective and universal when combined with certain symbolic meaning. A consistently-constructed color image functions as a standard of human conduct as well as has potential influence on consumer behavior, attitude and values. Overall, color association is an important factor across all industries.⁸⁾

Color appeals more strongly than shape, for color is more promptly perceived and lasts longer in memory. In this respect, previously formed color image is a crucial factor in constructing images of costume. Especially, with the growth of civilization, color white has been developed into a symbolic val-

ue of which the unique images and symbolism have become significant in modern society. Therefore, this research focuses on color white and investigates its symbolism and application in fashion design.

2. General Characteristics of Color White

White means 'bianco' in Italian, 'blanc, blanche' in French, 'blank' or 'leuchten' in German. In Greek, white means 'leukos,' from which a German word 'leuchten' originated. The concepts of color black and white are conceived before any other colors in many languages, in order to distinguish between darkness and brightness as well as night and day. As this distinction becomes obvious over time, other colors were given names in different context. In many languages, food has a significant influence on naming colors. For example, 'weiss' is associated with 'weizen,' in German, and 'white' is related to 'wheat' in English.⁹⁾ From pale-yellow-white of white bread, white-wine or vinegar to snow-white and milky-white, the word *white* is used to describe something white.¹⁰⁾ The most popular and widely-used white color among artists is called 'Bleiweiss,' a color made of lead. In 1930, Titanweiss, which is more opaque than Bleiweiss, was introduced. Experts say that Titanweiss, extracted from dark titanium and the whitest of all white, is the best-performing white color in all artistic techniques.¹¹⁾

White is an achromatic color that possesses the highest brightness but no hue or saturation.

Among the three qualities of color, white has no tone and chroma, and its shade falls in the realm of achromatic color. The color white has been recognized along with the color black since the primeval era where color sensation had not been developed yet. According to Berlin and Kay (1996), they performed research among 98 different races over the

world to investigate their languages which showed that the development process of color's name was prominent among black and white.¹²⁾

3. The color white's image and symbolism

All of the colors have characteristics. It could appear differently to everyone depending on their experiences and socio-cultural environment, and after time, it gained generality.

In general, the color white has images such as cleanness, purity, light, freedom, divinity, high-mindedness, and the beginning. There are slight differences according to different periods, and there are negative and neutral images for white, but most of the time, white is associated with positive images. White is associated with pureness, innocence, and femininity, and it has chaste appeal from its symbolism of surrender. Also, it is a symbol for upright social position since it has no association with deception and darkness.¹³⁾ White could turn either cold or affectionate depending on the color around it. When white is with colder shades, it gives intellectual and breezy feeling, whereas when it is with warmer shades, it gives vitality and cheerful feeling.¹⁴⁾ Since white represents femininity, noble and sophisticated mind, it is symbolically opposite to black and red representing power and strength. White's psychologically opposing color is brown, and there is no tonality which has white and brown arranged side by side. Nothing can be pure and heavy at the same time. White is a quiet color, and the arrangement of white-brown-gray gives an impression of one step being taken back. Also, including Korea, Asian art attach importance to the beauty of blank space presenting white as the color of emptiness.¹⁵⁾ Such as white's images have been

chosen and used intentionally by human beings for a long time, and it now has its proper symbolism. This symbolism contains certain meanings as a means of communication, and with national sentiments, it often takes firm room as traditional color. Regardless of East and West, the symbolism of the color white is taking various forms in different fields of society.

1) White expressed in mythology.

The symbolism of the color white could be found in mythologies of East and West. In Korean mythologies, appearances of white spirit, white birds, and white animals were considered as the divine king, and in mythological terminology, white was associated with childbirth and an auspicious spirit.

The sunshine, associated with color white, symbolizes the descent of god from Heaven to the earth. Moreover, according a myth about the birth of Park Hyukgersae from *Samkukyusa*, when the leaders of the six tribes climbed a hill and looked southward, there was a thunder-like energy coming from the sky and penetrating the earth near the well called "Najung," which was located at the foot of the mountain Yang. In front of the well, a white horse was prostrating itself with his knees on the ground. As the leaders of the tribes approached to observe more closely, they found a purple egg sitting on the ground. Seeing people approaching, the white horse flew away to the heavens. In effect, the white horse here symbolizes an auspicious and promising sign.

White lily symbolizes purity and innocence, and a myth says that lily is originated from Eve's teardrop. Seduced by Satan, Eve disobeyed God by eating the Forbidden Fruit and was exiled from the Garden of Eden as a punishment. She sobbed day and night, and it is said that her teardrops on the ground be-

came lilies. Greek mythology tells another account on lily. In order to give immortality to Hercules, Zeus ordered Somus to create sleeping pill, which was given to his wife, Hera. While Hera was asleep, Zeus feed Hera's breast milk to baby Hercules. Hercules suckled on Hera's breast too strongly that a few drops of breast milk dripped down on the ground and became lilies. Since then, lily becomes the gift from Zeus to his wife Hera, and later it becomes a sacrifice given to Saint Mary.¹⁶⁾

In myths, a unicorn is described as a white horse with a beautiful long horn on the head and is the symbol of purity. Although a unicorn is wild by nature and difficult to be tamed, it is sacrificing to its offspring and docile before chaste women.

Such characteristics of unicorn enable Christians to claim that unicorn symbolizes the life of Jesus.

2) White colors in literature

In Cho Chi-hoon's *Gopunguisang*, the color white appeared in "white dong-jung" and "white hand" is clean and clear; white symbolizes the noble spirit of clothing and women. In Chung Dam-sa's *Changiparanga*, the white color of "white cloud" not only symbolizes the noble spirit of a transcendental being, but also likens Gi Parang's lofty personality and noble mind to white moon reflected in the lake and pebbles. In a three-stanza Korean poem, Park Pangnyun uses color white as a method of describing the poet's loyalty, whereas he picks a crow, conspicuously black, to symbolize a villainous flatterer, thereby creating a stark contrast. The poet presents a crow, which is covered with snow and thus temporarily appears to be a loyal and high-minded subject of king, and shows that only the vile essence of crow is quick to be rediscovered.

3) White expressed in the national flag

Every national flags carries its country's own symbolisms of color. The color white in Philippines and Hungary's national flags means peace and purity, and white in Chile's national flag represents the snow of the Andes Mountains. White in India's flag represents truth and peace, where the one in Iraq represents magnanimity, and the one in Egypt represents peace and bright future. White in North Korea's flag represents fresh light, and white in Philippines' flag means virtue.¹⁷⁾ White ground in South Korea's national flag represents purity of the white-clad race, which symbolizes the national characteristics that has a tradition of peace loving.

4) White expressed in architecture

The symbolism of the color white can also be found in architecture. From architects trying to regenerate Ancient Greece, architectural style of Neo-classicism has been greatly influenced by that of Greece. Everything was white. Ancient Greece according to Neo-classicism had philosophers in white clothes, walking through the marble pillars consumed with active debates. The only embellishment on their costumes was a pleat, and the only ornament on buildings was embossed carvings. The simplicity of white meant nobility.¹⁸⁾

According to the architect Adolf Loos, the lower the public standard is, they want more embellishments. He insisted on discovering the beauty of gestalt rather than relying on the beauty of embellishments. In 1910 at Steiner House, to prevent the destruction of levelness caused from the irregularity of the outer wall's surface, Adolf Loos used white clothing without any ornaments. His idea of white clothing is not the intermediation of the inner part and the outer part or coming to a mutual understanding with the help of its symbolical meanings,

but he is separating them using the color white as a screen-like implication resulting in a phenomenon where the reality is lost. Looking from architectural stream, the color white has significance as a symbolism of abstraction contrary to embodiment. It gets expressed with a maximized significance of abstraction from the contrast between the concrete architecture of artnouveau in the end of the nineteenth century and abstract architecture of Adolf Loos, New York 5's white group in 1970's, and minimal architecture. Also, in reason-centered architecture of modernism, the importance of the color white has been expressed as the significant element known as 'white cubic.'

III. Historical examination for the color white expressed in costumes

1. The color white expressed in histories of costumes

1) Western costumes

Color has been developed as a symbolic language that represents traditional values and customs of society. Especially, the concept of black and white was recognized even at the incipient phase of human history in which no clear distinction of color had been developed.

The ancient Egyptians used white linen in their costumes, and the Greeks and the Romans wore white chiton and Stola. Although the Greeks were fond of colors and thus often became very flowery with their color selection, the basic color for the Greek primary garments chitons and peplos was white. As long as textile concerned, the ancient Romans favored plain style so the colors for the traditional clothing Toga had not varied much from

white and cream until the late Republic.¹⁹⁾

In Romanesque era, a white veil called wimple was required for nuns and widows at all times. Wimple was also required for all women when they would go out or go to religious ceremonies.²⁰⁾ Since the ancient time, color white has been used as color for priests' garments. In the same sense, white has been the official color for memorial services of Roman Catholic churches.²¹⁾ From the medieval time to the Renaissance era, a white chemise was worn; slash, in which the fabric with various colors or white chemise was shown, through ripped-open gaps is one of the items in this white-chemise trend.²²⁾

During the Neo Classic era, white and soft cotton fabrics as well as cuffs and sharp-edged collars that were exposed became the fashion trend. Additionally, during the Renaissance era, ruff became one of the ways to show one's dignity. The representation of color white changed during the Baroque period; on the contrary to flowery and luxurious quality that color white had stood for, the Puritans considered white as moderate color representing abstinence and thus used it in collars and aprons. The men of the Rococo period are fond of wearing tight culottes, which are so tight that the shapes of legs are wholly exposed. In the upper class, the culottes that are made of white lambs' leather became a big hit because they were snow-whitish and bore the tight and flexible quality of leather. Culottes were also made of white satin during this period.²³⁾ Color white symbolized freedom during the era of Napoleon's revolution, and subsequently, a chemise made of soft cotton was a big fashion trend during the Consulate Era. In his Color Theory, Goethe describes the fashion trend of 1800s and says "Nowadays, almost every woman wears white clothes while many men wear black."²⁴⁾ While black clothing had

been worn on special ceremonies from long ago, people's preference on white clothing was a new phenomenon. From that on, white clothes gained great popularity in Europe and represented the zeitgeist of Neo Classic period. This popularity on white clothes had influence that was far-reaching enough to continue until the Bustle period and ended up creating wedding dress costumes.

Wearing a British white satin dress and a wedding veil, the queen Victoria of Great Britain created a huge sensation when she got married in 1840. The wedding veil that Victoria wore was interpreted as a nun's hood. However, in fact, it was rather a calculated move by the queen to support the Britain's lace industry. Eugenie, the bride of Napoleon III, was also dressed up with a white velvet dress and a white wedding veil on her wedding day in 1853. No doubt, those ladies from royal family had a great influence on contemporary fashion trend. Furthermore, the reason why a white wedding dress swept all the ladies hearts away is not just because the royal ladies. It was craved by all the ladies because a white wedding dress became the representation of zeitgeist.

England's Queen Victoria who got married in 1840 created a sensation by wearing white British satin dress and a bridal veil. Her bridal veil has been interpreted as the hoods nuns were wearing at that time, but the truth is that it was intended for supporting England's lace business. In 1853, Eugenie, the bride of Napoleon III, wore a white velvet dress and a bridal veil, also. In those days, powerful influence the brides of royals had upon fashion trend is incomprehensible today, but the reason the white wedding dresses were loved as such was that they contained the spirit of the times.²⁵⁾

In 1930's, it was popular to wear cream or white colored pleated skirts with navy blazers jackets

when attending polo games or viewing tennis matches. Also, the color white's charm at that time was portrayed through ivory satin gown and white fox fur movie star Jean Harlow wore.²⁶⁾ In 1950's, for ball room dresses, white, light ice-pink or stylish black paper taffeta and skirts that made sound as it brushed against clothes were popular.²⁷⁾

The fashion of 1960's can be identified with freedom from oppressions and inhibitions. Young people preferred unconventional attires, and the fiber fashion industry reacted with accommodations to such demands. The op-art and space look had geometric patterns together with futuristic fashion of black, white and white, silver.²⁸⁾

In 1964, Andre Courreges created a great sensation in his autumn collection which was the most extreme change there was after the 'New Look' of Dior in 1947. He announced the collection in a white show-room, and for accurately formed shape, he used wool crape or gabardine with white, bright red, and strong green.²⁹⁾ Kings and queens wear white for the best occasions, and kings wear white for the coronation. Queen Elizabeth always wears white overcoat when giving the inaugural speech for annual parliamentary meetings. Traditionally, white fur collars with black spots go on king's overcoat, and that is northern Siberian mink. In 1969, when Prince Charles was enthroned to be the crown prince of Wales, he wore an overcoat with northern Siberian mink.

The color white is the best color for traditional men's costumes, and white bow ties always go with tailcoats. Traditional event costumes can be seen every year at Nobel Prize award ceremonies, and those are tail coats with white vests and white bow ties. Such traditions are being handed down even until today.

Before washing machines and dry cleaning were

universalized, the color white was the symbolism of high social position. Workers wore blue and gray shirts, and people of high social position who did not have to work wore white shirts.

In the early days of IBM, employees were required to wear white shirts. Moreover, young ladies wore white evening dress to their first ball, which was considered as the beginning of social participation.³⁰⁾ The above examples show that the *purity* of color white was highly valued in society. Similarly, a bride wears a white wedding dress to express purity of the bride.

2) Korean costumes

Korean people are often called "People of white clothes." In this manner, white has held a traditional value that defines the national sentiment of Korea. The reason why the ancient Korean people would favor white costumes so much is that most of clothes were made of cotton or hemp back then. According to an ancient Korean historical source, Puyeo, the country that worshipped color white, not only wore white pants, but also used white linen and cotton to produce outwears which had very wide sleeves.³¹⁾ This source shows that the Korean people's inclination toward white costumes is rather time-honored and long-standing. During the age of the three countries, in which white costumes were still very popular, aristocrats adopted the flowery costumes from China in an effort to appear different from common people.

In Koryu, noticing the uneconomical characteristic of white costumes and following the Chinese tradition of yin-yang theory and the five phases, the government establishes a law requiring everyone to wear blue. Yet the law was often ignored by people.

Furthermore, under the reign of the Chosun dynasty, various kings such as Taejong, Saejong, Yeon-

sangun, Sunjo, Sookjong, and Yongjo enact a law that forbids people from wearing white costumes.³²⁾ During the Gab-o Revolution in 1894, black costumes become mandatory by a Royal edict; during the Gwang-moo Revolution in 1897, the government prohibits white costumes, and sprinkles ink to those who wore white clothes; nonetheless, common people persistently keep on wearing white costumes. Even the Chosun dynasty's Taejong, who was very active and consistent with revolutionizing the national law system, once admitted that "I cannot do much about the white costumes."

In the meantime, the popularity of white costumes tremendously increases when it becomes a way to distinguish between the Japanese and the Korean in the midst of the World War II; it was broadcasted that one would be able to evade air raid if wearing white a white costume. Finding out about this, even Japanese people prepare themselves with white pants and would hurriedly put them on when the alert goes off.³³⁾

Conclusively, Korean people have nurtured and developed an emotional connection with the white costumes that thus have come to represent the Korean nationality and ethnicity. In the same manner, a Korean scholar who is incorruptible and noble-minded is compared to a white crane, and the clothes of the scholar are called Hakchang-ue, which has black lines above white background. In effect, color white symbolizes the virtues like fidelity and integrity that a Korean scholar is required to possess.

Among the military supplies from the United States after the liberation were parachutes that could be used as cloth, and those semitransparent nylon parachute materials were used for making blouses.³⁴⁾ Even today, the color white plays an important role representing Korea as the national color.

2. The color white's symbolism expressed in costumes

As for the history of costumes, the color white played an important part as it reflected the period and the state. Organization of the color white's image using the data of each period's representative costumes abstracted from historical examinations is as follows.

According to the discussion, the color white has been developing as a color with unique symbolism in costumes from ancient times to present-day. The symbolism of the color white abstracted from the research of literature on this subject was classified

into six categories; purity, grace, abstinence, sublime, decoration, and avant-garde.

IV. Examination of symbolism of color white in Modern Fashion

This chapter aims to examine the symbolism of color white in modern fashion through case studies based on literature review and historical investigation.

1. Purity

Under the category *purity* included a number of general images related to color white such as clean-

<Table 2> The color white's representative costume and image expressed in the history of costumes

Period	Representative costume	Image
Ancient Egypt	King, Queen's costume	Elegance, sanctity
Ancient Greece	Chiton, peplos	Elegance, polished style, feminine
Ancient Rome	A citizen's or rank officer's toga	Simplicity, humble, integrity
Romanesque	Wimple	Abstinence
Renaissance	White Schmitz, ruff collar	Sublime, decoration, authority, exaggeration
Baroque	White collar, apron (puritan's influence)	Abstinence, restrain, simplicity
Rococo	Culottes	Masculinity
Neoclassicism	Cuffs and shirts with emphasized sharp collars	Embellishment, dignity
1840's	White dress and bridal veil	Purity, innocence, femininity
1930's	Sports wear, Hollywood celebrities' dresses	Elegance, voluptuous beauty, polished style
1950's	Ball dress	Elegance, innocence, femininity
1960's	Space look	Modern, youth

<Table 3> Symbolism of white costume's image

White costume's image	Classification of symbolism
Innocence, purity, angelic, girlish, simplicity, natural	→ purity
Elegance, sophisticated, femininity, voluptuous beauty, intellectual beauty, noble, high class	→ Grace
Splendid image, delicacy, ostentation	→ Decoration
Abstinence, death, sorrow, magnificence, authoritative, power, vastness	→ Sublime
Simplicity, integrity, abstinence, modest	→ Abstinence
Modern beauty, futuristic, youthfulness	→ avant-garde

ness, clarity, transparency, light feeling, chastity, purity, girly images, simplicity, and natural beauty. Purity could also replace the narrow definition of beauty. Purity is opposed to turbidity, chaos and destruction. Moreover, it is accepted without raising any conflict or absurdity in viewer's mind and presents a kind of beauty that is impeccably positive and perfectly balanced between the viewer and the object.³⁵⁾ The purity of color white is expressed in various forms in modern fashion. Multi-layers of light chiffon or see-through materials are frequently used, along with mat material that conveys natural beauty.<Figure 1>³⁶⁾ While fashion designers suggest many different analysis on purity of color white, the photo images categorized under *purity* in this research can be characterized as follows: chiffon, thin materials such as silk, mat material and natural silhouette.



<Figure 1> Purity of color white expressed in modern fashion

2. Grace

Under the category *grace* included a number of images such as gracefulness, refinement, femininity, sensuality, intelligence, loftiness, and high-quality. In terms of describing beauty, this symbolism, *grace*, includes elegance, grace, and chic. Graceful beauty is characterized by non-violent, smooth, and freely-flowing undulant curvature. According to Schiller, graceful beauty is an expression of feeling from a

supra-sensitive personality, whose natural, not conscious, state of mind makes it possible.

According to Schiller, the beauty of grace is an expression of supersensitive character that needs naturalism more than consciousness. Grace is expressed as feminine, soft, and curvaceous. Concerning the curvaceousness, William Hogwth argues that serpentine line realizes the fundamentals of beauty the best, which is the line of grace. Grace can be represented by fancy flower shapes with organic curves and wavy pattern dominant 18th century rococo style of art. Likewise, the beauty of rococo costumes embellished with splendid floral pattern, ruffles, ribbons, and race can be represented as grace.³⁷⁾ Thus, grace is unique with delicacy, femininity, softness, and naturalistic beauty. Gracefulness has taken place as an important symbolism of white in modern fashion, and a representative example of that would be the wedding dress. Like this, white's gracefulness expressed in modern fashion contains extravagant lace, drapes made of glossy satin and silk, fancy material, and body curves emphasizing silhouettes <Figure 2>.³⁸⁾

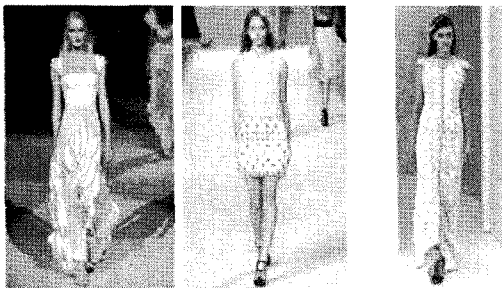


<Figure 2> Grace of color white expressed in modern fashion

3. Decorativeness

Decoration is based on a type of an impulse of formality originating in art activities, and its emphasis of aesthetical effect is confirmed in various

artistic phenomena of primitive societies.³⁹⁾ As civilization advanced, concept of costumes changed from 'wear' to 'ornamentation',⁴⁰⁾ and decoration took place as one of cultural phenomenon acting as a mechanism to mark values that express beauty and individual personality.⁴¹⁾ Decoration can be largely divided into detail and trimming. Detail is a partial decoration that takes place in overall outline of a costume, and trimming is putting the already-made ornaments onto proper places of costumes according to their designs.⁴²⁾ Decorativeness of the color white shown in modern fashion is recognized along with polycentrism, expressed in various forms, and its decoration according to object is infinite. The color white's decorative element has been highlighted with its clean image, and an important symbolism that can compensate for white's simplicity in modern fashion is expressed in various shapes as shown in <Figure 3>.



<Figure 3> Decoration of color white expressed in modern fashion

4. Sublimity

Under the category *sublimity* included images such as abstinence, death, sadness, dignity, and authority. Expressed by heroicness, infinity, or dismantlement, sublimity is the mixture of two seemingly-opposite feelings: pain and pleasure, fear and joy, negative and positive. In costumes, sublime

beauty is realized through a tattoo, a scar, a distortion, a human body in a tightened corset, an image of a devil, or a grotesque object. Furthermore, sublimity effectively displays the dignity and the authority of human beings as well as the dignity of religions by producing lengthened body images. In post-modernism fashion, sublimity is found in the dismantling of sex, the dismantling of wealth and poverty, and the dismantling of time and place. Sublimity is also demonstrated in androgynous look, sexless look, grunge look, ethnic look, and retro,⁴³⁾ as shown in <Figure 4>.⁴⁴⁾



<Figure 4> Sublimity of color white expressed in modern fashion

5. Abstinence

Under the category *abstinence* included the images of white that are shown in costumes: simplicity, integrity, moderation, and frugality. Abstinence is also characterized by its emphasis on chastity, aversion from ostentatious appearance, and pursuit of mental enrichment. Such characteristics results in suppression of feelings or concealment of figure, which are realized into loose-fit costumes.⁴⁵⁾ Abstinence is an aspect of complete suppression of the human body using simple shape, tough texture and textile, and achromatic color centered tone. Abstinent image can be shown through suppression or contraction of the body line, matt fabric, moderate line, and use of no decoration, and in modern fashion,

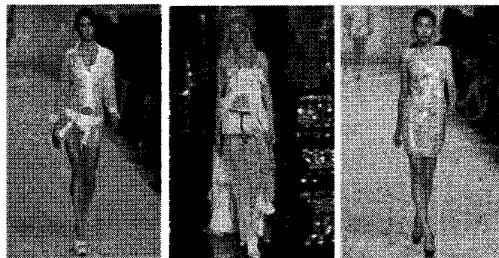
the abstinence of the color white can also be expressed as minimalism<Figure 5>.46)



<Figure 5> The color white's abstinence expressed in modern fashion

6. Avant-garde

Avant-garde includes modern beauty, futuristic beauty, and youthful image, and it is a trendy image that comes from exception and freshness of destruction of conventional order or creation of new and unprecedented aesthetics. Paco Rabanne applied diverse and astonishing materials such as metal, plastic, vinyl, and compact discs to costumes augmenting the range of materials and multiplying the transcendent fabric movement. The costumes that represent avant-garde are such as space looks, mini-skirt, op-art, kinetic fashion, and sports wear. In modern fashion, avant-garde is expressed through the exposure of human body, geometric silhouette, and simplicity. It has emphasis on futuristic image and use of heterogeneous materials. Also, it can be considered as an attempt at breaking the traditional shape, and its distinctive features are glossy materials, metal, vinyl, acrylic, high-tech materials, and various materials without divisions as seen in <Figure 6>.47)



<Figure 6> The color white's Avant-garde expressed in modern fashion

V. The Design Development & Production of Dresses

The purpose of this chapter is to present various possibilities of improving fashion design using color white by producing a piece of work based on the symbolism of color white obtained through the literature and empirical studies.

1. The Purpose of Design Development & Production

The peculiar symbolism that white bears has been accumulated by the purposeful selection and use of images of white by human over time. This study has come to conclude that white symbolizes many distinctive values: purity, elegance, refinement, decorativeness, loftiness, avant-garde, and abstinence. In this study, these symbolic values of white are exploited so as to help improving various design possibilities in modern fashion design; six pieces are created, each of them representing one of six symbolic values stated above. With multifarious techniques and different touches in a great detail, each piece is created in respect of materializing what white symbolizes. Especially, the emphasis is placed on developing and producing designs to which distinctive characteristics of material can be best appli-

<Table 4> Production planning table

	Purity	Grace	Decoration	Sublimity	Abstinence	Avant-garde
Characteristics	Thin materials Balloon-silhouette Cute detail	Subtle gloss Feminine silhouette Drapes	Pleats trimming Decorations with cut fabric and beads belt	Vertical emphasis of buttons and hats Lengthening of figure by employing long-sleeves	Concealment of figure Rough texture No decoration	Matches heterogeneous textures Flowing silhouette
Material	Silk Chiffon Silk Satin	Silk Satin	Silk Taffeta Italy Silk	Wool	Plaster bandage Hemp cloth Korean paper	Leather Zipper Vinyl
Details	Ribbon Knit ball	Lace Beads	Pleats Beads, Lace	Button		Cutting Patchwork

ed, in order to present a new horizon on developing fashion design.

2. The Symbolism and Process of Dress-Designs

1) Design No.1

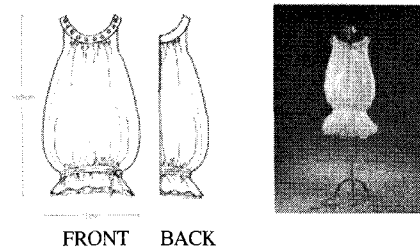
Symbolism: Purity

Composition: One-piece dress

Materials: Silk Chiffon, Silk Satin

[Design No.1] is a cute and lovely balloon style one-piece dress. Different textures of silk chiffons are multilayered in a way that each layer would be shown at the bottom hem.

Glossy silk satin of similar tone coloration was placed on the neck line, and ornaments of neat balls and silk ribbons were put on top of it. The inner lining was cut short to keep the stable form of the dress, and instead, the outer lining was pinned to the inner layer to firmly hold its form. Petticoat was made with a pleated net, and the lower hem was decorated with layers of silk chiffon so that the hem lines could be shown.



<Figure 7> Design No.1's diagram and photograph

2) Design No.2

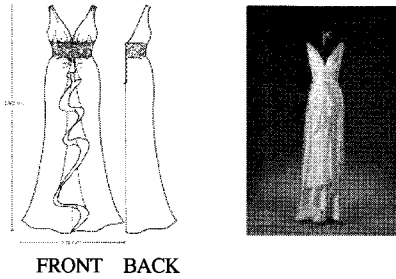
Symbolism: grace

Composition: Evening dress

Material: Silk satin, lace

[Design No.2] expresses the color white's gracefulness in its dress by portraying feminine body line with glossy silk satin. It has a high waist with natural shirring at the bust area, and emphasized waist line with splendid lace and beads ornamentation. The drape with cascade in the front center of the skirt created soft curve that contributes to the dress's gracefulness. Deep V-neck accentuates femininity, and crystal beads ornamentation on the shoulders adds fanciness to the dress. The subtle gloss and

feminine silhouette with emphasis on body line in this piece, along with fancy embellishments and natural draping create the image of Greek goddess.



<Figure 8> Design No.2's diagram and photograph

3) Design No.3

Symbolism: Decorativeness

Composition: One-piece dress

Materials: Silk Taffeta, Organza

[Design No.3] is a one-piece dress made from glossy silk taffeta and is consisted of a lap one-piece dress and a belt. Hemline of the dress is decorated with regularly-pleated organza, and the seam between the pleats and the body is finished with braid for a more decorative look. Also, color arrangement around the pleats as well as flowery decorations using beads and braid harmoniously blends into the dress, and the belt adds a even more decorative look. The belt is decorated with various types of braids and beads that match with the dress. Snaps are used for closure to give a shape to the dress, and the belt is employed to hold the dress in place

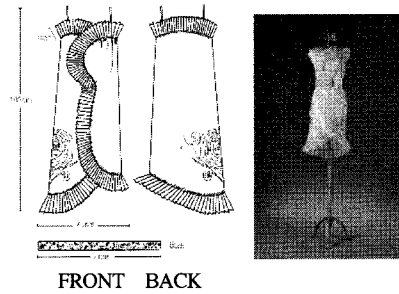
4) Design No.4

Symbolism: sublimity

Composition: One-piece dress, Hooded jacket

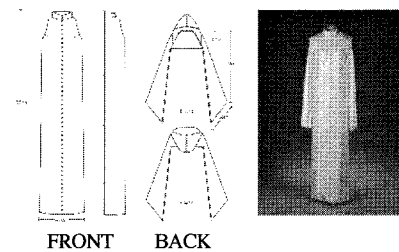
Material: Wool/Acrylic

[Design No.4] expresses sublimity with the em-



<Figure 9> Design No.3's diagram and photograph

phasis on perpendicularity and elongation of the body. It is composed of a one-piece dress and a hooded jacket made of thick mixture of wool. The length of this dress was elongated, and the perpendicularity was emphasized by stitching small sized buttons close to each other in the front middle. Also for extreme expressional purpose, elongated sleeves were attached to a short jacket, and this portrays the idea of elongation of the body. The hood for the jacket is another expression of elongation along with the emphasis on perpendicularity for the expression of sublimity such as the sublime image of the priests' costumes.



<Figure 10> Design No.3's diagram and photograph

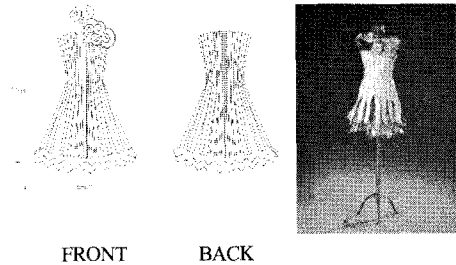
5) Design No.5

Symbolism: abstinence

Composition: one-piece dress

Material: Plaster bandage, Hemp cloth, Korean paper
 [Design No.4] Plaster bandage, hemp cloth, and Korea paper were used for the application of abstinence in the fifth piece. This piece was produced from two sides of human body and garments. First, the plaster bandage was wrapped around the body to express the abstinence of the human body. This is to express the direct confinement of human body, which is the primary abstinence, by ignoring the silhouette of a human body. Bleached hemp cloth and plain Korean paper were employed to express the abstinence from all human desires. Moreover, stems of paper mulberry, which is the major ingredient of Korean paper, were roughly torn and were draped to express inner pain and scar of human nature.

an opening of the zipper, clearly delineates avant-garde. Furthermore, an irregular neckline is created by using various sizes of corsages that are made out of zipper and leather.

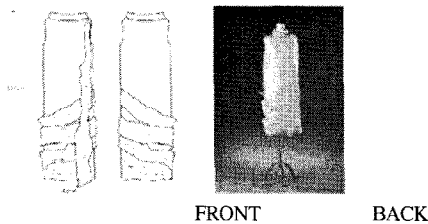


<Figure 12> Design No.3's diagram and photograph

VI. Conclusion

The role of color in modern society has been magnifying gradually, and today's society by and large is trying to bring out infinite potential of color along with active research on color. As an essential factor of plasticity in fashion, color reflects socio-cultural trends and has possessed different symbolism in its historical development. Among them, the color white has been considered the color of purity and sanctity. Recently, there have been different interpretations of the color white in various collections.

Thus, this study realized the color white's image and symbolism through the investigation of the various meanings this particular color possesses, and searched for an academic approach towards finding out how the concept and symbolism of this particular color were expressed in actual clothing. For the examination of this particular color's concept and symbolism, research of literature and case study had been performed simultaneously. Also, for empirical research, various designs were developed and pro-



<Figure 11> Design No.3's diagram and photograph

6) Design No.6

Symbolism: Avant-garde

Composition: One-piece dress

Material: Leather, Zipper, Vinyl

To express avant-garde, a mini one-piece dress was designed by using leather, metal zipper, and vinyl. A zipper was employed to express the possibility of movement and change, and leather and vinyl are selected as heterogeneous materials that convey characteristics of avant-garde. Leather was cut in length and connected with a zipper for an innovative look. The juxtaposition of heterogeneous materials, irregularly-crumpled vinyl shown through

duced into dresses.

The symbolism of the color white was classified into six categories; purity, grace, abstinence, sublimity, decorativeness, and avant-garde, and the development of these dress designs were realized by presenting the symbolism of the aforementioned six categories into images. The formative constructions of these images were presented by applying various design details, expressive techniques, and characteristics of the materials.

The symbolism and characteristics of each production of dress designs are as follows.

Design No. 1 expresses a clean and pure image of a girl by employing chiffon material. Design No.2 illustrates *grace* through cascades and drapes that are made from glossy material. Design No.3 expresses *decorativeness* by trimming pleated organza to silk taffeta and employing beads, braids, and a belt. Design No.4 depicted sublimity by using thin materials, emphasizing vertical lines, and lengthening of figure. Design No.5 delineates unembellished and frugal abstinence that is characterized by rough texture and plainness, employing plaster bondage, hemp and Korean paper. Design No.6 exhibits futuristic avant-garde by creating a patchwork of leather and metal zipper and by juxtaposing vinyl and zipper.

This research not only establishes the color images of white through application of the color images to actual clothing, but also extends the horizon of fashion design research through suggesting innovative possibilities of fashion design using the color white.

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