

## The Social Function of Clothes (Focusing on distinction)

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The clothing at present is a way which express one's personality and one can communicate with the others by means of the symbolism of clothing without language. This clothing has several functions. In this article, I would like to classify functions into three parts and particularly focus on the social function in clothing.

1) Physiological function - to protect the body from environmental threats such as temperature change, danger and the existence of animals and plants.

2) Civilization function - to think that the body is considered as not only physiological being but also social existence. Clothing, the ornament for the body and the behavior itself of adorning oneself while including the formative act can be regarded as civilization function because those isolate the body from natural condition.

3) Social function - It is not too much to say that the function of clothing at present occupies a majority. The desire of those who pursue different fashion from others is immanent in clothing. This is the very social function that puts emphasis on distinction. This social function can be largely explained as two kinds of viewpoints. One is what reflect social difference into individual body, the other is what express individual difference into society. The principle for being of the modern society on the basis of Europe can be thought of as three principles such as liberty, equality and solidarity. In modern society, system distinction was extinguished but individual difference was emphasized to the contrary. In our time, although the equality-orientation of system is taken root, the establishment of individual identity is considered as a matter of importance through being pursuit of individuality beyond one's expectation. Fashion is the phenomenon supported with the advent of equality-oriented society and the desire of distinction inside the society.

As of now when we choose clothing, what is considered as is the function of distinction. Because clothing has the meaning as the way

in which we set up the relationship between oneself and others through media and fix position.

Namely, it is the entity of consumer society that one express individual difference into society through clothing. what is the origin of this distinction function? Clothing was very various even 100 years ago. The diversity given above is not that by individual variation at the present day but that on the basis of the difference of being in each particular group. So to speak, it differed largely from a location, occupation, social position, economy and sex. For example, clothing differs from climate, resources, technical ability, belief and an esthetic sense. But this difference had gradually decreased by things, people, information and transportability far and wide which rapidly developed in nineteenth century.

The difference of social position had gradually decreased by the reform of political system in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, the type and classification of occupation had changed rapidly by industrialization, urbanization and the liberty of occupation choice so one's upturn stimulus by deregulation of clothing caused rapid economic growth. Clothing differed from the gap between haves and have-nots. This difference of economic strength had gradually decreased by the mechanization of the textile industry and the spread of a ready-made in an apparel industry. Fashion had two pieces of current of the times under those change. One was the behavior that pursue individuality with emphasizing distinction, the other was the movement that pursue the homogeneity toward the existing group.

On account of the spread of vogue, one pursued distinction from others while imitating the originality of the ways of life in the upper classes. So, one can see various factors of one's living environment and structure such as individual sense of values, the consciousness of life, culture and consumption through clothing. In addition, the above things are formed by the accumulation of object-oriented, physical and institutional culture.