

A Study on Clothing Symbolism in Visual Media -Based on TV Soap Opera "Whatever happened in Bali"-

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I . Introduction

Clothing is expression of human's psychological, social, cultural behaviors. Therefore one person can determine other wearer's various social and cultural matters which is in political, economical and social positions. These matters also acknowledged within territories of social class, one's sex, age, marriage status, religions. To understand societal, cultural and psychological identities which appears in dressing, we need to be able to understand and analysis symbolization of dressing.

A meaning endowed to dress is rather abstract. For symbolization of dressing is to be explained, analysis should share similar thoughts upon these matters regarding dressing. A similar dressing within a situation or an act of dressing can mean very differently due to general context of reasoning. To the point, the symbolism of dressing is not always stationary, it is effected by generations, social matters and cultural backgrounds.

We, researchers, are interested in research of cultural matters in symbolism of dressing within backgrounds of generations, social customs and cultures. As we look at cultural character in this matter, cultures are made by human race; acknowledged by studying, a criterion set by human and situation by groupings.

This also matters similarity and various meanings at the same time; this occurs in a continuous manner but at the same time, slowly adapts, transforms and is value practical. We like to follow laws of separation which had been studied by Ruth P. Rubinstein(Dree Codes, 1995, p125) regarding wealthiness, beauty, social position, ideal physics of human body and being young; these are visualized and expressed symbolism of dressing through TV media, which is very closely related to our daily life.

II . Method

The object of study will be a soap opera called "Whatever happened in Bali" which ran from

January 3rd to March 7th in year 2004 and a sensational drama came up with a word "Metro sexual." This soap opera chose us because outrageous dressing of these main characters greatly effected people outside of TV box and made a note. Especially, these 4 young adults in TV, they are setting an economic rule of example within wealthy and poor situations which informed us that fashion-sensitive young adults are to be penetrated and acknowledged by the way they dress. Total of 20 episodes of video tapes, we used, to examine their dressing. Within the classification of well displayed cultural matters, we picked representational scenes of these 4 characters. Selection of this reasonable appropriateness is occurred base on elected 3 of design majors who are or above master degrees.

III. Result

4 characters of this soap opera are; a son of a big businessman, Jung Jae-min, wealthy family-girl, Choi Young-Ju, poverty class, Kang In-Ook and Lee Soo-Jung.

Jung and Choi are living in wealthy, luxury life but Kang and Lee are living in economically struggling life. As Jung and Choi live their daily life, they prefer expensive dressing, bags, and shoes which are exclusive brands; but Kang and Lee oppositely, they cannot afford luxury dressings, so they wear casual or training wears in their life, so these matters are easy to see how these two are different from other two.

Especially, Jung's individuality is vivid colored shirts with luxurious suit jacket, casual but expensive boutique backpacks and snickers, colorful ties made a new trend word "metro sexual." Jung with his shirt buttons opened and exposing body line dress worn my Choi pointed up their manly and womanly beauty. Also, Lee's jeans, hot-pants and sleeveless style showed her youthfulness.

Just like this, we could see and determine whether a character is wealthy, attractive, ideally shaped body and their youth just by looking at how they dress.

As we see casual-girl Lee starts to dress her hair and modify how she dress, she happens to hope changing in her social positions or her sense of value.

Kang informed us that his social matters had already went up by switching his training wear to suits. As we can see in this soap opera, dressing varies when cultural individuality varies.

IV. Conclusion

As we researched through this TV soap opera, our conclusion of symbolism in dressing regarding cultural individuality are:

Firstly, expensive boutique brands, designer's collections and fancy accessories are expressing wealthiness of the wearer. Fitted clothing expressing manly/ womanly beauty are symbolizing beauty.

Second, ties, suit-style and a man with briefcase shows he's a white-collar person; especially luxurious ties and suit show that he is white-collar person of higher level. Likewise, casuals and

daily wear like training wear symbolizes poverty.

Third, man showing his chest or fitted shirts express strong manly beauty and woman showing her partial bosom, fitted dress drawing her body lines and colorful materials express her beauty.

Fourth, jeans, hot-pants, colorful dress symbolizes bright and healthy youthfulness.

Lastly, as we can see dressings in this soap opera, cultural individuality effects one's dressings and assessorial; these directly shows wearer's social position, wealthiness, beauty and their youthfulness. With this, we understood how effective visual media is, and at the same time we understood importance of fashion in a tremendous industry as this visual media, and importance of understanding characters' dressings in symbolic ways.

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