A Study on Gender Identity Expressed in Fashion in Music Video

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ABSTRACT

In present modern society, media contributes more to the constructing of personal identities than any other medium. Music video, a postmodernism branch among a variety of media, offers a complex experience of sounds combined with visual images. In particular, fashion in music video helps conveying contexts effectively and functions as a medium of immediate communication by visual effect. Considering the socio-cultural effects of music video, gender identity represented in fashion in it can be of great importance.

Therefore, this study is geared to the reconsidering of gender identity represented through costumes in music video by analyzing fashions in it. Gender identity in socio-cultural category is classified as masculinity, femininity, and the third sex. By examining fashions based on the classification, this study will help to create new design concepts and to understand gender identity in fashion.

The results of this study are as follows:

First, masculinity in music video fashion was categorized into stereotyped masculinity, sexual masculinity, and metro sexual masculinity.

Second, femininity in music video fashion was categorized into stereotyped femininity, sexual femininity, and contra sexual femininity.

Third, the third sex in music video fashion was categorized into transvestism, masculinization of female, and feminization of male. This phenomenon is presented into music videos through females in male attire and males in female attire.

Through this research, gender identity represented in fashion of music video was demonstrated, and the importance of the relationship between representation of identity through fashion and socio-cultural environment was reconfirmed.

Key Words : gender identity, fashion, music video, masculinity, femininity, the third sex

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I. Introduction

1. Purpose of study

As the phenomenon of globalization affects every dweller on earth in modern society, media culture became one of the strongest power through its wide-penetrating characteristics. It suggests new life style, image and fashion, thus effects the construction of personal identity.

Music video, one branch of modern media culture and a child of postmodernism, has played an important role in pop music because it has upgraded the experience of enjoyment by combining music and image. With the rise of popularity of music video, the costume and accessory of the singers and artists in music video became another important source for new fashion.

The costume in music video can provide its viewers new style, fashion and persuasive image. By these series of visual images, music video can suggest a certain gender identity. Gender is a term for socially and culturally acquired sexual identity, different from biologically acquired sex. Pop singers in Korea and other countries already have expressed characteristics of the third gender in their music video as a way of their rebel to the conventional fixed gender identity.

Existing studies on music video are about formative analysis in relation with postmodernism, characteristics of text and acceptance process, categorization by criteria of image characteristics and male and female image. As the popularity and the influence of music video increases, the need for study on fashion in it became more important. This study aims to research the gender identity expressed by fashion in music videos especially with a view of additional third gender, since they have reflected modern societies by expressing the meaninglessness of defining masculinity and femininity as being stereotyped and exposure of sexual desires.

2. Method of study

The methods of study are literature review and demonstrative research. As literature review for theoretical approach, a variety of books and academic papers and articles on this research topic were read. As demonstrative research for analyzing the fashion in music videos, the ones draw interest by critics concerning gender identity were selected and analyzed.

The periodic range of study is between 1980's and 2006, as MTV of USA opened in 1980's as the leading factor to make music video popular. Recent ones were more in focus since they include prominently increasing cases of expressing gender identity through fashion. Korean music videos were selected among those released between 1992 and 2006 because 1992 saw the exploding popularity of music video and the opening of SBS which provided viewers with more variety in TV program.

II. Music video and fashion

1. Postmodernism and importance of image

The western culture witnessed the social shift from modernism which is based on the belief of reason to a cultural phenomenon called postmodernism since the mid 1970's.[1]
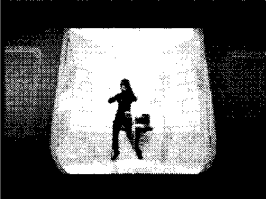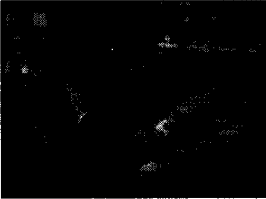
The characteristics of postmodernism are inter-textuality, self reflection, expansion of genre, and the destruction of boundary between high class- and popular or low class culture. These postmodernity are best expressed in images in movie, advertisement, and music video. They share variety of post-

modern techniques, for instance, destruction of tradi-
tional narratives, pastiche and parody, inter- textual-
ity, mixture of genre, fusion of technology and na-
ture and self-reflection. while music video puts
more weight on music itself as well as images.
<table 1> shows the image characteristics of music
video.

2. Development of music video

The definition of music video is a way of musi-
cal expression combined with image in one context
as a genre of popular culture.[2] The first music vid-
eo production started with the record of rock music
festival during the late 1960's, Woodstock Festival

<table1> image characteristics of music video

characteristics	techniques of image	music video
deconstruction of time/space	■ jump-cut frequently use in TV commercials ■ cyber space created by computer graphics	Britney Spears "Toxic" (2004)
inter-textuality	■ pastiche on the object	Junghyun lee, "Joolae"(2000)
self-reflection	■ making frame in frame by imitating images from existing text	Christina Aguilera "Beautiful" (2002)
variety of image techniques	■ fast screen editing, dynamic camera work ■ free and audacious expression	Bada, "V.I.P" (2006)

being the best known. Rock musicians in 1970's started to make music video to introduce their music not as a record of performance. In 1981, MTV opened an era when one can enjoy music video 24 hours a day.

Ann E. Kaplan[3] arranged the categories of MTV

<table 2> 5 styles of MTV music video

style			themes in MTV	
			love/sex	authority
all styles use avant- guarde strategy such as self reflection,	romantic	-narrative	-loss and re-union	-parent figure (affirmative)
	social-conscious	-changing factors	-fight for autonomy -love as problematic thing	-parent & public figure, -cultural criticism
	nihilistic	-performance -anti-narrative	-sado-mazochism -homosexuality heterosexuality	-nihilism, -anachronism, -violence
	classic	-narrative	-male gaze (voyeuristic, fetish)	-male as subject, -female as object
	postmodern	-pastiche -non-linear image	-playing with oedipus position	-ambiguity towards authority

source: Kaplan E. Ann. *How to read Music Video-Postmodern Images and Consumer Culture.* trans. by Chae, K.J. & Sung, K.W.(Seoul, Hannarae, 1996), p. 95.

<table 3> formative characteristics of Korean music video

category	characteristics	music video
personal image centered	images combined to emphasize singer & group members	S.E.S. <I'm your girl> Dues <In Summer> Sangun Lee <Sometime>
narrative centered	Images and narrative combined together to convey message	Jungwha Um<Rose of Betrayal> Jawoorim <Finding Lover> Gunmo Kim<Love is leaving>
message delivery	images combined to explain the implicated message	Seotaeji & Children <Dreaming Balhae> Hyundo Lee <To Friend> H.O.T <Happiness>
performance centered	images combined to show performing singers and enthusiastic fans	Seotaeji & Children <Classroom Idea> H.O.T <Candy>
montage centered	metaphoric music, images and expressions combined	Sungwoo Shin <Don't Cry, angel> Sungwhan Lee <Family> Sangun Lee <Wings>
movie/drama editing	images and music from existing movie/drama edited and inserted	Sukkyoo Han <Christmas in August> Yojin Jung <Too far away> Jaewook Ahn <Forever>

music video as <table2> according to styles.

Kaplan's categorization shares considerable common aspects with Korean music videos in their context, but it may differ according to social, cultural and economic situations. Kim, Kangsuk categorized Korean music videos by the criteria of the way how images are combined in formative characteristics.[4] The representing features of each category are summarized in <table 3>.

3. relationship between music video and fashion

With the growing popularity of music video, fashion items in them also started to gain popularity in young consumer market. Singers as well as the actors and actresses in music video tried to complete their image making and expression of personality mainly through fashion. They can be the fashion leaders through fashion tactics followed by ardent fandom.[5]

During 1990's. Korean pop group " Seotaeji & Children" was the first social phenomenon which contributed to the popularization of fashion represented in their music video. Their first release "I Know"(1992) brought a nationwide influence to the new generation with their fashion such as shorts, colorful print T-shirt, cap, and shoes being tremendously copied all over the country. Their second music video titled "Hayoga" virtually caused a blast of hot air of Hip-Hop fashion. <fig. 1> shows the group in Hip-Hop fashion with unique hair style and accessories which was called "Seotaeji fashion" and led to a special procurements and introduction of new fashion brands into the market. "Come Back Home "(1995) and "Free Style"(1996) were the reasons for the snowboard look to become popular in Korea as never before. <fig. 2> <fig. 3>
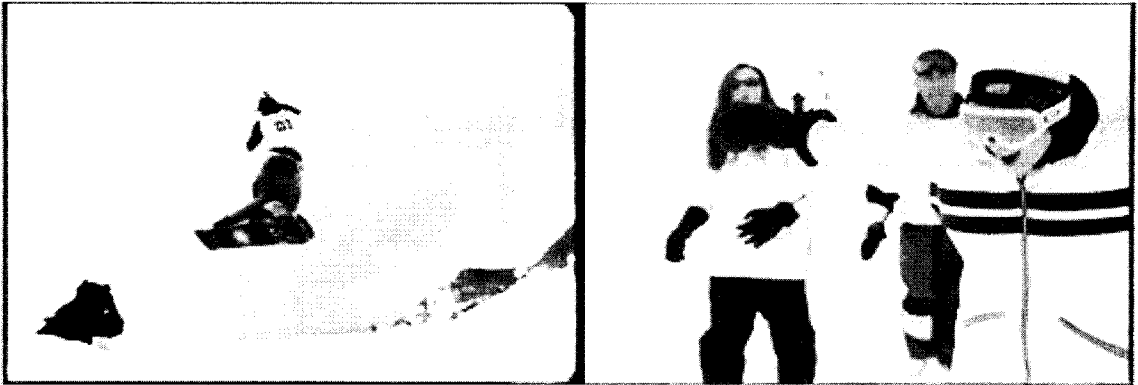

<fig. 1> "Hayuga", the source of Hip Hop fashion (1993)

<fig. 2> snowboard look in "Come Back Home"(1995)

In 2003, "Hyori Lee" brought a sensation by her sexy sweat suit fashion in her music video "10 Minutes" and this style became a fashion among young ones.<fig. 4>
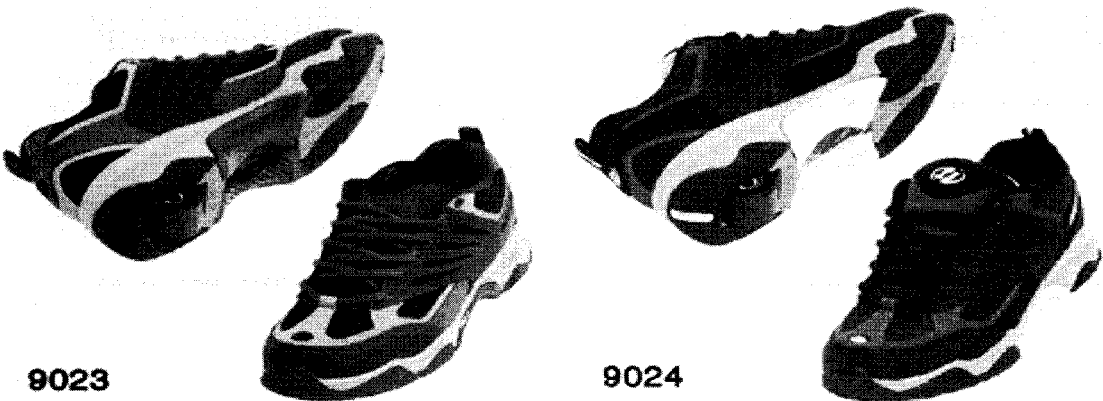
Korean pop group "Seven", as the representative of metro-sexual, introduced Heelys in the music video "Please, come"(2004)<fig. 5> which also turned to a fashion icon.

<fig. 3> snowboard look fashion in Seotaeji and children "Free Style" (1996)

<fig. 4> Hyori Lee, started sexy sweat suit boom by "10 Minutes"(2003)

9023   9024

<fig. 5> Heelys

Ⅲ. Gender identity and fashion

1. concept of gender identity

While sex is biological term which is determined physically at birth, gender is a socio-cultural term which is constructed by the sexual role in the social, psychological and cultural environment. The term "gender" was adopted in the 4th Women's Convention in Beiging in 1995 with the equal rights of women as background. Gender refers identity, role, activity and emotion we internalize after learning process. It means gender positions in the realm of choice.[6]

We are born as man or woman, but we learn to be masculine or feminine. Being a social construct, gender differs according to culture, and within the same culture it differs according to time and the relationship with other gender.

Since identity is relevant to the socially acquired mode of behavior, attitude, value and personality, the term sexual identity should be used to anatomically differentiate male and female, and the term gender identity to should be expressed to refer to socially accepted masculinity and femininity.[7] The term androgyny is a compound of Greek words "andros" meaning "man" and "gyne" meaning "woman" made in 1970's by researchers. The term is suitable to express the changing view on the conventional definition of masculinity and femininity because we see increasing numbers of individuals deviated from it.

2. relationship between gender identity and fashion

Fashion is a medium to provide the proper role according to one's sex and gender. Man wears proper clothes to fit for man, and woman for woman. As we started to differentiate sex and gen-

der, the difference between them is represented not naturally but by the recognition of the fact that the difference is socially constructed and expressed by the clothes they wear. The code of dress can be different in various cultures, therefore the concept masculinity and femininity and the expression in dress should be observed in relative point of view.

Once the attributes of masculinity and femininity are decided in a culture, the clothes are generalized accordingly, and the body plays proper role through clothes. Clothes explain and emphasize the wearer's gender, but they also hide and make it ambiguous, thus destroying the dichotomy of conventional practices in clothes and enabling the play between clothes and gender.

In modern society, urbanization and women's movement prompted the acceptance of masculine image as ideal for woman. But in recent days, the pursuit of individuality and the expression of dualistic value in postmodern culture made it possible to consider neutral or androgynous images as ideal.[8]

Ⅳ. Fashion and gender identity in music video

Gender identity in music video has a great deal of potential effect on public according to the socialization of gender role. In this study, as discussed above, they are categorized to masculinity, femininity and the third sex. The characteristics of each are analysed in relation to fashion in music video.

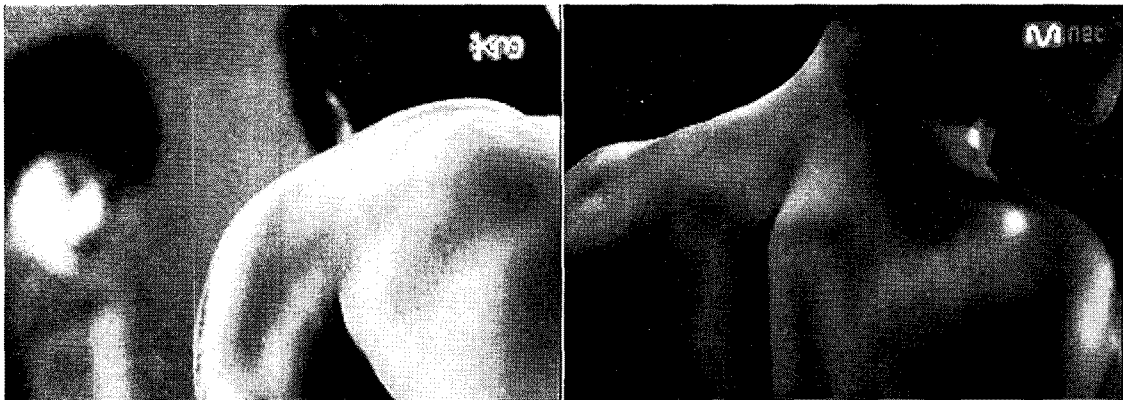## 1. masculinity in fashion in music video

As a result of extensive viewing and research of music videos related to the purpose of the study, masculinity in fashion in music video was categorized as traditional masculinity, sexual masculinity

and metro-sexual masculinity.

First, traditional masculinity seemed to change during 1980's as a result of consumerism and feminism, but feminization of men brought counter-effect and the conventional masculinity by the patriarchal culture reappeared. Minsun Lee suggested fashion design details to establish masculine image.[9] The silhouette is Y to emphasize shoulder and chest, and the inside lines of sleeve, collar, neckline are straight. Colors are simple, neutral and the fabrics are heavy, rough, hard and voluminous. Stripe, check, geometrical pattern or solid are masculine and short hair as well as mustache are among

them. Suit is representative of traditional masculinity accompanied by vest, hat, trench coat and cane. Muscular body and military uniform are additional expression of traditional masculinity. <fig. 6><fig. 7>

Second, sexual masculinity appeared as a result of feminism movement at the end of 20th century. Men started to try to change by refusing the dominant concept of masculinity which had been forced on them. They wanted to express inner feelings and to pay attention to their body by decorating. Postmodernism, with its multilateral view of world provided a new current in recognition of sex and sexuality. The notion that man can be a sexual ob

<fig. 6> muscular male body, Seven "I Know"(2006) Rain "I'm Coming"(2006)

<fig. 7> tradional masculinity in military uniforms, Rain, "I'm Comig"(2006)

ject just like woman spreaded and questions on general values accepted so far began to arouse. Leather, jeans and tight white T-shirt were the icons for male objectification. These sexual trends inevitably appeared in fashion in music video.

Third, metro-sexual masculinity as a new topic in fashion appeared in the 21st century.[10] It is a compound word of 'Metropolis' and 'Sexual', and it refers to a gender identity of young man who lives in big city. Metro-sexual men have highly developed fashion sense and they consider grooming natural to the extent that they invest much time on skin and hair care as well as spend money on
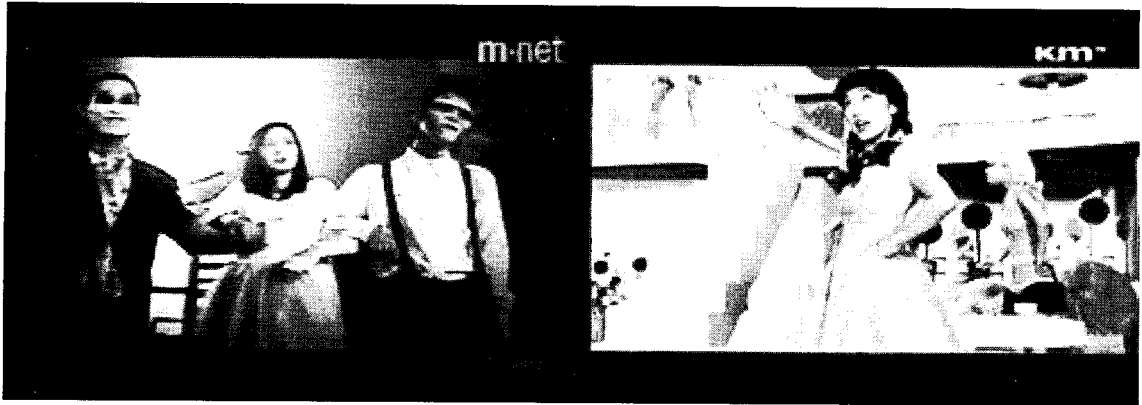
shopping. They became important new target of fashion consumer market. Their taste and interest in accessories are no less than that of women's. <table 5> summarizes the masculinity in fashion in music video.

2. Femininity in fashion in music video

The changes in the feminism movement affected gender identity through the interaction between fashion and the concept of femininity.   The result of analyzing research material, basically music videos related to the purpose of study, femininity in fashion in music video was categorized into traditional

<table 5> masculinity in fashion in music video

category	characteristics of fashion	music video
traditional masculinity	■ conventional man's suit ■ military style ■ uniform ■ jacket emphasizing masculine features ■ hat, cane, tie	Justin Timberlake "Sexyback" (2006)
sexual masculinity	■ leather, jeans, body revealing white T-shirt ■ tight tops	Big Bang "Ma girl" (2006)
metro-sexual masculinity	■ luxury accessory with feminine sensuality (watch, belt, wallet, bag, car, etc.) ■ refined and high-quality clothes (shirt, knit, suit, etc.)	Rain "The Bed I lied on" (2006)

<fig. 8> images of princess & Barbie, Jinyung Park,"Kiss Me"(2001), Junghyun Lee," I'll Give" (2000)

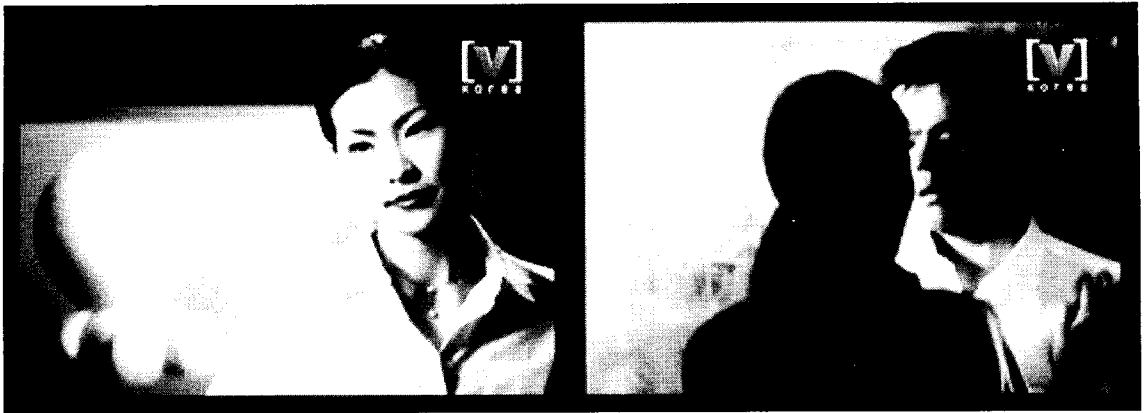<fig. 9> Beyonce "Naughty Girl"(2003)

femininity, sexual femininity and contra sexual femininity.

First, traditional femininity is defined by ideal beautiful body, fit for completion of feminine instinct as the society demands, adorned with elegant dress and long curly hair with refined smile. The fantasy of princess or Barbie Doll image is additional essence.<fig. 8>

Second, sexual femininity demands provocative and seducing attire. The "Femme fatal" image meant sexual emancipation and social independence of women, and this was expressed by matching fashion items. Sexual femininity also used the strategy of body exposure, especially the full bosom, arms and legs and shoulders. Black color, mini skirt and tank top, deep slit, high heel and boots, lace bra top and heavy make up are used to construct this image.<fig. 9>

Third, contra sexual femininity is a new key word appeared in connection with metro sexual masculinity. This is a phenomenon occurred as a result of the meaningful rise of women's status in society. This term, a compound of Latin "contra" literally meaning "against" and "sexual", first ap-

<fig. 10> contra sexual femininity, Jinyoung Park, "Um Um Um"(2001)

<table 6> femininity in fashion in music video

category	characteristics	music video
traditional femininity	■ purity expressed by white dress, clean make up, ■ long straight hair or long curly hair ■ white cardigan, blouse, skirt, cute shoes, etc.	Miyon Kan "Lady of Old Time" (2006)
sexual femininity	■ emphasis on bosom, ■ exposure of body parts ■ heavy make up ■ body-conscious tight dress, T-shirt, pants, skirt	Britney Spears "Toxic" (2004)
contra sexual femininity	■ white or black man's shirt ■ simple, refined accessory ■ sleek and tidy hair style ■ black suit	Jinyoung Park "I've Got a Women" (2001)

peared in England around 2004, referring women of 20's-30's with the idea opposite to traditional femininity.[11] They have strong motivation for success and money, and the economic success propel
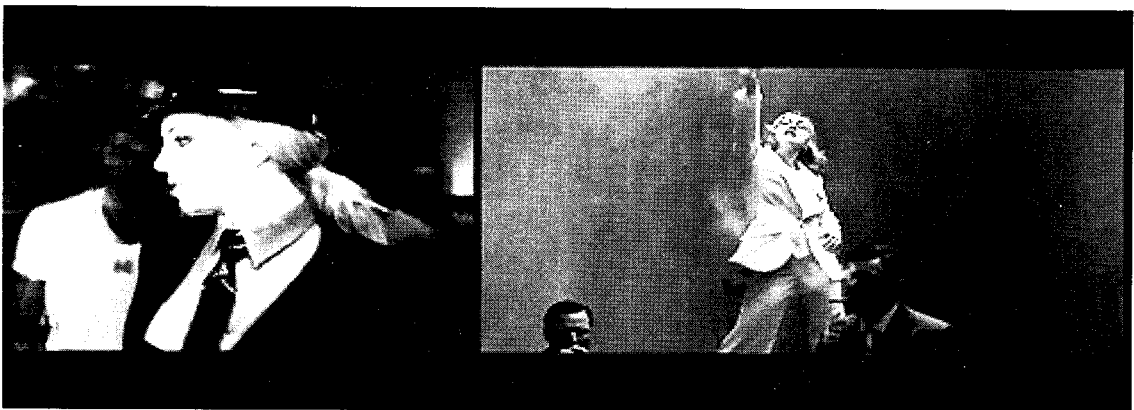
<fig. 11> transvestism, man dressing himself as woman

<fig. 12> humorous transvestism, "Talala" (2006)

<fig. 13> Hyori Lee, "Shall We Dance" (2006)

<fig. 14> Britney Spears and Madonna in man's suit, Britney Spears, "Me against the Music" (2003)

them to pursue enjoyment in life including invest-ment for themselves and sex without considering conditions. These images are frequently seen in ad-vertisement not only in music video.<fig. 10>

<table 6> is a summary of discussion above.

3. the third sex in fashion in music video

The third sex where sex and gender do not co-incide, had been considered extreme violation or infringement until 18th century, and since then a deviated form of sex till homosexuality earned social tolerance with the development of feminism movement. Therefore cross dressing was only permitted to those such as actors or prostitutes. [12] Since 1990's, the mixed image of sexual image suggested the concept of "the third sex", and fashion expressed this by borrowing design elements and details from traditionally established clothing cues from opposite sex.[13] This study analyzed the third sex in three categories.

First, transvestism is a term first used by German sexologist Magnus Hirshfeld in her book "Die Transvestism(1910)" It refers to psychiatrical syndrome wanting to dress with the clothes and hair styles of opposite sex. Most transvestites keep normal sexual identity. They just seek satisfaction by cross dressing as fetish. In recent years, it stopped being treated as pervert and became a way of just seeking fun by imitating the clothes of opposite sex. In this case, the wearer can't completely erase his(her) sexual clue and the image becomes hermaphrodite.[14] Another motive of transvestism is homosexuality because it may reveal wearer's sexual preference.<fig. 12>

Second, feminization of man, as interpreted by anthropologist C. Winich in his book [The New People] as "desex validation", [15] it expresses dual value of the postmodern society by mixing male image with female one.<fig. 13><fig. 14><fig. 15> Members of rock groups such as "Eve", Dong-bang-sin-gi and singer Jionyoung Park are those who use

<fig. 15> Lexy in man's suit. "A Novice" (2003)

feminine fashion item successfully in their music video. The fashion items are frilled shirt, embroidered tight pants, flower prints sleeveless shirt, ribbons, eye make up, long hair and feather shawl, etc. It can also deliver ambiguity and fun.

Third, masculinization of woman is expressed by fashion items traditionally conceived as man's such as suit, neck tie, pants, hat. It appears as a rebel to the fixed concept of gender role. But the socio-cultural feminists argued that selection and wearing man's clothes endow woman with tacit legality to patriarchal social common notion.[16]

The phenomenon of women's adopting man's clothes can rather be considered as a result of popularity of sports among women such as cycling and horse riding and expanded leisure activity during 20th century. [17] In many cases, tailored suit and hat can convey feminine eroticism when combined with deep front opening or erotic pose by breaking the boundary between femininity and masculinity. <table 7> summarizes the different characteristics of the third sex appearing in music video, by dividing them into three categories.

<table 7> the third sex in fashion in music video

category	characteristics	music video
transvestism	■ wearing fashion items of opposite sex ■ feminine-dress, blouse, lingerie, skirt, make up, high heel, wig, soft colors ■ masculine-suit, short hair, hat, tie, dark colors	 H "잊었니" (2003)
feminization of man	■ symbols of femininity in fashion-lace, frill, embroidery ■ short jacket, long hair, make up, accessories	 이브 "Good Bye" (1998)
masculinization of woman	■ tailored suit, pants, shirts, vest, leather jacket ■ short hair, hat, tie, boots	 S.E.S."Be natural" (2000)

V. Conclusion

We live in a age of image, culture and inundation of media. In this regard, music video is a child of our age, as the representing product of postmodern time by visualizing music through a series of images. The opening of MTV in the USA through which one can enjoy music video 24 hours a day, and M.net and Kmtv in Korea enabled the popularization of music video.

Also during the 20th century, the dichotomy of man and woman developed into a new concept of gender identity, not based on the biological sex but on various socio-cultural environments.

This Study aimed to do a research on the gender identity expressed by fashion in music video. It tried to argue as well that one can alter one's self identity and even co-share other gender identity through the selection and wearing of certain fashion items,

The results of study are as follows.

Firstly, masculinity in fashion in music video was categorized as traditional masculinity, sexual masculinity and metro-sexual masculinity. They were respectively expressed in music video by conventionally accepted male signs of dress, by objectification of man through tight white T shirt, jeans, leather jacket, etc. and by refined luxury fashion items fit for narcistic male ego.

Secondly, Femininity in fashion in music video was categorized as traditional femininity, sexual femininity and contra sexual femininity. They were respectively expressed by modest white dresses with innocent girlish taste, by provocative and tempting

"femme fatal" styles and by tidy white man's shirt, refined suits, high quality accessories.

Thirdly, the third sex in fashion in music video, referring the discordance between sex and gender, was categorized as transvestism, feminization of man and masculinization of woman. They were respectively expressed by cross-dressing, by man's selection of traditional feminine fashion items and by woman's selection of masculine fashion items.

This study showed that gender identity expressed through fashion in music video is not fixed by biological and physical conditions, but can be corrected, expanded and changed in different social context, and that fashion is the most easily recognizable method of above mentioned process.

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