

The Design Trend and Identity of Alexander McQueen Based on the Cultural and the Artistic Background of England

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Abstract:An understanding of social and cultural background is crucial to understand the styles of a fashion designer. The designer's national background and the nation's identity are the main elements to determine the designer's style. The aim of this study is to examine the relation between the social and cultural backgrounds in British society and Alexander McQueen's designs.

The multiculturalism in British contemporary arts, the public popularization of arts, and the harmony between traditional and modern arts are reflected well in the collections of the British-representative fashion designer, Alexander McQueen.

With this research, the direction of future fashion styles could be anticipated examining the current cultural situations.

Key words: *Alexander Mcqueen, British culture and fashion, national identity, British fashion designer, high culture, low culture, minority culture*

1. Introduction

On February 11, 2012, Alexander McQueen was found dead at his estate in London, and the news of

his death quickly spread throughout the world. Local media officially announced the designer's death as a suicide for the current loss of his own mother. The press announced that McQueen suffered from a mental depression and regularly recorded his grief and sorrow over his mother's death.

Alexander McQueen was an influential designer due to his unique and new approaches to designs. In 1999, McQueen was appointed as the head designer of Givenchy and was only at the age of forty when he started his own business with Gucci Group acquiring 50% of his company. It is quite rare for the loss of a fashion designer to become news headlines worldwide. The dramatic collections, life, and death of Alexander McQueen were that much of an influence in the current fashion world. Even now, after his death, fashion admirers all over the world regret and grieve over the loss of a great designer. Hidden behind the disappointment lies the questions, 'Will there be any more fashion genius with such passion?', 'Will there be any greater collection than the McQueen's?'. The young designer often indicated the extinction of his label after his death; however, Alexander McQueen is rather gaining more spotlights after his death. Alexander McQueen was that much a creative and an inspirational designer in which no one could imitate.

According to the comments by the press, "Alexander McQueen is as dangerous, adventurous, and also very talented as Don Quixote." He has presented a variety of wild fashion shows even in the high-cultured haute couture shows with the theme of rape, accidents, slavery, etc. Just passed the age of thirty, Alexander McQueen was known as the monster of the fashion world for his experimental movie-inspired collections, the friendship and gossip with rock stars like David Bowie and Keith Flint of Prodigy, and the talents and the provocative attitude arbitrarily close to a commercial artist rather than a designer – the type of person that suits well with the United Kingdom's social, cultural, and artistic atmosphere and the type of person the world demands for.

The study and the understanding of the periodical background, social • cultural influences are crucial when trying to understand the philosophies and the styles of a fashion designer. The national background and the identity of a designer are especially the main elements of their unique tastes. Thus, the following research aims to discover the British cultural economic backgrounds in connection with Alexander McQueen's designs.

2. British cultural art and fashion

2.1 The social-cultural backgrounds and fashion of England

(The recreation of British culture into fashion – from low culture to high culture)

Heinrich Wölfflin once stated that it is the spirit of each period, the temperament of an individual, and the nation that determines the creations of an artist, meaning that every creation and production contains its origins' cultural and social characteristics. National identities, in particular, play a big role in the creations of fashion designers. Especially, through the modern reinterpretation of the past, the British changed their historical heritage into something that can be shared by people around the world. Through this innovation, the culture of the country became more abundant, and the country is playing a major role in the cultural

capital market. When we think of ‘tartan check, trench coat, street fashion, and punk’, we instantly think of England. Like this, the British culture contains national intrinsic identities and the harmony of royal culture and low street cultures that are accepted to the public worldwide.

Culture is something that is created by the lifestyles of specific social groups based on their social and material life experiences. It could be defined both historically and culturally.

First, it is the idea of high culture such as intelligence and manner developed from the excellence, sensitivity, and the bourgeois society, and the second is the idea of changeable low culture that creates consumers with different consumptions, and expresses certain meanings and values of a particular lifestyle under arts, education, institutes, and everyday acts.

Both the elitist high culture on the basis of long-trodden cultures of the royal families and the low culture created from the culture that tried to imitate or transform the cultures of the upper classes due to the spread of the consumer culture from the availability of mass production after World War II exist in the British fashion culture. During the interview about the British fashion identity held in ‘The Cutting Edge: Fifty Years of British Fashion 1947-1997’ in the year 1997 at the London Victoria and Albert Museum, England’s leading fashion designers such as Margaret Howell, Catherine Walker, and John Galiano identified the British fashion in two aspects—the classical traditions and the innovative creativity since the 1960s.

The civilians’ clothes that were developed since the period of King Louis XVI began to be worn for the nobilities due to the Industrial Revolution, and it has constituted the foundation of a British-style suit based on the highest quality materials and tailoring skills. Unlike other countries, the British aristocracies have their own unique values and forms, and in the society where ethics and formality were important, the upper classes kept the spirit of a gentleman by practicing fair-play attitude in everyday sports. They paid attention to their fashion styles to clarify their identities and social statuses, and wearing traditional style symbolized the unspoken promise of keeping a gentleman’s attitude.

Even today, the traditional British looks that represent the high cultures occupy an important position in the luxury brands such as Burberry, Aquascutum, Daks, Mulberry, and Austin Reed. Fashion elements such as the tartan check, the emblem that symbolizes family, regimental decoration that symbolizes the army, black and white glen check, diamond-shaped argyle check, tweed, cashmere, and trench coat continue to define the dignity and the spirit of traditional aristocratic culture in England.

On the other hand, the mass production system in the late 1950’s dramatically expanded the markets, increasing the inequality between social groups, while the lower classes had to suffer more severe economic instability and cultural alienation. In the midst of the crisis, young people of the lower classes began to explore the meaning of life and self-identity and started to establish their own ways of resisting to the cultural alienation. They expressed their distinctive identities of the low-culture by creating an anti-fashion culture of clothes and looks reflecting their idiosyncratic values, behaviors, and lifestyles. As these young people’s fashion and the street fashion started to gain attention, pop and rock stars such as the

Beatles, David Bowie, and Sex Pistols also had a profound effect on the British low culture fashion. The musical images defended the young people's emotions by reflecting all the nervous feelings, love, and rebellious characteristics. Most of the young people in England started to have their own musical idols and were sensitive to imitating the pop stars' wardrobe styles.

In the early 1950s, the top that emphasized the waist and tight-fitting pants, thin bow tie, velvet collars that represent the teddy boy style appeared in resistance to the mods look popularized by the Beatles. In addition, the rocker images of the Rolling Stones also gained popularity as the androgynous look of the glam rock singer, David Bowie, tested the boundaries of a uni-sex towards the end of the 60's. In the end of the 1970's, standardized fashion was denied as punk style that expressed the individuality and freedom entered with the appearance of Vivienne Westwood.

From the 1900's to the present day, creative and exceptional designers, who contribute in advertising the British fashion world, have continued to be produced, and these designers have been the focus and the leaders in the fashion world ever since. It is no exaggeration to say that fashion has become the core of culture instead of existing only in a particular industrial area. From the 1970's to the present, the activities of designers such as Vivienne Westwood, Paul Smith, John Galiano, Alexander McQueen, and Hüseyin Çaglayan has modernly interpreted the traditional British elements and has gained the world's attention through dramatic show productions, clothes in artistic formations, and the combination of various materials and technology.

2.2 The relations between British cultural art and the works of Alexander McQueen

*We may be a small country,
But we're a great one, too.
The country of Shakespeare, Churchill,
The Beatles, Sean Connery, Harry Potter,
David Beckham's right foot.
David Beckham's left foot, come to that.*

In the film, *Love Actually*(2003), British Prime Minister(Hugh Grant) describes his country to the President of the United States during the press conference of the two countries. He makes implicit and sarcastic remarks on Tony Blair, criticized for being 'Bush's Pet', and expresses his pride towards England's history and culture despite its small military powers and economic strengths when compared to the US.

There are many proud heritages in British modern culture. Andrew Lloyd Webber is a renowned musician and the composer of the musical <Cats> and <The Phantom of the Opera>, and who can forget Damien Hirst, one of the world's most famous contemporary artists. It is no exaggeration to say that Hirst is the one who changed the traditional England to the hottest tourist attraction in 10 years. Damien Hirst not

only caused a sensation in the British and the international markets, but also made a huge impact on contemporary arts.¹

Although London is still considered to be one of the most unclean cities in the world, it is more dynamic than any other places in the world when it comes to the area of art. People who visited England have started to realize that contemporary arts are changing the antique landscapes of England. Once known to be unclean, the back alleys of the East End are now attracting tourists with graffiti art decorations. Here, artists like Banksy have a great influence in the streets of England. Graffiti arts have especially become a great influence and focus in the current times, and street artists today are still continuing to cooperate in various graffiti projects.



[Image 1,2,3] Graffiti art in the streets of England (Source: Wikipedia)

British contemporary arts are setting new milestones in the public sectors. Since the year 2000, Tate Modern, who wrote the myth of ‘Contemporary art that saved the regional economics’, have become the benchmarking of the tourist attractions such as Seoul. To take a step further, British contemporary arts have become the main talk as the ‘creative industry’ of the strategic industries in the 20th century. Even the growth of the art markets is amazing. As art fairs and auction markets are burgeoning in London, the city is emerging as the global market of arts after New York.

Up until the late 20th century, British contemporary artworks were less popular than the novels and films based on deep-rooted cultural traditions, the pop music of the Beatles, and the West End musicals that surpassed the Broadway musicals; however, since about 10 years ago, after the public appearance of British contemporary artworks with the title yBa, British artists started to become the leaders of contemporary arts.

The reason for the England’s traditional image as the ‘Land of Shakespeare’ or the ‘Gentleman’s land’ to change as a powerful nation of contemporary arts that habitually expresses deviance and provocation are as follows.

First, the cause of such revolution is cultural diversity. British politicians and artists involved in cultural activities agree that cultural diversity and multiculturalism are the driving forces of the British culture. Not only does this signifies the development of the immigrant communities, but also signifies that the difference of sex, class, and race are embraced as a part of the society. Minor daily elements, issues of the identity of the working class, and the problems of sexual minority are easily found in British

¹ Lim, Keun-hye. (2010). The Empire of Creation- The Sensation of British Contemporary Art. Jian. P.7~8

contemporary arts (that mainly deal with personal and realistic issues) because of such backgrounds.

Over 300 different languages are being used in London, proving its variety of races. Such numbers of population were brought in from the colonies that were once under the rule of the British Empire. In the late 20th century, the country was mainly populated with working immigrants from Asia and the Arabs, and eastern immigrants also grew in numbers after the unification of Europe. Also, being the birthplace of the English language, there are now vast numbers of transfer students from Asian countries like South Korea. In some ways, the ‘multiculturalism’ policy, in which the British governments frequently emphasize, is not a matter of choice, but rather an inevitable survival tactic for the different groups of different cultures to coexist in the society. Of course, the discrimination against different races and classes still exist in the media; however, there are various institutional strategies that accept the cultural diversity and respect the minority cultures. These social backgrounds have become a foundation of imagination and have been directly reflected in the art.

Alexander McQueen, too, combined British-styled design elements with the motifs inspired from the clothes of the Third World War, the minorities, and the underground cultures. The mix of the motifs borrowed from the minorities, British elements, and the unique exclusivity of premium couture add “surreality” and eccentricity in McQueen’s works.



[Image 4] Left) Alexander McQueen, Fall 2003, Scanners. [Image 5] Center) Alexander McQueen, Fall 2000, Eshu
(Source: <http://www.alexandermcqueen.com>)
[Image 6,7] Right) Photography of McQueen’s works by Nick Knight (Source: <http://wickedhalo.tumblr.com>)

The second reason for England’s transformation to a powerful nation of contemporary arts is the cross-over of various culture genres.

The communications of different culture genres such as fashion, art, music, architecture, graphic design, photography, film, etc. are very natural, and also, new experiments are done without fear. The tendency of breaking its own boundaries and passionately loving other cultures results in London’s unique ideas and radiates into ‘raw madness, creativity, and energy’.

The third reason is the social communication of arts.

In England, it is common for all areas of art to create social relationships with other fields. Public art seminars regarding the redevelopment of the region have opened its doors, and improvement projects of the city square were also taken into consideration. In particular, after the 1990’s yBa syndrome of political

apathy dampened in the year 2000, the free political and ideological remarks of the writers and designers have become more prominent. Thus, British contemporary arts associate with a variety of social concerns regarding regional economics, popular culture, politics, and social issues.

The design techniques that appear in Alexander McQueen's fashion show or event, design, etc. are much similar to British contemporary arts. For example, his skull-printed scarves and shirts that were popularized throughout the world reflect the works of famous contemporary artist, Damien Hirst.



[Image 8,9] Left) Skull Scarf, Center) Flower Skull T-shirt (Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)
 [Image 10] Right) For the Love of God by Damien Hirst (2007) (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damien_Hirst)

He also made extreme attempts by attaching the model of Jesus in the center of a mask that connects the forehead and the nose. Later, he was acclaimed for social criticism and original ideas presented in his sacred-pattern-printed silhouettes, jackets, and t-shirt series.



[Image 11,12] Left) Alexander McQueen, (Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)
 [Image 13] Center) Jesus Dies on the Cross by Damien Hirst, (Source: The Guardian, Saturday 1 May 2004 15.42 BST)
 [Image 14] Right) Jesus by George Condo (2010), (Source: soundoffebruary.com)

The last cause of England's transformation to a powerful nation of contemporary arts is the new discovery of the traditions and the combination of past traditions and modern arts. England is famous for being a country of affection for 'old things'. There are over 2,500 member organizations that are registered in the British museum associations. The establishment of the museum for the fictional British character, 'Sherlock Holmes', proves the British culture's unusual attachment towards museums. Such passions originated not only from collectomanias, but also the intellectual legacies that lead the enlightenment of England, and the British people's pride towards the victory of the British Empire. This is the reason why most of the museums in England display artifacts from the 18-19th century's bloom of imperialism except in minor places like the contemporary museum of Jesus. However, the commitments that the museums

make to keep the national treasures and yet embrace the trends of the new century are more worth noticing. This could be found in the many cases of the modern reinterpretations of the British Empire's victory, with Give&Take exhibition being the main example. Under such social atmosphere, British fashion designers have a common denominator of being able to read-out the history of fashion and combine it with their contemporary artistic senses. Alexander McQueen did not use the country's history simply as an inspiration, but instead, discovered the present modernity in the past to create his own designs. One can see at a glance the difference of the emotional foundations between British fashion designers and American fashion designers. The world's most creative fashion designers are cultured in the city of England. The harmony of the past and the present, commercialism and aestheticism, and high culture and low culture control the fashion industries of England, in which are quite similar to the rhythmical and the witty environments of the British contemporary arts.

3. Alexander McQueen's fashion

3.1. Alexander McQueen's life

Alexander McQueen was born as a son of a taxi driver in East End, London, in the year 1969. He quit school at the age of sixteen and first entered the fashion world as an apprentice in the tailor shop located in the Savile Row, the origin of the traditional British suits. Here, he proved his tailoring abilities by designing the suit of Charles, the Prince of Wales. He then changed his job place to the theatre clothes company, Berman & Nathan, and mastered the excellent suit tailoring skills characterized in his shows. Once hired as a paid position at Milano, Alexander McQueen returned to London in the year 1994 and belatedly studied and graduated with a master's degree in design at the Central Saint Martin's College, making a so-called 'jackpot' through his master's graduation works in the year 1992. Isabella Blow, the editor of the world's most influential fashion magazine, Vogue, has purchased all of his graduation work. Isabella Blow's discovery of McQueen became a legend. In the year 1991, blown by McQueen's graduation collection in Central Saint Martin's, Isabella intended to purchase one coat worth 350 pounds. While at it, she purchased his whole collection all together worth 5000 pounds, but rumors say she had to pay hundred pounds every week to pay off the debts from the clothes that arrived in a big garbage bag. Later, McQueen was able to launch his first collection under the support of Isabella Blow.

After his debut, McQueen was chosen four times as the British Designer of the Year in the years 1996, 1997, 2001, and 2003. On June 2003, he was chosen by the CFDA(Council of Fashion Designers of America) as the "International Designer of the Year" and was awarded the CBE(Commander of the British Empire). He also received the Menswear Designer of the Year in 2004, He reigned as the greatest genius of the fashion world along with John Galliano by working as a creative director of luxury brands such as 'Givenchy'. Not only was McQueen famous for his designs, but he was also known for his outstanding tailoring skills. In addition, McQueen became famous as the scary rookie of the fashion industry, causing a sensation in the fashion world by delivering shocking messages through his shows. Later, he suffered a

long-term emotional chaos after Isabella Blow, who suffered from ovarian cancer, committed suicide by consuming herbicide. McQueen, who then continued to present the best collections, followed his mother's path in the year 2010, a few days after the suicide of his mother. After McQueen's death, media and fashion-admirers worldwide could not suppress their sorrows of the loss, claiming that the British fashion was now dead. McQueen was that much of a leading designer in England.

3.2. The design styles of British fashion designers and Alexander McQueen

Many British fashion designers have their own design philosophies. Then, what does it mean to be a British representative designer, and what specific elements are there in 'British-ness'?

Vivienne Westwood, John Galiano, and Alexander McQueen can be picked as the three representative fashion designers of England. These big three are known as the rebels of the fashion world for breaking the common sense of the existing high-fashion culture and driving issues around the world by applying low-culture such as British pop and street culture into the motifs of the high-cultures as if they are mocking the fashion world. Some find their unique styles and new attempts a bit difficult to understand, but the British designers' attempts to make new styles are becoming issues worldwide. They have an insight of seeing new technologies and cultures in a different perspective and have combined commercialism and aestheticism with their creativity into fashion.

The youngest of the trio designers, McQueen is considered the owner of unstoppable ideas, grafting challenging and experimental styles into the elements of the British pop culture. Hence, he is praised as a designer with high business strategies, artistic creativity, and excellent tailoring skills, presenting fashion shows as entertaining as John Galiano's. More than anything else, the stages, performances, settings, fashion, and music of the fashion show with a glimpse of 'McQueen-ness' was more close to a composite art. He did not think of fashion show as an ordinary showcase of clothes, but rather completed an act with settings ranging from music, hair, and make-ups. Thus, his designs were not considered simply as clothes, but rather artworks with stories and creativity. McQueen's fashion show actually reflects fantasy films and images of fairy queens that appear in myths. He raises exclamations of the audiences by making the models walk through a stage filled with water, snow, rain, and wind, and making the models wear non-transparent lenses, and also by surrounding the stages with acryl and other dramatic structures. In addition, placing deer antlers and stuffed animals on an over-exaggerated hairstyle and mechanically spraying colorful inks on a model are reviewed as styles only possible by McQueen.

Since the appearance of Alexander McQueen, the original ideas of romanticism, glamor, comedy, and wit of the British fashion started to change. Strict tailoring based on traditional classics was the basic feature of a British fashion designer, but McQueen completed his fashion with an addition of modernity. Unlike other traditional designers, McQueen's inspirations from commercial movies such as 'Charlie's Angels' and 'Blade Runner' proved his acceptance of modern pop-cultures as an element of fashion design. Alexander McQueen's collections are known to be romantic with emotional strength and primitive energy,

yet not losing modern trendiness. Contrasting elements such as frailty and strength, tradition and modernity, mobility and strictness coexist as McQueen's symbols.

Alexander McQueen established his own style by combining London's strict tailoring techniques and science and technology into the formative structures of his artistic works. McQueen's show present fantasy elements, but his clothes actually stay in a realistic area.

3.3. Alexander McQueen's design trends

(1) Dramatic contrasts, sharp cuttings, and exaggeration

Alexander McQueen's fashion starts from sharp cut lines, and bizarre and extreme styles. He mostly uses items such as jackets that contain long and lean silhouette, one-piece, top and skirts, and his designs are characterized by contrasting effects such as exaggerated shoulders and fit waist, jackets with sharp lapels, and avant-garde patterns and cuts. Although most of the designs have skin-tight sexy silhouettes or exaggerated silhouettes, almost all of them are fit in the waist. In addition, he emphasized the sharp cutting details by accentuating the outer and the linings, the cuts and the surfaces, and the dramatic contrasts of the materials and colors. In particular, grafting unexpectability into the design by matching the contrasts of the quality, the structure, and the color of the outers and the linings can be viewed as McQueen's design trademarks.

When Alexander McQueen introduced his designs inspired from historical costumes, the slashed, gothic long-sleeves, colorful eyebrows, spiked hair, red and blue colors on the pale faces, and exaggeration of the cut lines were the center of attention. In addition, the extreme rebellious details contain slim belted tops that cover the body, deeply slit skirts, and transformed tailored jackets. Being the most important detail, the shoulders varied from high to stiff forms since the beginning to the present. In particular, the image of wild bull presented at the collection in the year 1997 showed very high and stiff, broad shoulders. The lapel extending through the shoulder line, high-towered hair, and colorful artificial eyebrows were praised in his earlier collections. In addition, McQueen showed an extreme reformation of dichotomy by exposing skin through the addition of slashes in the front legs of the pants and in the middle of the skirts and creating contrasts of primary colors on the linings and monotonous colors on the outers. The avant-garde-patterned hems and shoulder lines, lines flowing from the lapel and the sleeves, and lines connecting the skirt train and the side lines moved rhythmically and formed irregular natural patterns of line movements.



[Image 15,16,17,18,19] Alexander McQueen Fall/Winter 1997, It's A Jungle Out There

(Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)

(2) Application of various experimental materials

By presenting collections of new materials and details, Alexander McQueen proved to the world his capability of using surrounding elements as fashion materials.

In his earlier collections, he showed a variety of contrasting materials through the use of taffeta, thin and light wool, vinyl, leather, anaconda skin, enamel artificial leather, tiger skin, velvet, velour, wool, wool jersey. In addition, the natural suede and leather one-piece seared with an iron and the patterns of mad red bull printed on a power-shouldered jacket reveal the resistance to the insights on traditional culture and ideas. Alexander McQueen also used raw Tibetan wool fibers, mix-and-matching knit cardigans with sheepskin skirts attached with sparse hairs, and combining contrasting materials such as denim blouson and lambskin skirt.

In the year 1999, he presented a futuristic art wear that changed its color and silhouette according to the color and the shape of a computer circuit, and in 2001, he created artistic images by using clam shell, and materials created with ostrich feather with hand-knitting techniques.

Eventually, at the 2009 Fall/Winter Haute Couture collection, McQueen introduced a mix-and-match collection of recycled garbage art wears. McQueen will probably be the first and the last designer to use waste materials in an haute couture collection that are made with only the finest materials in the world. Ironically, the collections created from garbage junks were luxurious.

Alexander McQueen never hesitated in introducing new disciplines and convergence of new materials. His fan-shaped skirt, blouse, armor, and torso-shaped tops would not have existed if he had not physically calculated the center of gravity and space utilization of organic shapes.



[Image 20,21] Left) Alexander McQueen Fall/Winter 1999, The Overlook

[Image 22,23] Center) Alexander McQueen Spring/Summer 2001, Voss

[Image 24] Right) Alexander McQueen Fall/Winter 2009, The Horn of Plenty

(Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)

(3) Intense and extreme color contrasts

Alexander McQueen preferred using the extreme color contrasts of red and black. Of course, a variety of colors were used differently in each season according to its scenario, but the red and black colors that frequently appeared since the collection in 1996 well-reflected McQueen's extreme and bizarre works. In the beginning of his collections, he frequently combined black-red, black-purple, grey-red, grey-purple, and silver-orange, geometrically and mathematically balancing the season's point color and base colors.

Later, he used saturated, less-contrasted soft colors, emphasizing the materials and the silhouettes of his works. This probably indicated the situation of the late 20th century and the self-mocking attitude of closing a century that is reflected in the 19th century fashion. Such changes in the use of dark color contrasts were thought to have been replaced by smooth colors, but after the Spring/Summer collection in the year 2000, McQueen proved his return of using signature colors by using the tones of red-white-black in the midst of a dark background.

(4) Strong, free, and challenging patterns

Developing numerous patterns and constantly trying new things are the two best features of Alexander McQueen. These patterns are commonly strong and free in form and can be categorized into five different parts.

First are the heavy patterns from the rough touches of the brush and the oriental emphasis. These patterns, usually created from tie-dying and printing techniques, usually start from a point and show a gradual change of colors. Oriental tinting techniques were also used in his works to present an incomplete connection, thus creating static but strong attentions.

Second are stripes and British traditional checks such as the glen, tartan, gingham, and the argyle. Not only does McQueen create new patterns by differentiating the pattern's size and color and the material's thickness and weaving, but also creates a harmony of femininity and masculinity by adding embroideries of flower and trees on the base material.

Third are the modernity and rhythm created from lines and surfaces. The effect of capturing attentions through the use of playful and dynamic lines is the biggest feature in Alexander McQueen's collections. The variety of the curves, continuity, clarity, and the directions of the lines create different feelings, but most of these lines are straight, stiff, and masculine. McQueen also presents a feeling of excitement, dignity, and strength through the use of angled and vertical lines. In addition, he establishes distortion effects through the expansion of shapes from multiple uses of lines.



[Image 25,26] Left) Alexander McQueen Autumn/Winter 1995, Highland Rape

[Image 27] Center) Alexander McQueen Spring/Summer 2000, Eye

[Image 28] Right) Alexander McQueen Fall/Winter 2009, The Horn of Plenty
(Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)

Fourth is the free-styled scribble motifs inspired from graffiti arts. Alexander McQueen created provocative and intense impressions by presenting light, lively, and rhythmical diversity of free curves and straight lines, and by applying various techniques such as spilling, spraying, and drawing into fashion. He also applied graffiti techniques by making tangled lines in between thin plastic vinyl and by showing the changes of colors and proportions of the surfaces and the lines. Finally in the Spring/Summer collection of year 1999, he created an outstanding performance with model Shalom Harlow dreamily standing on a platform rotatable 360 degree, and with two robots creating patterns of colors by spraying various color dyes on the model's white dress. Such performance reflects a spontaneous pin art.



[Image 28,29] Left) Classic mens shoes splattered in paint,Alexander McQueen Spring 2010 footwear collection
(Source: www.outsapop.com)

[Image 30] Right) Alexander McQueen Spring/Summer 1999, Ending show by Shalom Harlow
(Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)

Fifth are the realistic presentations of flower, plant, and animal patterns. McQueen presented a variety of flower patterns through flower embroideries on glen checks, iron-burns on suede, and flower prints on furs. He favored using flowers such as the daisy and the chrysanthemum as a pattern and using a portion of a flower as a one-point detail on the hem.



[Image 31,32] Left) Alexander McQueen Spring/Summer 2010, Plato’s Atlantis (Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)

(5) Accessories that show deviance

In his earlier collections, Alexander McQueen used dried wood sticks and feathers as hair accessories, ponytails, hairs attached with feather-made heart shapes, and high-towered hairstyles. He used accessories such as sharp metal gloves and nails that matched well with the aggressive and challenging hairstyles and showed deviant tendencies contrary to the age by using extreme accessories such as the statue of Jesus, cross necklaces, and skeletons.

Also, he created Eastern and inhumane, organized futuristic images through the use of conical Vietnamese hat, slightly wavy hair chopped in a triangular form, and matching colors of pale make-up and white shadow.



[Image 33,34,35] Left) Alexander McQueen, knuckle duster metallic python clutch
 Center) Alexander McQueen, skull-clasp-clutch
 Right) Alexander McQueen, bonebag
 (Source: www.alexandermcqueen.com)

4. Conclusions

Today, the representative fashion designer of England such as Alexander McQueen is not only created from his sheer talents and skills, but rather is the result of the school education that allowed the designer to gain a solid place in the society, a fashion editor who quickly absorbed the new sensibility and developed a new economic infrastructure, the designer’s effort to catch up with the changing trends, the eye-bright industries that apply the designer’s artistic imaginations into marketing techniques, and the cultural governments that have supported fashion for the creation of new national images. Although the

situation is dealt in a specific region such as England, it will be a prospect of the future Korean fashion culture.

Some people might consider understanding the culture, art, philosophy, and the time period is unnecessary in fashion designing and is a disturbance that interferes with one's ability to concentrate purely on fashion. However, the story will change 180 degree when fashion is viewed as a large cultural industry with a perspective of 'design as a result of human activities' even before being blinded by the fantasy stories produced by the fashion industries. Also, the direction of the future fashion culture will be caught under the contemporary cultural situations and mechanisms.

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