

The “Charisma” Represented in Fashion Magazines

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the word “charisma” has been used frequently in Japanese fashion magazines in order to describe a fashion leader. The use of this word has gained in popularity and is now found in many other aspects of the Japanese society. In particular, the term can be often seen in so-called “street-kei” magazines. The most frequent use of the term occurred between summer 1997 and autumn 1998. Because of this overuse, it can be said that the word “charisma” has become devalued. These charismatic people exist in many different areas of society and are known only by the limited members of each social group. This “charisma phenomenon” can tell us that the way fashionable things and phenomena emerge and the way new consumption behaviors appear cannot be explained with the conventional Trickle-Down Theory. The phenomenon also shows that it is getting more difficult to create mass consumption/mass production through mass advertising. It can be said that the background of this phenomenon includes not only the fragmentation of mass media but also the fragmentation of the teenagers’ market. It shows the influence of charisma on the youth in order for them to identify pluralistic and ad-hoc self.

key words: fashion magazine, charisma, youth-subculture