

UTILIZATION OF THE SPACE IN BETWEEN A GARMENT AND THE WEARER: A DISCUSSION ON THE GARMENT FIT

Usage of space and human interaction

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Abstract

Garment is one of the links between the human body and the outer surrounding that acts as the intermediary for the two aspects. Humans seek for their personal space as the top most priority in the survival, hence before dealing with the external aspects, an individual seeks for their comfort in the personal space. For this the main element they control is their dress, for the dress can be used as an indirect boundary to satisfy their personal space. From the Fashion designer's perspective, garment is an artificially created boundary; achieved through a meaningful control on the space in between the garment and the wearer. From the wearer's perspective, they identify this controlled space as the fit of the garment. Therefore, garment fit variations done by 3 selected designers were brought into the discussion and thereby tried to identify the interaction of the human body and the personal space with reference to the garment fit. Accordingly, three main definitions were derived about the garment fit that plays around the personal space of the human body. They are:

1. Adaptation of the garment for the live human body allowing the customization of fit giving an adoptable personal space
2. Tailoring to perfectly match the measurements and the body curves enhancing the body shape and
3. Hiding the body shape through exaggeration of the garment from the human body giving an abstractly exaggerated space around the body.

Keywords: *Garment construction, Garment fit, Space utilization, Garment Construction techniques, Space in between*

Introduction

"Garments form the testamentary envelope that contains the body and presents it to the social world" (Twigg, 2009). Hence, garment can be referred as the outer boundary of an individual that defines the personal space occupied by that particular individual. At the stage of the creation or construction of a garment, a proper system is always needed based on the wearer and the context. Predominantly there are five main garment construction systems (Lindqvist, 2015) practiced around the world, namely, body wrapping, rectangular cut, flat Pattern making, draping and creative pattern cutting. Any system holds a correlation with the human body and the way of controlling the space in between the body and the boundary created by the garment.

This paper will refer „the dress form,, to a static human body and „body,, to a live human body.

THE CONCEPT OF GARMENT FIT

"With the progression of time, garments have fluctuated in varying degrees of fit ranging from close-to-body to away from the body" (McRoberts, 2000) Accordingly fit is given different interpretations by the wearer and designer both. "Fit typically refers to the comfort and appearance of a garment" (Boorady, 2011) The above mentioned explanation can be extracted as an explanation that commonly concerned about the visual appeal of the human body after wearing a garment and the comfort provided by the garment. Further, visual appeal is considerably high when a garment is proportionately placed on a body. The theories related to the origin of clothing itself are directly connected with the fit of the garments. By controlling the fit, the space occupation of the garment against the body and also the surroundings has also been controlled. Hence, it is clear that Fit has been the prior consideration for the construction of garments from the very early times.

"Clothing fit has been shown to be the most important element for consumers in determining their overall satisfaction with garments" (Shin, 2013) Designers has managed to control the personal space around an

individual by controlling the fit of the garment in various ways which will be analyzed next. In other words, designers control the fit of the garment against the personal space in order to achieve variations of the garments designed and constructed.

According to studies, garment fit can be defined in "two perspectives: designer-mediated and consumer" (Shin, 2013)

Garment Fit From Consumer's Perspective

The consumer's perspective about the garments depends on two factors; the visual and the tactile qualities of a garment. "The visual, when looking in a mirror or looking down at themselves, the tactile, when feeling the clothing as they wear it" (Frost, 1988). Accordingly, providing the comfort of the personal space in a visually appealing way for the particular consumer is important.

Garment Fit From Designer's Perspective

Garment fit from designer's perspective is the fit that is evaluated during the construction process. "Fit can be measured by a set of criteria known as a standard of fit (Shin, 2013) "The standard of fit which is defined as a set of physical characteristics of a fitted garment" (Frost, 1988). Accordingly the designer's perspective of a garment's fit is determined based on "five basic factors namely the grain of the fabric, the construction lines, set of the garment, balance and the ease" (Boorady, 2011).

Case Studies and Discussion

Three case studies; works of three veteran designers" were selected for a comparative analysis based on the differences on the silhouette, garment construction system and the signature garment fit of their creations. The designers for the case studies; Issey Miyake, Christine Dior and Cristobal Balenciaga are couture designers from the 20th century who have introduced revolutionary silhouettes to the fashion world.

CASE STUDY 1: ISSEY MIYAKE

"Fashion to me is like the wind, I like to stay constant. I put my mind to making a product that people enjoy." Says Miyake as Ross (2011) states. Issey Miyake is a Japanese fashion designer who is still considered to be an icon who reinterprets the garment construction through his approaches (Hiramitsu, 2005). He who was a pioneer for introducing and following new methodologies and techniques for making garments which has cleared vision for numerous possibilities for constructing garments. According to Hiramitsu (2005) "To Miyake, making haute couture dress is comparable to serving the bourgeoisie and in complete opposition to his sensibilities.", says Hiramitsu (2005). He thoroughly believed that that a garment should be created together with the feel of them.

Issey Miyake refused the western garments that enhance the body shape through skilled tailoring and also the western clothes, which were constructed as structural packages. Most of the times Miyake uses basic shapes for the construction of his garments and then he let air flow into the garment to complete the silhouette. Therefore he has a prior consideration to control the space in between the body and the garment as well. The movements of the live human body will only reveal the body curves unless the body shape is not defined in his garments (Hiramitsu, 2005). His concept not only explores the relationship between the garment and the body but also the space in between.

Key Discussion Points

- Miyake's starting point of the designs was the traditional Japanese Kimono which requires no real tailoring and fits the wearer regardless of the proportions.



Figure 1 : One Piece of Cloth Source : <https://www.2plus3d.pl/artykuly/issey-miyake>

- Miyake’s garment constructions always followed the basic geometry which was the rectangular cuts for the cutting of the fabric.
- His designs include the systems of garment construction namely body wrapping, rectangular cut, body wrap and creative pattern making. Flat patterns were modified in his own way for the construction of the garments.
- His designs always maintained his identity of not revealing the exact body shape when the body is still.
- His garments adopted the human body when they are put on a live human body.
- Miyake’s designs interacted with the live human body without revealing its full body shape.
- He facilitated an adoptable personal space for an individual through his garments

CASE STUDY 2: CHRISTIAN DIOR

Christian Dior was a French designer who is considered as a revolutionary fashion designer who lived in the 20th century. “He used solid, rigid construction to achieve his delicate-looking “femme-fleur” look, sometimes requiring up to 15 yards of fabric for the skirts.” (Williams, 2011) He always believed that a garment’s beauty needs to be expressed both its inside and outside as the wearer sees the inside of the garment. Dior's most of the inspirations for the designs have been gained out through flowers, says Clinton, 2016 in the daring buds of Dior. Elfman further states that Dior loved feminine details like draping, laces and bows which can be seen even in today. This clarifies that Dior has been a brand that tries to bloom the female from a very long time. Dior has its signature with figure conscious silhouettes. Femininity is always a prior quality of Dior Silhouettes and played with the waist lines and hemlines. (BORELLI-PERSSON,2016) The brand often plays with construction lines, hence the garments are always well tailored.



Figure 2 : Junon Dress

Source : http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/dior/hd_dior.htm

Key Discussion Points

- Dior's garment construction includes skilled tailoring and intricate detailing of the garments.
- Drapery has also been involved with the garment construction.
- The curves of the female body has been given a higher priority through style lines.
- Multiple layers can be seen in the garments often to give the fullness especially for the lower torso of the wearer.
- When construction a garment Dior considered the beauty of both the inside and outside of the garment incorporating feminine details.
- Dior embraced glamorousness, body shape and enhanced femininity.
- Dior's garments were embraced by the people who needs a limited but glamorous personal space around them which will control their postures and movements as well when wearing the garments.

CASE STUDY 3: CRISTOBAL BALENCIAGA

"Haute Couture is like an orchestra, whose conductor is Balenciaga" quoted by Christine Dior which explains a lot about who this designer is. Cristobel Balenciaga was a Spain born fashion designer who radically changed the fashion silhouette of women through his designs. He was able to experiment with the fashion silhouette of women towards a new silhouette. In Cristobel Balenciaga: A Timeless Legacy, Urgel quotes Balenciaga as “if the framework is good, one can build what one wants”.(Urgel,2013) This was Balenciaga’s philosophy for his designs. He used the female body as a living sculpture as the base of his designs.



Figure 3 : Cocoon Dress

Source: <https://www.pinterest.jp/pin/120541727496042298/>

Balenciaga’s designs handled the volume very skillfully which is filled with embroidery, prints and architectural volumes. (Urgel, 2013) Some of his voluminous creations through the designs were considered as master pieces even today. This is because he was known as “Architect of Haute Couture”.Balenciaga’s collections featured different heights and different fits

that played with the body, hence his designs expanded from body fitted to semi fitted garments. He was a pioneer to introduce the concept of space between the body and the garment which indirectly provided the wearer, an exaggerated personal space around them.

Key Discussion Points

- Draping is prominently used to create volumes in the garments, with supportive materials to lift off the garments from the body and create volume.
- Flat pattern making can also be seen in the garments that follow fluid lines to alter the way his clothes related to the human body.
- The garments were sometimes inspired and influenced from various historical styles specially Spanish.
- He used the female body as a female sculpture so that he can play with his creativity freely.
- Tailoring expertise has made his garments revolutionary and innovative
- His garments incorporated several construction techniques to give a conceptional outline and conceptionally exaggerated personal space around the human body by controlling the space in between the garment and the body.

Table 1 : Comparative Analysis Of Case Studies
Source: Author

	Issey Miyake	Christian Dior	Christobal Balenciaga
Nature of the fit of the garment	Semi fitted garments	Tailored to fit garments Exaggerated garments	Semi fitted garments Exaggerated garments
The final garment look	The final garment's look is unpredictable	The final garment's look is predictable	The final garment's look is predictable
Tailoring	Requires no advanced tailoring	Requires advanced and skillfull tailoring	Requires skillfull tailoring
Dress Vs. Body	Do not enhance the body shape	Enhance and exaggerate the body shape	Exaggerate the body shape
Main garment construction system	Main construction system is Rectangular cut	Main construction system Flat Patter Making	Main construction systems are Draping and creative pattern making
Adaptation of the dress to the body	The garment adopts the wearer's body	The garment should have the spcific measurements of the consumer	Specific measurements are not needed but the garments dont adopt the wearer
Fit customization	Fit automatically customizes	Should be manually fitted	Exaggerated fit
silhouette definitions	Not figure concious and not defined silhouettes	Figure concious defined silhouettes	not figure concious but defined silhouettes

Conclusion

Personal Space is a mandatory thing needed by every individual. This can be created intentionally or unintentionally both. Also this is something where the nature of the need depends on person to person. Garments define the secondary outline around the body that defines the personal space owned by the wearer. This can be decided by the fit of the garment, hence; the fit of a garment is an often used term in the everyday life, but what exactly the fit of a garment means? This research was carried in order to find

out the relationships between the garment construction and the fit of a garment which defines the personal space provided by the garment to the wearer.

In the fashion industry, construction of garments plays the most important part. This can be called as implementation in other words. Accordingly there are a number of systems of garment construction that are being used to implement garments. Those are namely Body wrap, rectangular cut, draping, Flat Pattern Making and Creative Pattern Making. All of the five systems contribute to the construction of garments in various ways depending on the needs of the designer for the garment to be. The fit of the garment becomes a concern for the designer when constructing the garments because that is what that will define the final form of the garment, or in other words, the personal space. Accordingly, the criteria that will define a garment's fit from the designer's perspective include the fabric grain, the set of the garment, the construction lines, the balance and the ease of the garment which are discussed in detail in previous sections. The comparative analysis and the detailed analysis of the Case Studies clearly showed that designers control and utilize the criteria in different ways to achieve different forms of garments (Table 1). Hence, the parameters; the ease of the garment, the line of the garment, the fabric grain, the way the garment balances on the body and the set of the garment are especially controlled in different ways for the construction of garments. The initial research and the analysis of the case studies reveal that the incorporation of the systems of garment construction, followed by the designer along with the utilization of the criteria of fit in various ways, define the forms of garments and the nature of the personal space provided by the garment.

Comparing the case studies; Case study 1, Case study 2 and Case study 3, the nature of the fit of majority of the garments can be analyzed as three different types. Issey Miyake always followed the loose fitted concept for his garments, where the garment cannot be predefined until it is worn. But when considering Christian Dior and Christobal Balenciaga, both of them have garments with an exaggerated fit. Although they both exaggerate the garment to enhance the body shape according to the standard hour glass body shape but Christobal Balenciaga's designs tried to enhance the body shape with extremely exaggerated garments that has lifted off from the body. The final garment look is unpredictable for issey miyake's designs because those garments adopt the consumer with a customized fit with a less tailoring skill involved because of the simple cuts and straight lines involved. Cristobel Balenciaga and Christian Dior both have skillfully tailored garments where the final garment look is predicted from the initial step of the garment construction process.

Considering the construction systems used by the three designers in case study 1, 2 and 3, Issey Miyake can be seen always following the rectangular cut garment construction system prominently, giving priority to his signature style. Balenciaga follows the systems of draping and creative pattern making while Christian Dior follows Creative pattern making and Flat pattern making prominently. When considering each one's garment construction systems they follow, these designers who are mentioned in the case studies, play with the ease, construction lines, balance, set of the garment and grain in different levels. They have their own interpretations on the personal space achieved through the garment for an individual and they have played with the paradigms of fit for the garment construction technique to achieve it. Issey Miyake changes the nature of the material so that he can control the fabric, this is executed using his pleats experiments but the other two designers utilize the grain of the fabric as they associate advanced tailoring in a higher extent. The lines of the garment in Christian Dior's designs are extremely well defined as they enhance the body shape and involve advanced tailoring whereas Issey Miyake's designs involve a minimum number of construction lines. Balenciaga's designs also involve construction lines but not as defined as Dior's as they do not enhance the body curves. This shows that the more the garment enhances body curves, the more the construction lines and the need for the construction lines to be defined well, is higher. Whatever the design is, or whoever the designer is, the set and the balance of the garment equally affect each and every design to be a practical one. A consumer's perspective of fit over a garment depends on visual and tactile qualities of a garment. Accordingly, as designers who cater fashion universally, and as designers who broke away from conventionality and set

milestones in fashion industry, the designs have extreme Balance and the set of the garment is very well fulfilled. For example Issey Miyake's use of details and designs related with the pleats, Dior's feminine details and skillful distribution of layers in the garments and also Balenciaga's skillful utilization of volumetric details and architectural concepts that has been blended with the designs can be considered. Finally, when referring to the case studies, ease of the garments has played a major role when conquering the unique silhouette types for the garments. Issey Miyake's use of garment ease that makes the garment adaptable to any type of body, and Dior's control of ease of the garment with the body is what gives them their own definition of the garment fit. Additionally Balenciaga's designs extremely achieve garment ease and the volume is filled in order to redefine the body. Hence, the personal space given by the garment for the wearer.

Accordingly after analyzing the three case studies, it is clear that they have their own definitions of fit. Issey Miyake designs garments that have undefined silhouettes and not conscious about the body which makes the garments to have a customized fit where the personal space given by the garment adopts the wearer in various ways. Christian Dior has figure conscious and very well predefined silhouettes in which the garments need to be manually fitted. His designs provides the wearer with an exaggerated personal space but highly depending on the body shape too. Cristobel Balenciaga predefined silhouettes for garments where the figure consciousness is null which makes his garments exaggerated in fit. He has an extremely exaggerated personal space which is conscious about the proportions and balance only but not about the body shape at all. Hence, derives three definitions of fit provided by three designers as described above which result in three forms of garments. Also the garment fit can be manipulated by the method of construction. Accordingly this research proves that garments that enhance the body shape and body curves does not expresses the best fit it's a matter of the consumer's perception on the visual and tactile perception of the personal space and skillful utility of the design elements and criteria that involves in the fit of a garment.

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