Typology of Dress in Contemporary Fashion

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Abstract

This study categorizes the formative aspects of dress and their implications according to the extent of revealing or concealing corporeality based on body perceptions. By considering the notion of dress as bodily practice to be a theoretical and methodological framework, this study combines a literature survey and case analysis to analyze and classify the forms of women's dress since the 1920s when contemporary fashion took hold. As examined in this study, the typology of dress was categorized as body-consciousness, deformation, transformation, and formlessness. Body-consciousness that is achieved through tailoring, bias cutting, and stretchy fabric displays corporeality focusing on the structure and function of the body as an internalized corset. Deformations in dress are categorized into two different subcategories. One is the expansion or reduction of bodily features based on the vertical or horizontal grids of the body, which visualizes the anachronistic restraint of the body through an innerwear as outerwear strategy. The other is exaggerations of the bodily features irrelevant to the grid, which break from the limitations and constraints of the body as well as traditional notions of the body. Transformations of the body refer to as follows. First, the deconstruction and restructuring of the body that deconstruct the stereotypes in garment construction. Second, the abstraction of the body that emphasizes the geometrical and architectural shapes. Third, transformable designs which pursue the expansion and multiplicity of function. Formlessness in dress denies the perception of three-dimensionality of the body through the planarization of the body.

Key words: Body, Body-consciousness, Deformation, Transformation, Formlessness

I. Introduction

A form is one of the essential visual elements that occupy space. The form of dress is completed when two-dimensional cloth covers or wraps a three-dimensional human body and its aesthetic effect begins to exhibit. In dress, the body is regarded as a three-dimensional form or a spatial figure that is designed by a dress.

Humans have often distorted the natural body deliberately. Hips are pushed forward, height is elongated by wearing stiletto heels, the torso is bound and suppressed by body supplements such as corsets, and the silhouette of the body is enlarged by foundational garments such as petticoats in the 1950s or power shoulders in the 1980s. Moreover, humans have modified the body with grooming, diet, exercise, surgical operations, skin-marking, and so on. Dress transfigures the natural body into a fashionable one, into a structure which fashion assumes, by enlarging, extending, or reducing the body silhouette. One of the most distinctive features of fashion is its ability to convert an object into a symbol. Dress is transformed into fashion, and the body into a fashioned body (Thesander, 1997).

Interest in the body has increased since the 1990s in fashion and dress studies. Fashion scholars such as Craik (1994) and Entwistle (2000) stated that resear-

In this study, we intend to examine the formative aspects of dress drawing on the perception of the body; we attempt to categorize forms of dress according to the extent of revealing or concealing corporeality. This study classifies and analyzes formative characteristics of dress, in other words, suggests a typology of dress, of contemporary fashion design. Furthermore, this study examines implications in each category of the formative aspect by focusing on the relationship between the body and dress, which establishes a framework for analyzing forms and images of existing as well as emerging forms of dress.

As a seminal example of previous studies, DeLong (1998) developed models that consider the role of the body in the presentation of appearance to assess observer’s aesthetic responses. Analyzing dress forms from a cognitive point of view, her Apparel-Body-Construct (ABC) model acknowledged the processes through which observers perceive, understand, and organize the clothed appearance of humans. This model's five categories – closed/open, part/whole, planar separation/integration, flat/rounded, and determinate/indeterminate – are based on Heinrich Wölflin's five sets of polarities in his art theory.

Instead of categorizing with sets of polarities, this study attempts to build a framework that categorizes the formative aspects of dress according to the degree of conformity/disconformity to the conventional Western sartorial representations. Moreover, as a significant number of fashion designers have been challenging Western tailoring practices as well as deconstructing Western sartorial conventions since the 1980s and more commonly since the 1990s, the need to categorize and analyze those contemporary fashion designs arises. This study examines how contemporary fashion designs disconform to or challenge the dominant aesthetics of Western fashion via the manipulation of the body-dress relationship.

The research contributes to lending structure to the formative aspects of dress otherwise ambiguous parameters related to body-dress in fashion design, by structuring as follows: the first section presents the theoretical reviews of dress as corporal space in contemporary fashion, while the second section discusses how a typology of dress can be developed giving special attention to the interplay between the body and dress. Finally, the implications of each category of the typology are discussed in terms of the relationship between the body and dress.

This study combines literature survey and case analysis in order to analyze and classify the forms of women's dress since the 1990s by examining the literature of fashion studies and dress history as well as photographs from Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter collections. This study deals principally with the end of the twentieth century and the new millennium to make the content engaging through relevance and currency.

II. Literature Reviews on the Body and Dress

The body and dress are in a dialectical relationship. While dress manipulates the phenomenological body, body as a dynamic site animates dress (Entwistle, 2002). Dress is not formed irrelevant to body shape but follows the design laws that are intimately associated with the body.

In the human body as a spatial form, the skin represents the border between interior and exterior space. As such, a dress is regarded as an extension of the boundary of ‘corporal space’ (Loschek, 2009), not to mention space where the corporal space and environment interact. As dress always refers or indicates the body, it is considered to symbolize a body form. According to Loschek (2009), both a dress form and a display mannequin function as a representative of the human body form. She describes a mannequin as an
ideal living body at the interface between the inanimate dress form and the imperfect body of a wearer.

Perception of the body as a spatial form has been apparent throughout the history of dress. Dress not only deals with a spatial figure of the body but limits or expands a body form. In this regard, Loscheck (2009) states that dress points to a basic model that is ‘both plastic and sculptural’; fabric drapes around the body (plastic) and the fabric is cut out and sewn together (sculptural). Furthermore, dress is the interface between creation and social communication, as well as between form and media.

Throughout history, with its intimate relationship to dress, the body has appeared as a malleable form, often surrendering to the extreme vision of beauty – pulled in, padded out, tightened, or extended in an almost unimaginable way. Exaggerating body forms – such as padding or tightening the torso, filling up skirts with devices such as hoops and cages, and modifying the body contour with wires, wood, and whale bones – have been used in Western dress in order to reduce or expand the visual field of the body. Fashionable dress has manipulated the physical structure of the body by methods that are sometimes mortally harmful. Fashion has continuously attempted to create/re-create its shifting image of beauty on the canvas of the human body (de Perthuis, 2008).

For <Are Clothes Modern?>, an exhibition held at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1944, Rudofsky (1984) designed four different plaster figures, representing a bustle of the 1870s, a monobosom of 1904, a hobble skirt of 1913, and a flapper dress in the 1920s. Each figure corresponds to the form of dress from different periods (Fig. 1). As such, interference to human anatomy has been made with devices such as bustles, pads, heels, codpieces, and brassieres, for mere deception or bodily deformation. To look fashionable, humans have conformed to constantly changing corporeal ideals. Although the parts of the body which each period or culture focuses on might differ, fashionable dress continuously has been manipulating proportions of the body by applying elements that are often even contrary to an actual body proportion. Moreover, people now modify the body with various activities such as diet, exercise, and plastic surgery.

As Arnheim (1969/1981) explains, there is a relationship between a visual image and the content it attempts to hold. Images of a human body can be integrated into a few elements and in a similar vein the conventional forms of dress can be represented in several elements. The organic unity of the body is reconstructed according to the knowledge regarding the object; the permissible range depends on the styles of the time. As such, the elongated female figures in fashion magazines appear to be normal to observers since such figures are perceived as the idealized look.

On the other hand, many postmodern fashion designers deconstruct a dressed body or playfully manipulate Western tailoring practices by draping in a way that does not conform to Western sartorial conventions. For example, Rei Kawakubo often presents ambiguous body contours while Vivien Westwood unconventionally exaggerates body curves with tailoring. As a result, strong tension is displayed since there is barely any relationship between the pattern that is being seen and the one that is supposed to be seen (Arnheim, 1969/1981).

III. Typology of Dress

Form, one of the essential features that are detected by the eyes, refers to the spatial aspect of an object to the exclusion of position and direction. A form is the contour of a mass and visualized by the two-dimensional face of a three-dimensional object (Arnheim, 1969/1981). This study assumes the formative aspect
of dress as a referential frame and examines dress drawing on the body that is perceived as the object of garment construction.

Representation of the body in dress accompanies the comparison between an object and its represented image. Since the image cannot be an exact copy of the object, discrepancy always occurs. Thus, there exist distinctive features of dress that deviate from the exact representation of the body.

As people tend to pay attention to the parts that are different from the whole (Arnheim, 1969/1981), fashion designs that deviate from body-conscious form through deforming, transforming, or totally eliminating/ignoring body forms, add tension. Some fashion designers idealize a female body as with tightly fitting dresses as Azzedine Alaïa or Hervé Léger do, while other designers expand the corporal field with geometric structures as in the stair shaped Zig Zag or concentric-circled Minaret dress by Issey Miyake.

In this study, we categorize the formative aspects of dress according to the ways that a space between the body and dress is formed in conjunction with the extent of revealing or concealing corporeality. The body in this study is referred to or defined as the idealized body in Western convention that is sartorially embodied as the typical body-conscious dress. The body-conscious dress conforms to the conventional body image which often reveals or articulates the ideal body; whereas to disconform the conventions both corporeally and sartorially, designers frequently conceal or deconstruct the idealized body or sartorial conventions. In this study, the formative aspects of dress will be classified into the following four categories: body-consciousness, deformation, transformation, and formlessness.

1. Body-consciousness

The most generally and naturally accepted dress silhouette is the body-conscious form which enables us to perceive a body shape. Among the forms of the contemporary dress after WW I, the most common form of dress, except for some Haute Couture pieces and experimental designs, is in silhouettes without significant adjustments to body contour. This type of garments embodies the ultimate proximity between representation and visual concept of the body and is best exemplified by minimally tailored designs, body-hugging bias-cut dresses, and form-fitting garments in stretch fabrics.

Christopher Breward explained that the new tailoring techniques which have appeared since the 1820s – such as the development of measuring and cutting devices, as well as the invention of the tape measure – are closely related to the appearance of women's bodies in public space (Entwistle, 2002). The tailoring technique, a practice that is performed most intimately and closely to the body, visualizes cultural attitudes. In Western dress, interfacing and padding were used to idealize a body image, with the perception of an ideal anatomy being modified continuously. While an ideal silhouette changes constantly, the notion of a tailored suit as a hollow casting has not been challenged (Rudofsky, 1984). When a wearer takes off a tailored garment, it is supposed to be best kept on a dress form in order to maintain its shape.

Gilbert Adrian and Lachasse Ltd. – designers well known for their classic and angled shoulders based on controlled lines of menswear – redefined the notion of decoration with measured cutting, matching, mitering, and exquisite sewing (Spilker & Takeda, 2007). Each panel of a jacket is discreetly cut, matched, and sewn, so as to represents the ideal female body curves of the time. Hervé Léger and Azzedine Alaïa, on the other hand, romantically visualized a female body by horizontally wrapping the body with stretch strips of knitted fabric, not with restrictive corset fabrics (Fig. 2).

At the core of these minimally tailored designs, there is a connection to the principles of modern architecture. In other words, these designers embody lines and structural seams of garments through an architectural approach and, with those seams and construction lines, show how pattern pieces are to be combined. The architectural or structural approach which aims for a body-conscious form of dress reflects the adage ‘form follows function’ by Ludwig Mies van der Rhoe, a Bauhaus architect (Hodge et al., 2006). As a result, garments are constructed without decoration which is unrelated to the structure; the seams and darts

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themselves function as decoration. These body-conscious forms of dress are presented close to the body by minimizing the space between the body and a garment, as opposed to being independent to silhouettes of the body.

Besides the architectural constructions stated above, body-conscious silhouettes are effectively realized through bias cutting. Bias cutting reveals the body in a similar manner to tailoring, but bias cutting spirals around the body freed from the vertical or horizontal grids of the body. While cutting on a lengthwise grain is more stable in general, bias cutting gives more elasticity, which keeps a dress close to the contour of the body (Fig. 3).

Madeleine Vionnet, a master of bias cutting, freed dress from limits of vertical and horizontal axes. Moldable silhouettes of Vionnet’s dress react to movements of the body while spiraling around the body. It could be said that whereas Cristobal Balenciaga centralized presence of fabric in tailoring, Vionnet mastered handling gravity in dressmaking. In a similar vein, Madame Grès preferred simplicity that was realized through draping the body smoothly, not by restricting the body with artificial devices such as a corset or padding. Grès shaped dress through draping or wrapping rather than cutting fabric.

As examined so far, for the body-conscious dress, tailored pattern pieces are cut from a length of fabric and stitched together into a three-dimensional form that encloses the body, or fabric is draped around the body and then trimmed in such a way. In both techniques, the result is a garment people usually wear as a casing for the body (Brand et al., 2010). Aside from tailoring and draping, the body-conscious form of dress can be constructed through the physical properties of a fabric itself. When a garment is worn on the body, continuous circulations of interchange between void and mass are made. Elastic fabrics, such as Lycra, Tactel, and Latex, cling to the body and reduce the void between the body and a garment. The elastic fabrics encase the body as ‘the second skin’. The key feature of the second skin is to embody a vision in which a synthetic fabric similar to human skin is integrated into the skin. Today new types of fabrics already react to heat, light, touch, and mechanical strain. Skinthetic by KnoWear is a hybrid material with flexible membranes that are capable of being digitally networked, folded, stretched, or inflated with air to create a second skin in place of clothes made of fabrics (Seltmann & Lippert, 2006).

In regard to implications, even in the body-conscious dress which reveals the body at it is, the body represented is a culturally idealized one. That is, in contemporary society, where a corset is not worn anymore to modify the body shape, the body itself performs as ‘invisible corset’ (The Kyoto Costume Institute, 1999) or ‘muscular corset’ (Steele, 2001). In other words, fashion after the twentieth century has changed ‘from clothing-fashion to body-fashion’ (Brattig, 2003). Women are freed from corset made of wires and whalebones but controlled by a new form of corset called a muscular body. Power in contemporary society covertly stimulates desire rather than oppressively dominates, so that women voluntarily conform to the power and are controlled by the consciousness that they should cultivate their body without a corset.

Since the premise of wearing a body-revealing dress is having an idealized body, in order to wear a body-conscious dress one should be wearing an invisible corset of a muscular body. In this regard, the corset has
not disappeared but has been internalized in a sculpted body. In a body-conscious garment that reveals the body at it is, the actual object of representation is not an individual body but a corporeal ideal that a society of the time culturally idealizes.

2. Deformation

Deformation, one of the incentives for three-dimensional perception, is a type of deviation that breaks away from an expected position (Arnheim, 1969/1981). The silhouette of dress that assumes deformation deviates from physical margins of a body structure, which builds up tension. In Western fashion, one of the fundamental elements of the idealized beauty has been symmetry. For this category, we classified deformation of dress into two sub-categories according to the compliance of the vertical/horizontal axes of the body which is regarded as a basic condition of the symmetry; 1) symmetrical deformation which suggests enlargement or reduction based on the vertical/horizontal axes of the body and 2) asymmetrical deformation which explains enlargement or reduction irrelevant to bodily axes.

1) Symmetrical Deformation: Enlargement or Reduction based on Vertical/Horizontal Axes of the Body

Deformation through enlargement or reduction in a traditional Western dress appears predominantly symmetrical paralleling to the vertical/horizontal axes of the body; this type of deformation in dress enlarges or reduces certain body parts symmetrically. The deformation is interpreted as a representation of meanings and symbols of the body through dress-as-signifier. In other words, the deformation in dress signifies femininity, fertility, inaccessibility, or wealth and status (Koda, 2001; Laver, 2002), to meet the aesthetic demands of the times. The body has been deformed through dress in order to be fitted to cultural frames which the body could hardly assimilate to. In an effort to make the neck longer, the shoulders wider, the breasts larger or smaller, and the hips larger, dress has been used to deform the body, which is in close association with cultural perception of corresponding female body parts.

In Western fashion, the body has been idealized and sublimated through elaborate tailoring techniques. One of the basic forms of this idealization is symmetry, which has been regarded as a standard of beauty; symmetrical lacing and padding as devices of this idealization standardize and eroticize the body. An hourglass body shape as an erotic ideal has been realized by artificial apparatuses such as push-up brassieres, corsets, and bodices to flatten the thorax or elevate the breasts and hips. Whichever part of the body is exaggerated, whether such exaggeration looks artificial or natural, the body has been strictly shaped symmetrically (Fukai et al., 2010).

However, in contemporary fashion, the deformation in dress is often interpreted in a different context from the traditional one, as such bodily manipulation has been internalized in the twentieth century. The deformation in contemporary fashion intentionally digresses from the conventional sartorial association between signifier and signified by visualizing the deformation in an anachronistic way. Alexander McQueen and Hussein Chalayan, for example, introduced the corset in a grotesque and parodic way to represent physical damage or deformity caused by the restriction of a female body (Fig. 4)−(Fig. 5). Naoki Takizawa for Issey Miyake manipulated interior space of a garment by constructing a tailored suit with muscle-shaped inflatable panels; a natural female body is completely concealed behind the inflated bodice of

![Fig. 4. Hussein Chalayan, Surgical corset, 1998.](image1)

![Fig. 5. Alexander McQueen, 1999.](image2)
the exaggeratedly idealized muscular body shape.

On the other hand, Jean Paul Gaultier and Vivienne Westwood, designers who are known for collections drawing on historical costumes, employed the corset as a decorative item in an underwear-as-outerwear manner. These designers incorporated the erotic aura of a corset as a device to satire conformity to the aesthetic standard of society.

2) Asymmetrical Deformation: Enlargement or Reduction Irrelevant to Bodily Axes

In contemporary fashion, deformation in dress sometimes appears irrelevant to historical reference of traditional dress. These deformations in dress exaggerate a body shape irregularly and asymmetrically by deliberately breaking from vertical or horizontal axes of the body. Designs of Rei Kawakubo are representative cases of asymmetrical deformation in dress. In her collection, <Body meets dress, body becomes dress, dress becomes body>, Kawakubo presented asymmetrical dresses which deviated from vertical/horizontal grids of the body far exceeding the limits of what is considered to be a good taste of the time (Fig. 6). On the so-called ‘lumps and bumps’ dress from the collection, the emphasis of feminine curves is shifted to unusual places such as the back or abdomen, away from traditionally emphasized body parts, which could be regarded as an attack on the symmetry of Western fashion. Kawakubo propounds a question of the physical ideal by showing that lines of demarcation between ideal and deformity are a matter of a few inches in a garment. Through the collection, she suggested that the interesting sculptural effect created by unexpected volumes may be seen as repellent since they are associated with ‘deformity’ (Teunissen et al., 2014). By departing radically from the socially accepted anatomical form, Rei Kawakubo undermines the Western femininity and ideals of beauty. Her designs have been depicting her criticism on the feminine beauty in established fashion. In this regard, Teunissen et al. (2014) argues that <Body meets dress> questions whether symmetry is a necessary ingredient of beauty.

Fashion designer Noa Raviv integrated 3D-printed design elements into ruffled dresses done by distorted digital drawings (Fig. 7). In order to evoke images of deformation, Noa Raviv worked on 3D software and then translated the patterns into fabrics by printing and stitching the lines and grids onto fabrics. The grid-like patterns in ribbed layers of polymer were warped and stretched across the garments, which creates optical illusions across the body. Raviv has deliberately manipulated digital images with computer modeling software to deform the traditional versions of bodices. In an interview (Howarth, 2014), Raviv said that she used the shapes of broken Greek and Roman marble sculptures to inform the asymmetric silhouettes. She mentioned that patterns of the collection were mostly nonsymmetrical to enhance distorted or fractured looks.

In a similar vein, Finnish designer Minna Palmqvist, through her <Intimately Social> series, has depicted the coerciveness of the ideals of feminine beauty and its distance from reality. Palmqvist explores the struggle between the socially accepted female body and the real bodies, in other words, a conflict among what is forced upon us, what we wish for, and what we strive to hide (Palmqvist, 2009) which often results in asymmetric forms and shapes (Fig. 8).

These asymmetrical deformations do not intend to emphasize femininity in an attempt to supplement body defect or exaggerate feminine beauty as in tradi-

Fig. 6. Rei Kawakubo, <Body meets dress>, 1997.
From In pictures: 30 years of Japanese fashion. (2010).
http://www.bbc.co.uk

Fig. 7. Noa Raviv, 2014.
http://www.designboom.com
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tional Western dress, on the contrary, they seek to depart from the traditional notion of an ideal body by deforming bodily proportion and shape. That is to say, the exaggeration, which is irrelevant to the idealized bodily features, delivers the message to break from the restrictions on the body which are imposed in the form of the invisible corset.

Dress functions as a mediating interface between the body and social environment. There have been ways of concealing or revealing the body in social spaces in order to conform to internalized social norms. Asymmetrically deformed dress represents the deformation of the generally accepted notion of bodily practice (Welters & Lillethun, 2007).

3. Transformation

Transformation in art is entailed when an artist intends to visualize an invariable existence of an object (Arneheim, 1969/1981). Similarly, transformation in dress is often employed when designers deconstruct traditional forms of dress in order to deviate from conventions in dress and the body. Transformation refers to changing from one figure, form, or structure into another without losing its substance (Loschek, 2009). The intention of transformation in dress is to vitalize a design goal and its process.

In this category, transformation in dress will be examined in three subcategories: 1) deconstruction which fragments and rearranges garment construction or structures, 2) abstraction that radically digresses from body structures and silhouettes, and 3) transformables which aims for multifunction in dress. As we postulate a basic body-conscious dress as the ideal body in that its dress parts correspond to the respective body parts, deconstruction disintegrates and reconstructs the conventional body-garment correspondence, abstraction exceeds the conventional body-garment space, and transformables expand beyond the conventional body-garment functions.

1) Deconstruction

The term ‘deconstruction’ (Hodge et al., 2006) has been applied to areas such as art, architecture, design, and music for more than thirty years. Deconstruction in fashion challenges the foundations of the sartorial convention; its implications radically deviate from the sophisticated and elaborately finished dress that dominated the 1970s and 1980s.

Deconstructed garments often appear unfinished with details such as frayed or worn out hems; sometimes look fragmented, recycled, or recombined. Deconstructed fashion design is dominantly in dark tones which frequently suggest poverty, deconstruction, and degradation. The deconstructed garments lack clear frontality, and the silhouettes do not reveal body contours.

When introduced in the early 1980s in fashion, aesthetics of deconstruction were rejected in the initial stage; however, it went through turnabout in the 1990s whilst being rapidly appropriated by mainstream and high fashion. While deconstruction in dress was originated from the countercultural movements of Punks in the 1970s, its appearance in the early 1980s runway shows of Comme des Garçons and Yohji Yamamoto are regarded as the official introduction to high fashion (Hodge et al., 2006). Subsequently, Belgian designers such as Ann Demeulemeester, Dries Van Noten, and Martin Margiela presented new types of deconstruction fashion in the late 1980s.

Margiela, notably, challenged the fastidious standards of Haute Couture and overturned traditional elements of techniques of tailors and dressmakers. Although, in general, linings, shoulder pads, interfacings, and facings are concealed carefully, Margiela utilized
Margiela articulated nihilistic reactions to sartorial conventions; he amplified interest by designing contrary to expectations in the sartorial representation of the body. Not considering the body as an organic entity (Vinken, 2005), Margiela frequently isolated or disconnected particular parts of dress; designing one sleeve fitted and the other loose, for example. He emphasized the fragmental aspect of garments by dissembling a garment and then reassembling the pieces, or created new silhouettes by transferring interior elements to the surface.

In Margiela’s designs, often the body is not accenteduated as a consistent whole but fragmented into respective body parts. Margiela’s trench coat <Fig. 9>, for example, can be regarded as a design in the transitional process from one style into another; the half of the coat is traditionally tailored as in a standard trench coat while the other half is draped on the shoulder to be knotted or twisted at will.

Deconstruction in dress can be effectively created in reverse. In their S/S 2006 <Upside Down> collection, Viktor & Rolf staged aesthetic deviation. They attempted every possible ‘upside-down’ by reversing the top into the bottom; the hemline becomes the neckline, by reversing the left to the right; the sleeves become the pants, and even by reversing the beginning into the end; the show began with the designer's bow (Fig. 10). The garments from the show are still wearable even though they did not follow tailoring conventions. In the collection, Viktor & Rolf freed the body from dress through transformation.

In deconstructing of the body in dress, repetition and overlapping – repeating a certain part of a garment and overlaying them – also suggests a transformation of the body in dress. Reassembled designs with overlapped patterns are unconstrained from existing garment forms and separated from conventional appearances. <Molux>, Bernhard Willhelm’s F/W 2006 collection, was about multiplication and addition (Loschek, 2009). In a primary example of the collection <Fig. 11>, the head takes center place in reversal, legs grow out of the head, more than two arms are attached to the shoulders, and moreover the second set of limbs stands up from the head; Willhelm put transformity before anatomy of the body. Similarly, Klavers Van Engelen questioned the corporeal body with a tailored jacket with five sleeves, while also portraying macabre implications (Fig. 12).

Deconstruction is now frequently being applied in ready-to-wear lines, continuing to be one of the most significant elements in contemporary fashion design. Deconstruction in dress rejects sartorial conventions, questions the aesthetic standard of garment proportion corresponding to body proportion, and often visualizes tailoring processes in garment construction. Deconstructivist designers refuse to take human ana-
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tomy for granted but reassemble body parts in their own imagination, or separate some sections from the body and combine them with other body parts. Deconstruction in dress is conducted through fragmentation-division, displacement, multiplication, or addition- and reassembly. These deconstructed designs disregard practicality and functionality as they deny and deconstruct conventional forms of Western dress.

Deconstruction in dress challenges traditional signifiers in dress and identifies finished garments as a starting point of the process rather than end goal of design. The aim of deconstruction in dress is not to deconstruct garments literally but to reconsider formal logics by breaking from stereotypes in conventional garment construction, based upon the philosophical scheme of deconstruction. Since the corporeal body is embodied into sartorial convention that corresponds to the culturally idealized body, the deconstruction is regarded to signify the transformation of the body in dress.

2) Abstraction

Abstraction, a subcategory of the transformation of the body in dress, attempts to transcend the body form even beyond deforming. Abstraction of the body in dress transforms the body into radically different shape from the natural body by exploring transformations of garment structures.

In abstract art, which does not assume similar figures to humans or landscape, it is hard to recognize the objects. Likewise, it is hard to perceive or picture the body in abstract forms of dress that do not focus on bodily features but on sculptural or architectural beauty of a garment itself (Steele, 2007). Abstraction in dress creates a fictional body and emphasizes sculptural or architectural aspects of dress.

Pioneering examples in creating unconventional forms of the body through abstraction are found in Cristobal Balenciaga's architectural designs. Most of his designs conceal body contours, structured with empty space between a garment and the body, and often were made of stiff fabric such as gazar or organza. Balenciaga, ‘architect of cloth’ (Polan & Tredre, 2009), frequently eliminated all the unrelated details using only the lines that cocoon the body and highlight sculptural forms. Balenciaga's dresses and outer wear often employed shapes such as a wedding cake, lamp shade, or balloon, which made his designs look distanced from conventional garment shapes. In constructing his wedding gown in 1967, a primary example, only three seams – two on the shoulders and one on the center back – were used. This cone-shaped dress conceals all the body parts except for the face.

Contrary to the symmetrical deformation, silhouettes of abstraction are usually embodied through innovative tailoring techniques rather than structural foundations such as corsets or petticoats. In abstraction of the body in dress, the waist is often not accentuated. Usually an abstract silhouette does not refer to body curves, which usually result in a geometrical shape by approaching the body with silhouettes of cocooning, bordering, or floating around the body.

As such, transforming the body in dress through abstraction prioritizes not an individual body but space around the body. Designs that have abstract structures and forms appear independent from the body, which exhibits similarity with architecture or sculpture rather than with conventional garments. These abstract garments do not necessarily reflect an actual body; presented in geometric forms such as spirals, rectangular, or circular shapes.

Abstraction of the body in dress transforms the body into a geometric form by inserting pads or expanding volumes, which results in structures irrelevant to the body. Martin Margiela rejected three-dimensional perception of the body by encasing the body in two-dimensional rectangular dress <Fig. 13>, and on the other hand, Giles Deacon's coat <Fig. 14> implies contour of medieval monk's robe or medieval architectures such as Cloisters. In his coat, the body is completely concealed in architectural proportion and distinct features of body parts as well as conventional garments are all ignored; if seen not worn on the body, the coat would inevitably be perceived as a geometric sculpture rather than a garment.

As examined so far, abstraction of the body in dress entirely departs from distinct features of the body and garment structures, thus indicating a tendency toward de-corporeal and dysfunctional. If one of the functionalities of dress is, in a sense, not to confine bodily
movements, abstraction of the body in dress intends dysfunctionality or ignores functionality by separating the body parts from the corresponding dress parts.

3) Transformables

Transformables, a subtype of the transformation of the body in dress, expand functions, contrary to the dysfunctional tendencies in deconstruction or abstraction stated above. This category of the transformation of the body breaks from the notion that dress is based and worn only on the body, by expanding function beyond conventional garments; the vestimentary transformables postulate the multiplicity of the body in dress and even other forms of product than the clothes. Transformables assume garment forms on the body, however, when taken off the body they can be transformed into different forms for multi-functions.

Multi-functional garment designs have been expanding with increased human mobility in contemporary society. Modern nomadism and its unprecedented mobility have influenced our needs in a dress. From this point of view, C. P. Company's designer Moreno Ferrari's transformable designs are considered to fit the needs of modern nomads (Quinn, 2003). C. P. Company has designed transformable garments that can be converted into a piece of furniture or a tent. These vestimentary transformables invest the body with multi-potentiality and embody fantasy for the expanded-self; present the possibility that dress can provide a shelter to the body (Quinn, 2003).

In this regard, transformable designs by C. P. Company reflect human needs for space. A primary example is the S/S 2001 collection, <Outerwear, Urban Protection, Transformables and C. P. Relax>. The collection included a garment that can be transformed into an inflatable air bed, a cushion, and an armchair. Also included was a hooded cape transformable into a trench coat, a boiler suit, and a kite, which was manipulated with zippers and equipped with an air compressor. The most innovative item of the collection was <Caban>, an overcoat that, if inflated, is transformable into an aerodynamic air mattress and a one-man tent (Fig. 15). A similar design in the collection, a ‘foldaway hammock’ jacket (Quinn, 2003), can be expanded into a comfortable hammock that can be slept on, serving the dual function of garment and hammock.

If a garment could be transformed into a piece of furniture or a tent, it has the potential to become a larger structure to inhabit. Artist Lucy Orta, a pioneer in this field, devised wearable dwellings. Orta's designs seek to break down the boundary between clothing and architecture by overcoming restrictions of each field for ultimate transformation. Her <Refuge Wear> multifunctional series of clothing, is transformable at an individual's instant needs, and was designed to prepare for urban emergencies and natural disaster (Bol...
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Orta’s *Habitent*, a poncho type raincoat in polyamide fabric coated with aluminum, is a series of clothing that can be transformed into a tent with its telescopic structure (Fig. 16). Besides the functional transformation examined above, conceptual transformation continues in dress. *The Wizard of Jeanz* by Hiroaki Ohya is a collection composed of books transforming into a ruffled necklace, a pair of denim pants, an elegant evening dress, etc. *Fig. 17* Ohya’s *The Wizard of Jeanz* series of twenty-one cloth ‘books’ were mapped out in the spirit of origami. The volumes of the series transform into more elaborate garments sequentially; the first volume transforms into a shift dress, the second one into a top, the third one into a pair of pants, the fourth one into a skirt, and the final volume into an accordion-pleated necklace. This series is regarded as a reaction to the incessant cycles and ephemeral nature of fashion. By transforming books into garments, Ohya disapproves of the notion that fashion demands beautification of the human figure (Fukai & English, 2005).

As investigated so far, vestimentary transformables in transformation of the body in dress are designed to be utilized for other purposes than the garment itself, and moreover, suggest that clothing can be expanded beyond the space of the body. In this vein, vestimentary transformables challenge sartorial convention and transcend boundaries in fashion design. Whereas couturiers gave directions in every detail and accessory to complete a style, following the principle that a designer’s intention is an ultimate objective, some designers since the late twentieth century consider that their designs are not complete until worn by a wearer. According to Spilker and Takeda (2007), transience and transformation characterize contemporary fashion. Transformable garments are conceived to be interactive; the designer’s original vision is open to the wearer’s interpretation, making fashion a vehicle for creative collaboration (Spilker & Takeda, 2007).

### 4. Formlessness

Making a garment is about how to associate two-dimensional fabric with the three-dimensional human figure. Formless or indeterminate form in dress is freed from European couture methods of perceiving a three-dimensional body as a patterned object of garment construction; couture involves shaping fabric into a three-dimensional form by using darts and curved lines to fit it to the body. Formlessness in dress presents alternative forms of dress that are independent of the body and appears to be an unfinished or incomplete design that deviates from solid structural perfection. As such, formlessness puts emphasis on the space between a garment and the body; the design changes with a wearer’s body and movements thus creating a new relationship between dress and the body. This category, with its obscured curves of female form, introduces the physical aspect of a garment itself while denying the comparatively explicit sexuality of Western dress. As will be further explained,

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**Fig. 16. Lucy Orta, Habitent, 1992-1993.**

**Fig. 17. Hiroaki Ohya, S/S 2000.**
formlessness of the body in dress starts from a flat piece of fabric ignoring the three-dimensionality of the body; the indication/inclusion of the body is rarely found.

Japanese designers maximize a piece of rectangle fabric on the basis of Kimono patterns, departing from the European couture way of sculpting the body. A kimono is constructed by piecing together rectangular pieces of fabric, thus when not worn, a kimono is laid out flat. The designs of Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, and Rei Kawakubo have all invoked the kimono as an essential form, a prototype that can define sartorial proportion, segmentation, and space (Dimant, 2010). Miyake's APOC (A Piece of Cloth) designs are about simply draping a piece of fabric over the body and earlier works of Kawakubo or Yamamoto comprised of complex two-dimensional sections.

Since Western traditional dress is articulated through tailoring, its three-dimensional feature is maintained to a certain degree even when taken off the body. Conversely, the formless dress has indefinite three-dimensional structure or silhouette, inasmuch as distinctions among body parts appear to be ambiguous and traditional relationships among the corresponding garment parts are eradicated. In Western traditional dress symmetry in dress has rarely been challenged, these Japanese avant-garde designers – Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto, and Issey Miyake – propose asymmetry as a core design concept. Formlessness of non-structural and asymmetrical designs appears indeterminate and ambiguous in presenting body contour, which shares common ground with aesthetics of traditional Eastern Asian dress. Formlessness based on the non-Western perception of the body is often observed in Japanese avant-garde fashion designs. They presented alternative forms by putting together geometric pieces irrelevant to the body silhouette.

Miyake, notably, started from a basic concept that clothing is literally wrapping around the body with a piece of fabric. Miyake often denies the system of manipulating contour and plane but pursues simplicity by articulating a whole garment with a single structure. Since the 1970s, he had been developing a concept of rethinking visual articulation in traditional Western fashion and finally came up with a basic rectangle with or without sleeves, a refined garment structure of the simplest shapes (Fig. 18). His signature concept, ‘A Piece of Cloth’, was developed into a diffusion line, A-POC, in 1997, which puts emphasis on the planarity that frequently appears in Japanese design. The logic in his design is to give a wearer freedom or unrestraint by planning a space, referred to as ma (ま), between a garment and the body. As space changes according to a wearer's body shape and posture, each individual garment forms a different interaction, thus an overall shape. Superfluous space between a garment and the body is regarded as a space that ‘possesses incalculable energy’ (Fukai et al., 2010), not just void, in formlessness in dress. Worn on the body, these designs display unexpected shapes through interactions with a wearer’s body while continuously crossing over between a two-dimensional and three-dimensional phase with bodily movements. In this vein, Yamamoto often mentioned that his designs are made half by him and half by a wearer (Fukai et al., 2010).

The concept of planarity also often appears in Kawakubo’s collections. Her formless dress <Fig. 19> articulated by wrapping a piece of fabric around the body, creates space between a fabric and the body. The individual body creates its own unique form, which presents a radical difference from the Western concept of dress.

In formlessness of the body in dress, being oversi-
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Formless or ‘one-size-fits-all’ gives freedom to a wearer's movement. This anti-structural look comprises of layers that form volume and form. A fluid dress of Yamamoto, for example, off the body, takes on formlessness; on the body, it creates an interesting tension between a garment and the body. Similarly, Miyake optimized planarity of the dress by creating a coat in mulberry fiber paper cut in rectangle-shaped patterns.

Formlessness in fashion design is further explored by Zhang Da. For his label Boundless (没边), Zhang Da draws inspiration from the Chinese way of cutting garments and uses a ‘flat cut’. Unlike the garments made from European sartorial tradition, whose shapes are still maintained even when taken off from the body, Zhang Da’s designs become flat off the body (Fig. 20). Rather than being fixed, his designs are derived from the environment that a wearer creates, leaving more to the imagination (Teunissen et al., 2014).

As such, formlessness in dress connotes a potential to take constantly indeterminate shapes; only when worn on the body the garments take their final form, and movements of a wearer cause them to display unexpected shapes. The once sharply divided line between designers and wearers has been blurred at an accelerated pace entering the twenty-first century. A good number of designs have been presented that take form at a wearer’s will. This tendency to include a wearer in a design, or to incorporate interplay between a garment and the body, moves away from designer-oriented design and towards interactions with a wearer. This concept, leaving the final form of dress to be completed with a wearer’s idea, meets contemporary lifestyle with the extended sphere of activity.

In formlessness in dress, the interaction between a garment and the body is one of the significant elements of creation, which is related to awareness of imperfection. Since the form refers to the conventional form of garment which corresponds to the body, formlessness in dress is concerned with incompleteness as opposed to a traditional role of fashion as a purveyor of an eternal ideal. In this alternative perspective in perceiving the body, the boundaries between the body, dress, and space appear obscurely, and a wearer's gender is indicated ambiguously. In creating formlessness in dress, the body is perceived as an indeterminate form, thus the garments are structured in simplified shapes irrelevant to a body form; the practicality, as well as the functionality of dress, is ignored accordingly.

Below is the typology of dress drawing on the perception of the body so far examined (Table 1).

### IV. Conclusions

As we classified forms of dress based on the perception of the body, it has been examined that dress reflects, consults, reduces, extends, or expands the body. The typology of dress drawing on bodily perception has been categorized into four different types; body-consciousness, deformation, transformation, and formlessness. We have analyzed the cases that best
Table 1. Typology of dress: Formative aspects and implications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Formative aspects</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Body-consciousness | • Representation of physicality through tailoring, bias-cutting, and elastic fabrics  
                      • Ultimate proximity between dress and the body                                   | • Body as corporeal ideal                        
                                                                                   | • Body in internalized corset                                                         |
| Deformation       | • Symmetrical deformation: enlargement or reduction based on vertical/horizontal axes of the body  
                      • Satiric presentation on restriction of the body                                     | • Satiric presentation on restriction of the body                                     
                                                                                   | • Digression from conventional association between signifier and signified         
                                                                                   | • Underwear-as-outerwear                                                              |
|                   | • Asymmetrical deformation: enlargement or reduction irrelevant to bodily axes      | • Satiric presentation on restriction of the body                                     
                                                                                   | • Deliberate departure from the corporeal ideal                                     |
| Transformation    | • Deconstruction: fragmentation (division, displacement, multiplication, and addition)  
                      and reassembly                                                                          | • Deconstructs Western sartorial conventions                                          
                                                                                   | • Questions aesthetic standard of garment construction                              |
|                   | • Abstraction: structures irrelevantly to the body; prioritizes space around the body/expands beyond the space of the body | • Focus on sculptural or architectural shapes                                         
                                                                                   | • Dysfunctional                                                                     |
exemplifies each category in the study, and we would assume that, in practice, there is a wide range of mixed forms as well as there are fluid transitions among the types.

First, body-consciousness in dress is articulated through tailoring and bias cutting as well as elasticity of fabrics. Via representation of physicality, body-conscious dress displays the body with an internalized corset. This type of dress emphasizes eroticism and prioritizes structures and functions of the body.

Second, deformation causes tension by digressing from the conventional sartorial associations between dress and the body. Symmetrical deformations enlarge or reduce physicality based on vertical or horizontal axes of the body. This satirizes the constraint on the body by deviating from the conventional association between signifier and signified. Asymmetrical deformation enlarges or reduces physicality irrelevant to bodily axes, satirically presenting restriction of the body by deliberately departing from the corporeal ideal. As such, deformation in dress challenges the traditional sartorial signification of femininity, fertility, inaccessibility, or wealth and status.

Third, transformation of the body in dress can be subcategorized into three types. Deconstruction destroys Western sartorial conventions and challenges aesthetic standards of garment construction by way of fragmentation and reassembly. Abstraction prioritizes sculptural or architectural shapes irrelevant to the body while expanding beyond the space of the body. Multi-functional and interactive transformables expand functions beyond the conventional garment.

Finally, formlessness in dress focuses on indeterminate shapes irrelevant to the body, as well as space between the dress and the body. Imperfection and incompleteness are implied accordingly and a final decision as to how the garment should be worn on the body depends on a wearer.

Body-consciousness in dress draws near representation of the body and its conventional implications by portraying a culturally idealized body. On the other hand, in deformation, transformation, and formlessness, the representation of the body is distanced from corporeal ideals and deliberately deviates from a traditional garment structure and its associations. In other words, while body-conscious dress highlights intrinsic harmony, balance, and order in the body and a garment itself, dress that deforms, transforms, or eschews conventional perception of the body causes tension and constructs a divergent visual field by departing from the traditional relationship between the body and a garment. The non-homogeneity (Arnheim, 1960) in contemporary fashion articulates these categories and their implications.

### Table 1. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Formative aspects</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td><img src="https://via.placeholder.com/150" alt="Transformation Diagram" /></td>
<td>• Transformables: expands functions beyond conventional dress; expands beyond space of the body; transcends boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formlessness</strong></td>
<td><img src="https://via.placeholder.com/150" alt="Formlessness Diagram" /></td>
<td>• Indeterminate shape that is irrelevant to the body&lt;br&gt;• Changing space between dress and the body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1969/1981) features of deformation, transformation, and formlessness of the body in dress articulate tension and complicate the visual field. Thus, whereas body-consciousness aims for a ‘utility function’ (Cambridge, 2006), deformation, transformation, and formlessness aspire to a ‘status function’ (Cambridge, 2006) which is an intangible symbol generated from the fashion system.

Through building the framework that categorizes the formative aspects of dress and accordingly examining the degree of conformity/disconformity to the conventions of sartorial representations, we could draw the implications of each category; how contemporary fashion designers attempt to challenge or destruct the dominant aesthetics of Western fashion by articulating the structural relations between the body-dress.

References


