

ORIENTALISM IN FASHION

Yoo Jin Kwon
Korea National Open University

and

Min-Ja Kim
Seoul National University

Abstract

The Orient has been an ample source for new fashion throughout history. The Oriental look refers to Western dress that shows an Oriental taste. In his seminal work, *Orientalism*, Said criticized the intrinsic qualities of awareness, thought, and expression reflecting the academic and intellectual traditions of the West toward the East. This study analyzes and provides a contextual reading of the Oriental look found in Western dress. The analysis suggests that Oriental look reflects the arbitrary awareness of the Oriental beauty by the West and Orientalism in fashion is the Western aesthetic tradition toward the East.

Key words: Orientalism, fashion, Said

Fashion is a “self-dynamic social process” (Mayntz and Nedelmann, 1987 in Gronow, 1997, p. 76) driven by recurring cycles that consists of pursuit of new styles to differentiate them from others, followed by adoption of socially accepted styles by followers. This simultaneous antinomy of fashion has been referred to in several ways: differentiation versus identification or isolation versus union (Simmel, 1957). Therefore, the newness of a style is a necessary condition of the autonomous process of fashion. Although the compulsive attention to the new relates to the idea of modernity and progress (Radford, 1998), newness in fashion does not refer to literally new styles of clothes. Rather, fashion is what is perceived as new at a certain point in time.

In order to be perceived as *the new* in fashion, a style should be different enough from current styles or a style should have been forgotten by society for a long enough period of time that it appears to be new once again. For example, the 1980s look that became popular once again in 2010 is different from the actual fashion of the 1980s. The use of historic elements in postmodern fashion (Morgado, 1996) or cyclic changes of style such as the length of skirt and silhouette of female dress e.g., Kroeber, 1919; Lowe and Lowe, 1982; Young, 1937) illustrate the mechanism of new fashion.

The Orient has been an ample source for new fashion throughout history. As far back as the late ancient Greek period, Eastern influence has been found in Western dress, likely a result of travels along the Silk Road (Tortora and Eubank, 2005). However, the Oriental look has come to be perceived as a taste that reflects the visions of the East in Western dress, especially since the period when trade with the empire was prosperous after its geographical discoveries in the sixteenth century (Martin and Koda, 1994). Since then, the Orient has actively been used as an attractive inspiration source for designers and consumers.

Given the different terms that are confusedly used to refer to the Oriental look or similar styles—namely, Orientalism, exoticism, ethnic look, and folklore—it is important to identify the stylistic features of Oriental look and understand its cultural meanings. The Oriental look here refers to the Western dress that shows an Oriental taste. As such, the operational definition includes two key terms: *Western* dress and *Oriental* taste. Therefore, the current study is limited to Western dress, which excludes the authentic traditional dress from Asia or North Africa or self-Orientalizing fashion in Asia (Leshkovich and Jones, 2003). The term Oriental implies the culturally constructed concept of the Orient by the West. Archaically, the word *Orient* indicates the place where the sun rises (American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 2000), meaning the Asian countries located to the east of the Mediterranean Sea, in contrast to the *Occident*. This relationship suggests that the word Orient reflects Western-centered thought about the East.

The theoretical perspective of this paper draws upon the seminal work of Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978). Criticizing Western texts about the East since the era of Imperialism, Said revealed the intrinsic qualities of awareness, thought, and expression reflecting the academic and intellectual traditions of the West toward the East. Said (1978) argued that Orientalism is not simply Oriental studies or Oriental taste, but the Western style of thought about the East. Defining Orientalism as the accumulation of discourses on the East, Said discovered the internal logic of Orientalism in relation to the dynamics of power and knowledge. The discourse system of the West Orientalized the East from its dominating position. According to Said, Orientalism reflects the Western style to dominate, restructure, and acquire authority over the East. This Saidian interpretation of Orientalism is the essence of Western awareness of the East and its academic and intellectual traditions toward the East. Subsequent research expanded into various genres of texts, including art, music, literature, film, dress and literature, supporting Said's notion of the Orientalism (Celik, 1996; Hisama, 1993; MacKenzie, 1995; Nochlin, 1983; Wollen, 1987).

The current study aims to provide a contextual reading of the Oriental look found in Western dress after the age of geographical discovery, particularly Western dress influenced by the East after the sixteenth century. According to Roach and Musa (1979), Western dress completed a conceptual formation of its authentic identity in the sixteenth century. Establishment of identity, that is, criteria that distinguish *the Western* from the *non-Western*, is an essential prerequisite for awareness of the East. Martin and Koda (1994), who were curators for an exhibition entitled "Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress" at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, also indicated that the starting point of Orientalism in fashion occurred when trade and empires were prosperous during the Age of Exploration.

Orientalism in Fashion

This section discusses the Oriental look from three perspectives: the "subject" of the Oriental look (i.e., the West that creates and consumes Oriental design and clothing), the "object" used in

the Oriental look (i.e., stylistic features of Oriental look), and the “system” (i.e., the cultural meanings of the Oriental look in the Western fashion system).

Western-Centered Thought of the Oriental Look: Subject

The Oriental look is created by Western designers and consumed by Western consumers. By leading creation and consumption of the Oriental look, the West has gained authenticity as a subject. Such authenticity enables the West to integrate the Oriental look into Western culture.

Prior to the 19th century, it was taboo for Western explorers, missionaries, or ambassadors to wear Eastern dress during their stay in the East (Martin and Koda, 1994). However, they were allowed to wear Eastern dress once they returned home. This practice reflects the lack of the West’s authentic identity while in the East. Said (1978) argues that the West pursues *flexible positional superiority* to maintain relatively dominant position in any relations with the East; this concept can also be applied to the adoption of Oriental dress, which Martin and Koda (1994) called “body transference” (p. 12). It must have been difficult to keep positional superiority while in the East; the body transference was completed and the subject (i.e., wearer) kept superiority by positioning the Eastern dress as the exotic. Although Eastern culture was regarded as aesthetically and racially inferior (Martin and Koda, 1994), the West overcame its self-consciousness and adopted it by establishing the positional superiority.

The 19th century ushered in the age of imperialism, during which time westerners were generally allowed to wear Eastern dress as long as Western lifestyle and religion are not abandoned. In fact, many heroic figures dressed in completely exotic attire as they were perceived as reliable gentlemen of the empire (e.g., Colin Mackenzie, 1806-1881) (Baines, 1981). During this time, Oriental dress was perceived not as a sign of cultural flexibility, but as the trophy of imperialism, signs of imperialistic behavior, and symbols of cosmopolitan knowledge (Baines, 1981; Martin and Koda, 1994). However, today’s Oriental look in contemporary Western fashion does not necessarily refer to the trophy of imperialism. When Eastern reference or concepts were utilized with Western dress, the West kept its superior identity by rendering

Western dress richer with foreign materials and embellishment, and took in Eastern reference as a style embodying *the Otherness*. Figure 1 conceptualizes the psychological process of maintaining the exotic imagination and charm in Western dress. The identification and aesthetic distances ensure the fact that the subject of the Oriental look is the West.

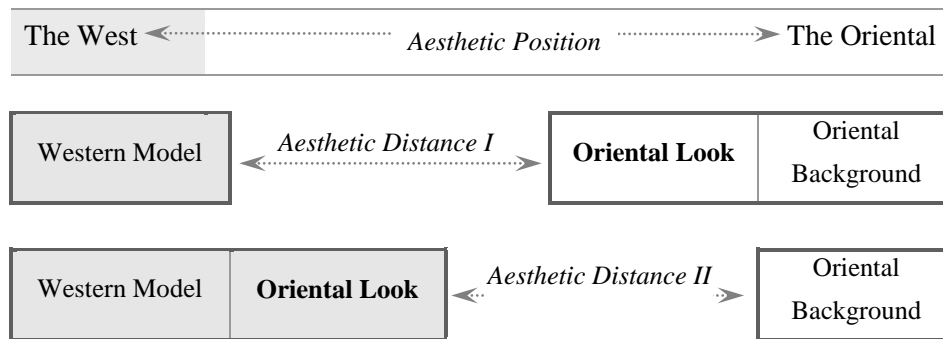


Figure 1. Aesthetic distances in Oriental look

Figure 1 was adapted from the idea of identification that occurs in film viewing (Metz, 1986). In films, the Oriental look is typically presented in Western models, set against an Asian or Oriental background (i.e., uncivilized or colonized place). The primary identification with the camera provides viewers with a sense of power. Viewers feel the scene, which is actually enacted by the director or photographer, as a world they discover themselves. Consequently, viewers perceive themselves as the subject who creates the scene. The secondary identification relates to Freudian narcissistic identification. Narcissistic identification refers to the identification of oneself with another's image. The narcissistic image is perceived as being much more ideal, ultimately becoming the object of desire.

As seen in Figure 1, the body, dress, and background can be placed on the continuum from the Western to Oriental aesthetics. The primary identification enables a viewer to embrace the editorial message as her own. The Oriental look may well be perceived relatively. A Western viewer identifies the Western model's body with herself; thus, the body is separated from the Oriental that consists of dress and background, signifying the Western body and the Oriental

correspondently. The “aesthetic distance I” is established by the contrast between the Western beauty of the model and the Oriental objects, including dress and background. However, the relative aesthetic position of the Oriental look can shift toward the West, as the Western narcissistic self integrates the Oriental look that she is bonded to the Western body. Due to the narcissistic identification, the dress embodies “the Orient in the West,” thus becoming a desirable object. The charm of the dress design is fused with the ideal beauty of the body, completing the aesthetic value and identity of the Oriental design. The Oriental look and the body are contrasted with a background that hints at some location in the East. Therefore, the “aesthetic distance II” ensures that the Oriental dress is incorporated into the Western dress culture.

Although the former distance creates the hedonic tension of consuming the new or exotic Oriental look, the latter distance is an editorial apparatus often used for both non-Oriental design and Oriental design in order to establish the authenticity of the subject and imply superiority. A typical background includes old-fashioned, rural, undeveloped, or colonized East, historic relics, and native people or animals. For example, in a photograph depicting a 5-foot, 9-inch model in a lavish, white India-inspired outfit surrounded by native Indian women in colourful but humble traditional outfits somewhere in the countryside, the background—including the Indian women and the rural landscape—presents a reference to the origin of the Oriental design (i.e., India) while the model in the Oriental design stands out and creates a great contrast with the uncultured image of the background (i.e., native people and surroundings). The first aesthetic distance provides the information on the original source of the design and the second aesthetic distance ensures that the Oriental look is Western fashion worn on the Western body. Indeed, this strategy is reflected in *Vogue*’s comment on the Russian ballet in 1913: “The message may be semi-Asian and the material may be barbarian, but the technique was rather semi-European and civilized” (Wollen, 1987, p. 27). The origin and the outcome of the artwork (e.g., clothing design) are appreciated differently. Drawn upon the Saidian perspective, the Oriental look is an entirely new-born creation by an outstanding aesthetic sense and skill that merely use inferior and primitive sources. As such, the Oriental design is justified only by the authenticity of the subject, the wearer, and the creator (i.e., the West).

Imagination Appearing in the Oriental Look: Object

The common element of the Oriental look is that the design reminds a viewer of the Orient in one's imagination and maintains the imagination. The analysis of stylistic features of the Oriental look is discussed herein in relation to the imaginative Orient in three parts: imaginative geography, imaginative history, and imaginative object. Imaginative geography and history" are the terms that Said used to indicate the Western arbitrary concept of space and time of the Orient. "Imaginative object" was coined to refer to arbitrary awareness of objects of the East, adapted from "imaginative geography and history" (Said, 1978).

Imaginative Geography

Said (1978) explained Orientalists' constitution of imaginative geography using French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's notion of space. According to Bachelard, space acquires its emotional or rational meanings through a poetic process (i.e., creation process). As a result, empty or anonymous space becomes meaningful; the same applies to time. Said (1978) maintained that imaginative geography and history dramatize the distance or difference between the far and the near, thereby making the awareness more solid.

The West's designs are reminiscent of the Orient, maintaining a significant distance from Western dress. Martin and Koda (1994) noted that Chinoiserie in the 18th century was simply a compound of exotic elements that had nothing to do with Chinese design or techniques. Chinoiserie consisted of the meandering line and pagoda shape reminiscent of the imaginative China and palm trees and sail boats reminiscent of the imaginative foreign land.

Hybrid taste is the most distinctive stylistic feature of the Oriental look. The hybridity is rooted in the imaginative geography—that is, the arbitrary awareness of the East as an exotic and imaginative place. The imaginative Eastern countries in Oriental design only exist in the mind;

therefore, the cultures can be freely amalgamated. The identity of each Eastern culture is not necessarily appreciated individually. Uzbek's design, called "Uzbek's culture club", shows a hybrid taste intertwining various exotic components, including Indonesian print, Mongolian fur trimming, and Nepalese headdresses ("Uzbek's," 1993). Similarly, Poiret's exoticism contains vague hints of Turkey, China, Japan, and other Asian countries (Martin and Koda, 1994, p. 25).

Imaginative History

Said (1978) asserted that Orientalism regards the Orient as static and uniform. Such Orientalism is also reflected in social theories. Turner noted that philosophical discussion by Aristotle, Montesquieu, Adam Smith, and Hegel has included autocracy and social stagnation in the East (Turner, 1989). In painting, Nochlin (1983) criticized the absence of history in Orientalists' paintings. In the paintings of a realism painter like Gérôme, any changes are absent from the Orient and timeless customs and rituals feature the Orient, despite the fact that Eastern countries faced significant changes during that time. To the Orientalists, changes no longer occur in the Orient. The violence of the despot or despotic masculinity and mysterious and sensual femininity became a formula in Orientalists' paintings and the despotism of the ancient Orient is described through the splendour of the lives in court and the violence of the ruler. The East and Eastern people in paintings are completely excluded from social progress.

The imaginative history in dress has been represented by the image of invariable despotism and splendour of lives in the court, which suggests one glorious day of the Oriental empire a long time ago. Images of the court are portrayed in gorgeous colours, sumptuous silks, jewels, and the like. Limited exposure to China, Japan, or Turkey through explorers such as Marco Polo or French ambassador Ferriol made the East a source of sumptuous silk textiles, jewelry, and expensive spices, stimulating the curiosity and attraction of the lavishness of the court life (Baines, 1981).

Orientalism in dress is also characterized by the static world. During the Elizabethan era, many English people believed that fashion did not exist outside Western Europe (Baines, 1981).

Rather, they believed that Eastern people wore clothing that had been worked for centuries. Therefore, reviving the old style from the East means focusing on the naiveté and simplicity that English people once had (Baines, 1981). In addition to exotic taste, wearing dress or accessories from the East signified the traditional wealth and power of the empire and implied associations with diplomats and travelers as well as significant buying power (Baines, 1981). The exotic taste served as evidence of status.

The Orient in the 20th century—when despotism no longer existed—continued to be associated with something old. The Russian ballets, “Schéhérazade” and “Cleopatra”, which were huge successes in Paris in 1909, presented political nostalgia as well as massacre, fear, and desire. Poiret held a party named “The Thousand and Second Party” to celebrate his new Oriental fashion in 1911; it was the perfect representation of Arabian despotism, with lavish interior and garden design, slaves, and even a circus (Wollen, 1987). Poiret dressed himself as a Turkish sultan holding a whip and a scimitar. He kept women dressed in Arabic costumes in a cage and released them when guests arrived.

Meanwhile, contemporary Oriental fashion echoes the code of sensuous women in evening gowns made with extravagant colours, textiles, and jewels. Galliano’s “The jewel of the Nile” (1997), Dior’s look reminiscent of “Czarist Russia” (1997), or Dries Van Noten’s “The last emperor” (1997) represents the imaginative history embedded in the Oriental look.

Imaginative Object

The imaginative object illustrates an arbitrary usage of the borrowed objects from the East. Orientalists in fashion have employed any objects related to the imaginative East. The arbitrary usage of such objects relates to Orientalists’ “textual attitude,” which is the attitude to judge something based on the texts (Said, 1978). This textual attitude creates continuity in culture, thereby maintaining cultural unity. Said argued that textual attitude is powerful in two cases: when the object is unknown, threatening, or far away and when a person experiences success through texts. In these cases, people trust and rely more on the texts. Thus, the reality described

in texts exercises more authority and stipulates the reader's experience. Until the mid 19th century, scholarly outcome related to the East in language, anthropology, literature, and geography provided the foundation for the textual attitude by the later Orientalists.

Applying this concept to Oriental design, designers referred to the work of their predecessors and experts in other Oriental genres, such as dance, film, and literature, in order to express the image of the East. The cumulative process of referecing created the whole of the Oriental look. Baines (1981) explained that the Turkish masquerade costume in the 16th century was based on imagination rather than actual dress, and the Chinoiserie in interior, textile, and dress designs in the 18th century came from imitation and training of Chinese ceramics since the 17th century. Because of the lack of standards and experience, the Chinoiserie was driven by European values and fashions. The pagoda shape, minaret skirt, or kabuki image is an example of the use of imaginative objects. Even the influence of traditional dress from the East was anchored by textual attitude. Traditional Chinese dress in the 18th century was flat and loose like other Far Eastern countries, but it did not receive much attention despite the zeal for Chinese taste during that time. The flat and unstructured style was introduced and enjoyed as the Japanese kimono; meanwhile, traditional Chinese dress was introduced to the West in the 19th century via Japan in the form-fitted modern Cheongsam style (Baines, 1981; Garrett, 1987).

In a strict sense, the Oriental look is not the style influenced by Eastern dress, but rather the style designed with elements labelled as Oriental. The imaginative objects of the Oriental look have expanded the repertoire of Western dress. Popular Oriental elements include intricate textures representing Chinese or Japanese ceramics and lacquer, the shape of the pagoda, embroidery, brocades, dragon motifs, Chinese red, the salon skirt, the kimono sleeve, fur trimming, the harem pants, and the turban. All of these elements were used to maintain the exotic imagination. The beauty of the East has been redefined by the Oriental look while the aesthetic value of the Oriental look has been dominated by the Western definition of the beauty of the East.

Cultural Meanings of the Oriental Look: System

Based on the discussion thus far, this section examines the cultural meanings and functions of the Oriental look in the Western fashion system.

Niche to Elicit Desire

Cultural texts imply the desire of the contemporary world using their original language. As texts of the same age share the same social, economic, cultural, and political background and audience, desire transcends the genres and is easily recognized through texts of genres that incorporate narratives, such as film, literature, dance, or painting. Nochlin(1983) maintained that the imaginative Orient is what the Western desire fabricated. The Orient has served as the best vehicle in the West for portraying desire in literature, dance, and film. The Orient in the narratives serves as a safe niche from which to elicit desire embedded in Western culture.

Orientalism in film and dance was propelled by the success of “Schéhérazade,” a Russian ballet. The fantasy about the harem and Oriental women was expressed through the exposure of the body, which represented the secular desire to possess women sexually. The erotic stimulation of the harem as a prohibited place entails the fantasy of peeking at Muslim women’s faces and bodies, promiscuity, masochistic beings, and sexually possessing women (Lewis 1996). This male fantasy is found in the portrayal of sensual and indulgent women in Orientalist paintings, such as Ingre’s *Turkish Bath* (1862) or Bernard’s *Harem* (1912). Although the mystery that the West has for its own culture is based on pietism toward heaven, expressed in the concealment of the body, the mystery that the West has for Middle Eastern culture is based on incomprehensibility expressed in the exposure of the body. Modesty in the Middle East was achieved by covering the face (Rudofsy, 1974); however, the exposure of the midriff was interpreted in the West as the visual representation of sexual fantasy.

The passion for Oriental dances and films in the early 20th century introduced the image of the aggressive decadent Oriental woman (Studlar, 1997). Oriental cultures that dealt with the inversion of sexuality, women's penis envy, and strong vampish women were accepted. Zobeida, the main female character of *Schéhérazade*, perfectly embodied the decadent image of a femme fatale (Wollen, 1987). Studlar (1997) commented that this imagery related to women's desire to be free from the bondage of home and the conservativeness of society. Cleopatra and Salome also became the foundation for the Hollywood vamp. The aggressive image of Oriental women continued to be popular in various popular culture genres and fan magazines (Studlar, 1997). Early Oriental fashion that shows the exotic imagination, as in Poiret's work, has gained popularity despite the moralistic criticism of representing the uncivilized and seductive exposure and vamp image (Studlar, 1997). Women represented by Orientalists not only show male fantasy, but also serve as a safe place to liberate Western women.

The desire of the West is realized safely through heretical Oriental indulgence. The image of an Arab slave, the red eyes and lipstick of a Chinese concubine, the concealed sensuality of the kabuki and geisha, and the use of black kohl for Turkish or Indian vamps are favourite ways to present Oriental charm. These images are often used for a female character in fantasy movies. For example, Lisle, a mysterious woman with a potion, is dressed scantily in Oriental style in the movie *Death Becomes Her* (1992). Her outfit simply creates an aura of mystery that has nothing to do with any particular identity of the East, which is the symbolic place for liberation and provides a niche from which to elicit the desire of West. The fear of political desire derived from the Western social system, the conflict between classes, and the sexual fantasy controlled in institutional sexuality have been safely relieved through cultural texts embodying Orientalism.

Consumption of Otherness

Unlike the imperial discourse, which represents the Other as a threatening being, Oriental culture gained popularity through mass consumers. The popularity of the Oriental commodities could be understood as the commodity fetish. Before the age of modern mass consumption, the Oriental look was possessed exclusively by the upper class. Since the age of modern

consumption, the look has spread widely. Consuming the exotic other (e.g., Oriental film, novel, and dance), including dress, is characterized as hedonic and conspicuous consumption, which is also the characteristic of modern consumption. Thus, with the advent of the consumption society, consumption of the Otherness provided a playground for the politics of desire.

The discourse on the Orient contains ambivalence—that is, the hierarchical awareness of race and eroticism (Lalvani, 1995). According to the Freudian scheme, the fear of difference (i.e., castration) is reduced to fetish (i.e., value). Fetish represses and replaces the difference so that the reaction between approval and disapproval produces desire. In other words, the ambivalence of the Oriental—the hierarchical awareness of race and the object of eroticism—is reduced to a fetish of exotic taste. The fetish of exotic taste is the basis for establishing a “commodity fetish.” In the society of romanticism and desire, the fetish of consuming the Oriental provided an alternative to the mechanical rhythm of the industrialized society. As the fetish was not repressive but rather productive, the fetishism of the Oriental appeared as the enthusiastic consumption of the Oriental cultures, including fashion. International expositions and department stores of the 19th century provided an unprecedented environment for consumption, especially for the products of Oriental taste. People were enthusiastic about Oriental cafés with seductive dancers, Oriental interior designs with Persian carpets, the dome and the minaret, and the Oriental vampish style in makeup and dress.

According to Marx, the generalization of production and exchange in the 19th century made the commodity the only container in which to incorporate the value of goods. The commodity fetishism first eliminates (i.e., conceals) the real social relationship; then an imaginative relationship is injected. This suppression of the social relationship makes the commodity independent from labour, and the commodity is offered a new value. In the process of commodity fetishism of the Oriental, the Oriental commodity acquires a new value, which Said defined as “Orientalism.” Thus, the Oriental signifies nothing but “Orientalism” and the symbol of desire that never reaches completion (Lalvani, 1995). Therefore, consumption derived from incomplete desire repeats the endless pursuit of desire.

Middle-class women in particular were heroines of the modern consumption and desire. The “New Woman” in the 1890s denoted the new female role as a shopper (Higasi, 1994). Seduction and desire of modern consumption were accelerated with Oriental commodities. In sum, what colonialism had repressed was represented as ‘the dream image’ of the consumption society through the dynamics of modern consumption and desire.

Forever Sources of Alternatives

The Orient has conveniently provided alternatives based on existing needs of the times so that elements of the East were selectively adopted. Not until the 19th century did the influence of the Eastern culture expand beyond craft and decorative art to the principles of fine art. The Arts and Craft movement focused on the production of handicrafts in pursuit of the effacement of fine versus decorative art and ultimately new standards. Art Nouveau found help in the use of expressive outlines in Japanese woodprint, providing solutions for symbolic and abstract expressions following the Impressionists. Art Deco styles reflected the influences of the Russian ballet, the Middle East, and the Far East; the tubular structure of the Far East was particularly considered as an alternative concept of dress that wraps the body (Martin and Koda, 1994). Since the late 19th century, various elements from Japanese culture often accompanied avant-garde movements in Europe (MacKenzie, 1995). Bourgeois who pursued an aesthetic counter to vulgar materialism in the 19th century patronized Oriental style as appropriate consumption objects. In adoption, they arbitrarily chose the Oriental elements and endowed them with new value suitable for their needs. The Orient was the only “appropriate East,” which they created in order to make up what was deficient in European culture.

The use of the Oriental look to fabricate alternatives is often found in film. In science fiction movies such as *Star Wars* or *Demolition Man* (1993), the films described Utopian dress with an Oriental look. It is because the unknown style of the future accords with the notion of the Orient as the unknown land, rather than the dress symbolizes the adoption of Eastern philosophy. Another use of Oriental look in Hollywood is evident in costumes for evil or decadent women in science fiction movies. Dr. Cocteau, the hypocritical leader in *Demolition Man*, and Zorg, the

evil weapons dealer in *The Fifth Element* (1997) are dressed in Oriental style. Although these films show the influence of Far Eastern dress, the awareness of origin was removed to fabricate these alternative dresses of the future.

Conclusion

Orientalism in dress is not just an Oriental costume or an Oriental look, but the arbitrary awareness of Oriental beauty by the West and the Western aesthetic tradition toward the East. The West has secured the authenticity of the subject so that they have orientalised the Oriental look according to their imagination about the Orient. The imagination is represented by hybrid taste, image of the invariable ancient Orient and thus produced elements labelled as Oriental. Oriental look is beyond one of the repertoires of Western fashion. Owing to the difference maintained by imagination, it has served as a safe place that exists outside to release desire in consumption society and at the same time has become a convenient source of nonexistent alternatives. The summary of the discussion is found in Figure 2.

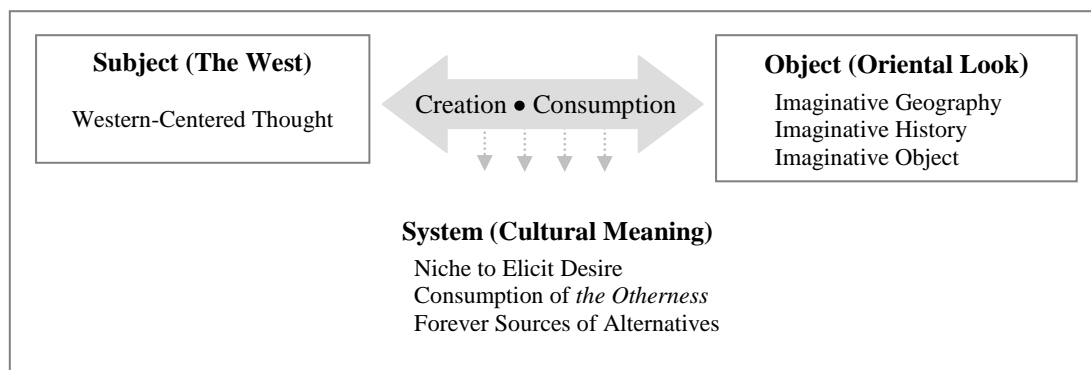


Figure 2. Orientalism in fashion

Since the early 20th century, Western fashion has been ruled by haute couture and prêt-à-porter. The ready-to-wear industry of the United States is also one of the major institutionalized powers of contemporary fashion. The Oriental look was initially confined to the private domain, kept away from the development of authenticity of Western dress outside the institutionalized

system. However, in the 20th century, the Oriental look was labelled and integrated into the fashion system of Western dress. Sharma and Sharma (2003) called the contemporary Orientalism *a strategy of differential inclusion*. The West never endowed the Oriental look with the orthodoxy of Western dress. With a strategy of differential inclusion, Oriental look is controlled and managed as a sub-style so that it can bolster its own identity and aesthetic hegemony. This aesthetic hegemony is, in turn, a practical force that sustains Orientalism in fashion.

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About the Author

Yoo Jin Kwon is an Assistant Professor at Seoul National Open University; her research is focused on consumer culture in fashion. Her email address is y_kwon@wsu.edu. Min-Ja Kim is a professor at Seoul National University. Her research interest focuses on aesthetics of dress and fashion design. Her email address is mjk6847@snu.ac.kr.