

# RE-DEFINING FASHION ARCHITECTURE: AN ETYMOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION TOWARDS THE HYBRID OF FASHION ARCHITECTURE

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## **RE-DEFINING FASHION ARCHITECTURE: AN ETYMOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION TOWARDS THE HYBRID OF FASHION ARCHITECTURE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The interrelationship phenomenon between fashion and architecture has always been included in both discourses. An issue has emerged from the fragmented understanding between two fields as the research problem, whether the two should have been separated or linked. In this paper, fashion architecture theory is questioned in order to scrutinize the core of this two knowledge. By using the etymological and theoretical method, etymology highlighted as the entry point while the theory is developed to find the connection. This paper aims; 1) to re-search the linkage between fashion and architecture; 2) to clarify a profound understanding of fashion architecture based on primitive space development's idea; 3) to re-define the hybridity of fashion architecture. According to the primordial perspective, the requirement to cover the human body from the immediate environment has hypothetically created an envelope. This covering can be understood as the initial development of the space, where later has generated divergent understandings: as clothing if being worn as an attire, an architecture if structured as a shelter. These variants were later developed into differentiated fields in a modern perspective. A finding refers to both were constructed to create a protected environment: an interiority; besides varied by dissimilar pattern, structure, and material depending on the targeted end product. The paper's result suggests a critique on a superficial development on both fashion and architecture, encouraging a hybrid as the world has become fragmented.*

**Keywords:** Etymological Investigation, Fashion Architecture, Hybrid, Interior, Redefinition

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Coco Channel once mentioned, "Fashion is architecture, it is a matter of proportion, while Zaha specified, "Architecture is how the person places herself in the space. Fashion is about you place the object on the person". On the other occasion, Moshe Safdie stated, "Architecture has joined the world of fashion, but fashion is passing, and architecture is timeless," while Kalf Lagerfeld neutralized, "We need houses as we need clothes. It's like hunger and thirst; you need both" [1]. These debates were not relatively new [2] [3]; the discussion about fashion architecture may have begun since the beginning of the space creation as a body's protection. In addition, more statements have been raised with the antithetical expression, for instant: Pierre Balmain believed, "dressmaking is the architecture of movement," while Pierre Cardin assumed, "dress is a vase which the body follows. My clothes are like modules in which bodies move". Thierry Mugler added, "I am an architect who completely reinvents a woman's body." To reflect that, Christian Dior once reminded, "A dress is a piece of ephemeral architecture, designed to enhance the proportions of the female body", while Balenciaga strengthened, "Couturier must be an architect for design, a sculptor for shape, a painter for color, a musician for harmony and a philosopher for temperance" [1]. Although, various statements have emerged from both fields to claim the connection between the two; they are visually represented as a different object, raising misleading interpretation, and triggering deviant perception at the same time [4]. The phenomenon of the unclear interrelationship between fashion and architecture world has contributed issues, movements, and contradictions [5] [6]. Although some have provoked problems like fragmentation in ideology or field divisions caused by dominated culture or perspective [7], others may have contributed development of a new hybrid: the fashion architecture.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### 2.1. Methods of Study

This paper explores the fashion architecture theory through bibliographical examination. The primordial concept of the space creation once differentiates fashion from architecture, while at the same time bridging the two as both were formerly intended as a body's protection [4]. The research engages etymology as the offset while studying theory from the origin of the words and its historical meanings by using dictionaries and literature. The steps of this methodology allow the reader to re-evaluate; 1) the general definition; 2) the definition of fashion; 3) the definition of architecture. The investigation is followed by an etymological crosscheck critically of; 1) the meaning of etymology; 2) the etymology of fashion; 3) the etymology of architecture; 4) the etymology of hybrid. By conducting this method, the research suggests the genuine meaning of fashion architecture, and to stimulate a critique towards the hybridity of fashion architecture. This method is aimed to target a profound understanding of the word fashion and architecture as a foundation while questioning the hybridity of fashion architecture for a wider context.

### 2.2. Theoretical Approach

#### 2.2.1. The General Definition

The world fashion and architecture have been phenomenal to our contemporary society [5]. Possessing a great sense of the two means an indication of an intellectual individual. The research re-examines the etymology as a historical revisit to the case study: the original meaning of both words, while extending the study to a philosophical investigation: dual polarities [8]. Later, this study scrutinizes the meaning of fashion architecture as a hybrid; an extended question must be addressed to this contemporary creation. The inquiry is intended to

present the clarity of the case while searching for the connection [9] taken from its primordial idea. As a contrast, while the common understanding refers to less connection between fashion and architecture [3], instead, this research questions a present-day dilemma of overwhelming claims regarding fashion architecture as a hybrid. The contrasting arguments are bridged in order to extract the mutual connection [9], while questioning a hybrid formula. By revisiting the primordial concept of the space initiation, cross-examination via the etymological investigation confirms the connection from the original meaning of both words. That is why, a common definition of both words must be provided in the first place so that the conventional understanding as the foundation for the discussion can be further connected later to what extent the hybridity must be profoundly understood.



**Figure 1** The Search of the Space: The Interiority as the Concept of the Body's Protection

Source: Le Moustie Neanderthals by Charles R. Knight, 1920, downloaded from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caveman#/media/File:Le\\_Moustier.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caveman#/media/File:Le_Moustier.jpg) on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### **2.2.2. The Definition of Fashion**

Fashion is generally understood as a popular trend, not only related to the styles of dress and ornament or behavior, but also considered as a part of manner. Fashion in a higher understanding is also associated with: vogue, mode, fancy, and luxurious articles. The meaning was speculatively derived from the verb: to fashion; it means making something into a particular or the required form [10]. Some believe once the fashion's form is iconic; it influences a wider audience. This becomes apparent the reason: why in more contemporary society, the word fashion has been interpreted as a style that is popular at a particular time. Fashion is also related to clothes, hair, make-up, etc. [11], as those articles show the prevailing style during a specific period [12]. Moreover, Collins dictionary has even extended the definition of fashion as the area of activity that involves styles of clothing and appearance. The reason is fashion has evolved into a domain: design fields that contribute the style creation to a human body in the form of clothing [13], or a way of behaving that illustrates a specific quality at a particular term [10]. Despite generic, this common definition has also never mentioned about the intellectual level of fashion that should be differentiated from the idea of clothing.



### 2.2.3. The Definition of Architecture

On the other hand, the word architecture refers mostly to the art or practice of designing and constructing buildings. It is a complex or a carefully designed structure or the style of a building, as defined by the Cambridge English Dictionary. Merriam and Webster agree by describing architecture as the art or science of building, implemented as a practice of designing habitable building structures. It is a formation or construction, created from a conscious act, between man and the environment. Architecture is also often argued as a unifying/coherent form or structure, architectural product or work, a method or style of building, and the manner in which the building components are organized and integrated [14]. The dilemmatic understanding generally stands between confirming architecture as an art or science of designing a building or non-building structures [6]. This meaning has predominated the general idea of architecture while opening up various public interpretations. Moreover, the Oxford Dictionary in 1993 added complexity to architecture's meaning. It mentioned the correlation between architecture with technology and humanity as the art of science, while categorizing it as a design activity. Nowadays, architecture has various related meanings from: the micro-level, such as: details and furniture: to the macro-level, like: urban design and landscape architecture. Hence, although the world of architecture offers miscellaneous interpretations of space definition [14], and implemented in a wider range of structured forms as the physical representation; the idea of architecture is often claimed that closely related to the human body [6].

### 2.2.4. The Definition of Hybrid

Hybrid is generally translated as a thing made by combining two different varieties, a mixture that contains a well-blended character because composed of the mixed part [15]. Although it seems quite easy to mix different compositions into a thing, the word hybrid is connected to biology as a reference. The definition refers to a mixed creature developed from crossbreed as two plants or animals of different species of varieties are combined as one ideal and stable new species. This reference suggests that to develop a hybrid, genetic engineering must be involved in order to recombine each unique DNA type by using a specific biological technology. A hybrid can only be successfully re-constructed if mixing the most fundamental and essential elements that construct a flawless yet sturdy object, whether it is a thing or a creature. I must demonstrate a mixed characteristic, reflected from the smallest unit to its actual representation. The end result must not only be alien to its parents while exhibiting similarities at the same time. Last but not least, a hybrid must be fitted and well-grown within its environment as its context [16].

## 2.3. Etymological Approach

### 2.3.1. The Definition of Etymology

As the study of the origins, history, and development of words, etymology is considered to be part of the linguistic study [15]. It is categorized as the historical linguistic, where present-time research has now moved towards the semantic change [17]. Nowadays, etymology focuses on searching a pattern of semantic transformation, with less historical oriented work in pidgins/creoles. Etymology belongs to lexicology, technically possessing the diachronic dimension, as related to shifted meanings; it is definitely can be considered as semantic. The etymology depends on phonology to justify successive forms of words while constructing morphological explanation through the evolution of the word's form (Figure 1). As the research framework, etymology in this paper presents the linkage between the field of fashion and architecture, by presenting: 1) the origin of its meaning, 2) the historical background of each word, including the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history, 3) the latest interpretation. In this paper, although etymology is considered as a linguistic

discipline, it is highlighted as a tool for presenting the word's evolution. Hence, the genuine meaning can be extracted from derivation, deviation, and inconsistency; while traced the history of the word in order to cross-examine its background by using a bibliographical investigation.



















**Figure 2** Etymology as a Linguistics Study, Re-drawn from Alennano, 2011

Source: Authors, 2019

<https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/questions/594/is-etymology-considered-part-of-linguistics-or-a-separate-field-outside-the-scope>, downloaded on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### 2.3.2. The Etymology of Fashion

The word fashion was introduced in 1300 by using the word *fashoun*. It was translated as a physical composition to make up the appearance. Old French, *façon*, *fachon*, *fazon* refers to manner, characteristic, and feature defined by feature, appearance, construction, pattern, design and beauty. A 12<sup>th</sup> century's Latin word *facere*, *factionem* or *faction* literally means: to make, to set, to put. This later contributes an extended definition of fashion as making, doing, preparing something, done by a group of people that collaborates. In the late 14th century, the definition was placed higher as a style or manner and associated with dress making and embellishment. In the late 15th century, the meaning was strengthened as a prevailing mode, a style of dress and adornment that is common in a particular place and specific duration [17]. The word was later developed into a wider meaning: to form and to give shape [10]. The meaning was specified in the 1630s to indicate a higher rank society dress by demonstrating a good style [5], shaping a fashionable society. In 1851, the middle English word, spelled as *faschyoune*, *facune*, *faction* in a fashion plate, a full-page picture in a popular magazine described the prevailing or latest style of dress. In the 1920s, this becomes a reference to a typographic plate, printed to illustrate the sense of a well-dressed personality [17]. A sample of the evolution of clothing illustrates an overall idea of how fashion is developed (Figure 2). The constructive word of mode, associated with stylish, modish features and exceptional manner [13], contributes the idea of being a popular yet iconic personality.

Evolution of clothing	Periods in time	Secondary skins
Realization of need for primary body protection		
Discovery of fabric-making processes		
Development of clothing from function to fashion		
		
		
Refinement of clothing due to technological and material evolution		
		
		

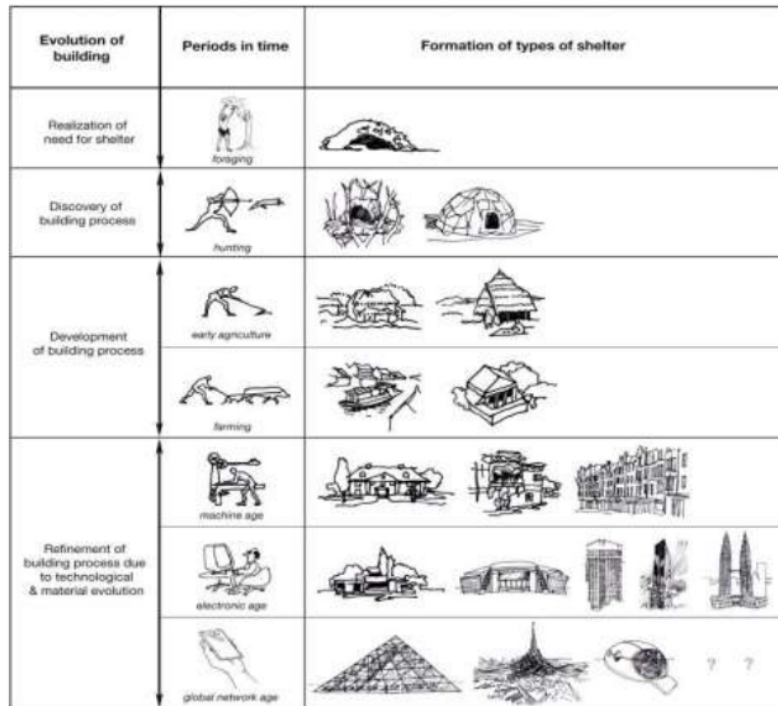
**Figure 3** The Evolution of Clothing

Source: Rethinking Design and Interior by Caan, 2011

### 2.3.3. The Etymology of Architecture

Architecture as a Middle French word was initiated in the 1560s. It influenced contemporary translation as the art of building [15], tasteful application of scientific and traditional rules of good construction by using high-quality materials[6]. The architecture was differentiated for the first time from common building in the 1610s, translated as buildings that was constructed architecturally. The word architecture was extracted from Latin word, *architectura*. It was derived from *architectus*, which represents master builder, chief workman. As the word comes from a profession jargon, architecture is a product created by an architect. According to the 1560s Middle French word, *architecte* was meant formerly as a skilled person in the art of building, the expert who plans, designs, and supervises building's construction [17]. The word *architecte* was derived from the Latin word: *architectus* has been loaned from Greek word: *arkhitekton*: *arkhi*-(chief)+*tekton* (builder, carpenter) [8]. It is translated as a master builder or a director of works. Although it refers to a profession, the original idea of these words is rooted in the meaning: to weave and to fabricate. The Old English utilized *heahcraeftiga* to differentiate higher-crafter, while the Middle English used *architectour* as superintendent, a loan-translation from Latin. Its meaning has been extended as a specialist who creates and designs since 1580s [17]. The meaning has elaborated since then, where the transformation processes from shelter to the contemporary building have contributed to the evolution of architecture (Figure 3).

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**Figure 4** Evolution of Building

Source: Rethinking Design and Interior by Caan, 2011

### 2.3.4. The Etymology of Hybrid

The word hybrid was firstly introduced in 1600. The word was loaned from Latin word, *hybrida*, *ibrida* that refers to a new generation of different varieties or species. Although the origin of the word was still speculatively predicted from Greek, the word hybrid has been widely well known to describe a thing produced from at least two heterogeneous animals or plants since 1850. In 1716 hybrid word was used as an adjective, while in 2020, a hybrid word was introduced for vehicle marketing, an engine that able to utilizes both electricity and gasoline.

Although there is no logic of seeing the interrelationship between the world fashion and architecture, the development idea of these two fields indicates the similarity: designing an envelope for human [10]. It contains material, tectonic, structure, and pattern that intended for higher society or intellectuals, planned and executed by a group of experts. Despite both are considered as a designed product, a deeper investigation into the past presents an intellectual quality that represents both fashion and architecture physical domination as a form [6]. On the other hand, in a contemporary situation, as the world becomes fragmented yet overwhelmed by epistemological generalization [7], a new hybrid has been raised for the future as the fashion architecture [13], offering a new alternative solution for integration. Hence, according to the etymological and theoretical approach, analysis is presented as follows; 1) fashion's general definition versus etymology; 2) architecture's general definition versus etymology; 3) towards a hybrid.



### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Fashion's General Definition versus Etymology

The meaning of word fashion has been widened: from the act of shaping, composing, and forming a specific appearance at a particular time for special people, organized by a certain group of experts, to a popular style for anybody. Formerly aimed to change the body into the desired shape exclusively for higher society, fashion has now been understood as something that makes somebody becoming popular. Fashion was prepared by a group of expertise only who certified as a professional, while nowadays brands claimed their general articles as a fashion item, as long as they follow the general trend. Previously designed as dresses and suits, contemporary fashion articles are now varied: from lingerie to swimsuit. Heretofore, fashion-focused only on composition, construction, pattern, structure, and high-quality material (elevated exclusively by hand-made creative fabric embellishment) in order to present the best creation, differentiating higher society appearance from the common people. Nowadays, there is an extensive range of fashion to serve wider customers, but the original interpretation must be closest to the idea of *haute couture*, although in modern term *haute couture* is defined as the high-fashion in order to carry the same rank like when fashion was introduced at the first time.

#### 3.2. Architecture's General Definition versus Etymology

The word architecture was raised by the profession of the carpenter's head-chief. This head-chief was considered as an experienced craftsman who is able to plan, direct, to supervise, and to execute his idea based on the experience. With a range of experience, the person was believed as a master in fabricating material, constructing a tectonic, including managing human resources and explaining the logic of his plan as he is being respected by both: his team members and the clients. The architecture was not intended as an art at the beginning, but a building that contains logical explanation and argumentation. The word *arkhitekton* contains a representation of the Greek culture that constitutes the scientific tradition and comprising urban principles. Despite the dilemmatic consideration of placing architecture as an art or a science that may be influenced by both Greek and French's ideas of beauty in architecture, in the first place, architecture was raised as a rational habitable structure. It was planned with logical principles and conventional rules. It was constructed by elevating high-quality natural material, craftsmanship, and tectonic. It was aimed to be fitted with its surrounding environment, while decoration and ornament were considered as secondary. This can be the reason why the contemporary interpretation suggests that structure, form, and composition accompanied by logical and scientific argumentation are the most important things in the architecture field.

#### 3.3. Towards a Hybrid

According to bibliographical and etymological comparison, both fashion and architecture refer to an act of composing and forming an intellectual object. Both are planned and executed by a group of experts: experienced professionals. Fashion and architecture are only made from high-quality materials and finishes, composed by using a specific tectonic in order to exhibit a unique structure, special characteristic, and distinctive pattern. They are also created to transform people, improving behavior/ manner as the human body is directly involved with both objects. As fashion and architecture are intellectual property, they potentially stimulate knowledge, whether taken as an art/science. Once an innovative object is being successfully accepted by society, it is not that surprising if the new design presented by the object becomes a popular style. Although both demonstrate a similar way of thinking, the comparison highlights several differences; 1) scale; 2) dominant elements (soft/hard); 3)

structure & pattern. Hence, in order to claim an object as a fashion architecture, it must possess both dual polarities: as fashion and architecture, containing their similarities, compromising their difference, while at the same time exhibiting a new foreign feature. According to the bibliographical comparison above, a formula is argued as follows; 1) body-environment scale; 2) soft-hard transformative elements; 3) co-related structure-pattern. Then, in order to construct a symbiosis between fashion and architecture, an integrated gesture must be constructed as an inter-relationship. At the same time, the object must function both as fashion, architecture, and as the alien: the fashion architecture. Consequently, the relationship can be synonymously and analogously argued as a concept of the system both in fashion and architecture. In order to create a hybrid, the system holds the possibility to transform the object, presenting flexibility, elasticity, and plasticity of the fashion architecture.

**Table 1** Contradiction of Similarity & Difference in Fashion & Architecture Contributes A Hybridity

No.	Similarity	Different	Towards hybridity
1	Act of composing	Scale	Dual polarities
2.	Body-oriented object	Dominant element (soft or hard)	Integrated system
3.	Intellectual object	Structure and pattern	Corellated structured pattern
4.	Material and tectonic to feature characteristic		Synchronized material and tectonic
5.	Transforming people		Transformative space

Source: Authors, 2019

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Both fashion and architecture were formerly developed as an object for body protection. Once space was created for the naked body, it was a buffer to avoid direct contact with the immediate environment. According to the bibliographical method, fashion is unavoidably a former space development, using the body as a human dimension, and utilizing craftsmanship to initiate a tectonic. Nevertheless, shelter is definitely clear as the first-ever structure that can be closer claimed as the architecture. Thus, fashion architecture in the primordial concept must lie within the gap between the first clothing and building were ever made.

This paper is not intended to judge whether fashion or architecture was born in the first place, as it is not aimed to generate further fragmentation nor division. It is meant rather clarify the connection between the two and to contribute a better definition of fashion architecture as a hybrid. According to etymological and bibliographical comparison, the similarity of the two can be concluded as follows; 1) act of composing; 2) body-oriented object; 3) intellectual product; 4) material, and tectonic to feature characteristic; 5) transforming people. The differences are found in; 1) scale; 2) dominant element; 3) structure and pattern (Table 1).

Hence, in order to construct a fashion architecture, a mixed composition must possess hybrid criteria rather than a combination of the two nor taken one as merely an inspiration for others. The hybrid must contain dual polarities while constructing an inter-relationship between the two. Furthermore, fashion architecture must be implemented comprehensively from a micro-level in order to produce its macro feature, where integration must behold by the relationship, represented by the concept of the system. A system shall be designed to

construct a co-relation between pattern and structure, combining program and event, merging fashion with architecture as one integrated object. As the system manoeuvres the relationship, the material and tectonic can be now synchronized with its pattern and structure; thus, a transformative space must be considered to extend the capacity of the object: from personal to social, from private to public, from body-scale to the environment.

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