Conference Proceedings

THE POWER OF FASHION
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The 16th Annual Conference of the International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI) was hosted by Bunka Gakuen, Japan from 27th - 31st January 2014 and was based around the theme of ‘The Power of Fashion’, which is of particular relevance in a Japanese context. Fashion is a powerful communicative tool; a timeless and universal instrument of cultural transmission. As a visual language that we use to communicate and transmit our ideas about ourselves as individuals, as well as our culture and our society, fashion has the power to influence and helps to inform and create the institutions around which our lives are based. Nothing is untouched by fashion; the global economy, our cultural identities and our very notions of self. As such fashion, as a creative discipline, has the power to innovate and transform everything with it comes into contact with.

At the conference we debated this stimulating theme in detail, looking at how the influence of ‘fashion’ has evolved over time and how, by gaining a better understanding of its power, we can use it to enhance the quality of our lives and the improve the world we live in. We explored sub-themes such as fashion and happiness, interrogating the psychology of fashion, its effects on our individual cognition and interpersonal relations, as well as fashion as a force for technological advancement, education and transformation.

The conference attracted over 110 delegates from fashion technology institutes around the world as well as a number of representatives from the fashion industry. The distinguished keynote speakers included: Takeshi Hirouchi (Chairman, Japan Apparel Fashion, Industry Council; Chairman, Council of Industry-Academia Collaboration on Textiles and Fashion; Representative Director, Chairman and President, Onward Holdings Co., Ltd.), Susumu Kataoka (Director of Textile and Clothing Industries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry), Hiroyuki Horihata and Makiko Sekiguchi (Designers of matohu) and Prof. Zeshu Takamura (Professor of Advanced Fashion Design and Head of the Fashion Illustration Laboratory, Faculty of Fashion Science, Bunka Gakuen University Graduate School; Lecturer, Tokyo Institute of Technology). All of the keynote speakers gave insightful presentations and I would like to thank them for their valuable contributions.

Other highlights included the presentation of over 28 academic papers by faculty from member institutions, a tour of the Bunka Gakuen campus, Bunka Fashion Textile Research Laboratory and the Digital Human Research Centre. Delegates were also invited to hear from eminent guest speaker, Yohji Yamamoto, as part of the Bunka Fashion Graduate University Fashion Week Seminar.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organising committee and staff at Bunka Gakuen for all their hard work and for making us feel so welcome. My particular thanks also go to Tina Guglielmino (Deputy Head of Vocational Education & Training at RMIT Australia and former Chair of IFFTI) for her insight and guidance and to Commodore Vijay Chaturvedi (Retd.) for his untiring hard work and support as Secretary-General of IFFTI.

One of the aims of IFFTI when it was founded in 1999 was to serve as an international forum for the exchange of ideas and collaborative research and development in fashion design, technology and business and related industries. I am confident that the 2014 IFFTI conference at Bunka Gakuen has successfully met this aim. And I look forward to attending many more successful conferences in the years to come as IFFTI continues to fulfil an important role in global fashion education.
Following on from Los Angeles in 2013, it was a great honor to host the 16th Annual Conference for the International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI), which was held at Bunka Gakuen Educational Foundation in Tokyo, from January 27 until 31, 2014. This year’s set theme – “The Power of Fashion” – was chosen to inspire all delegates to think about how the power of fashion has evolved over time and the contribution it has made to build a better world for future generations.

The conference proposed contributions from experts, academics and professionals all passionate about addressing the conference theme in its full entirety. Takeshi Hirouchi, Chairman of the Japan Apparel Fashion Industry Council, the Council of Industry-Academia Collaboration on Textiles and Fashion opened the official proceedings by outlining the prosperous outlook of the fashion business in Japan. Japan’s future role to play in the global fashion and apparel industry was then addressed by Susumu Kataoka, Director of Textile and Clothing Division Manufacturing Industries Bureau Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

The following day, Japanese Designer duo Matohu, Bunka Fashion College alumni, Hiroyuki Horihata and Makiko Sekiguchi spoke about our current age of globalization and the importance of designers to search for a real originality within the aesthetics of one’s local culture. They were followed by Professor Zeshu Takamura of Bunka Gakuen University who spotlighted the current Japanese fashion which derived from ‘Japanese pop culture’.

During the course of the conference a broad range of social; economic; business; industry; technology; culture; and educational subjects were focused upon with many academic paper presentations addressing the theme and the subsequent sub-themes which resulted in stimulating discussions and exchanging of ideas.

Throughout the course of the conference delegates from IFFTI member institutions witnessed various activities and events held at Bunka Gakuen. Among those were fashion shows put on by Bunka Fashion Graduate University (BFGU) as part of the annual BFGU Fashion Week with special guest speaker and Bunka Fashion College alumni, Yohji Yamamoto.

The conference enabled all participants to make an accurate assessment of the current challenges within the field of fashion industries; education and environment from a global perspective. The information exchanged fully outlined the trends and changes of the times through meaningful discourse among IFFTI members and the presentation of research papers, which will serve as a guide to all participants.
Abstract
The aim of this study was to examine the image of fashion psychology and its relation to health among female university students in Japan. The word “fashion” has various meanings. The term “fashion psychology” has come into increasingly wide use in recent years. Now it is important that not only the perspective of psychology of clothing but also the perspectives of health and health psychology are considered. Health is not the primary purpose of life, but is rather a way to improve everyday life. If clothing is used as a means for forming impressions or for nonverbal communication, it can be a resource for enriching life.
A questionnaire consisting of free answers about respondents’ image of fashion psychology, the Health-View Questionnaire, and the Clothing Behavior Scale, as well as several questions about clothing, was administered to 93 female university students. Seventy-seven students (81%) completed the free answer questions and 16 students did not.
Responses to the free answer questions were grouped into five categories using content analysis: happiness or health through fashion (2 respondents, 3%); the relationship between fashion and psychology (24 respondents, 31%); self-awareness or impression formation with respect to fashion (28 respondents, 36%); other responses without a coherent theme (20 respondents, 26%); and responses of “no/none/nothing” (3 respondents, 4%).
The scores of the Health-View Questionnaire (HVQ) and its subscales were compared for each category. In the “attitudes toward maintaining health” subscale, the HVQ score of the “relationship between fashion and psychology” category was lower than that of the “other responses” category, and this difference was marginally significant. The “relationship between fashion and psychology” was considered to involve connections with other people, while “attitudes toward maintaining health” requires individual effort.
Next, the scores of the Clothing Behavior Scale (CBS) and its subscales were compared for each category. In the “tendency to think much of function and amenity” subscale, the CBS score of the “relationship between fashion and psychology” category was significantly higher than that of the “self-awareness or impression formation” category. The “relationship between fashion and psychology” was considered to involve the function of wearing clothes.
The free answer responses were further classified into two groups according to whether the response was framed from the perspective of the respondent or others. In “fashion consciousness” and “interest to appropriateness for social situations,” two subscales of the CBS, the scores for responses framed from the perspective of others were significantly lower than those framed from the perspective of the respondent.
Although only two respondents mentioned happiness and health through fashion and the respondents of the present study were all female university students, the present results suggest the possibility of a “health psychology of fashion.” The term “health psychology of fashion” is not yet widely used; however, this concept is considered to be related to the quality of life or well-being of individuals as well as groups. In this way, fashion is thought to act as a tool that can be used to enhance one’s life. Consequently, the concept of “health psychology of fashion” can be
treated as an applied field of health psychology. Furthermore, our findings suggested the need for education on “fashion literacy.”

1. Introduction
1-1 Aim of this study
The aim of this study was to examine the image of fashion psychology and its relation to health among female university students in Japan. Psychology related to clothing has generally been referred to as the “psychology of clothing.” This is a rather broad term and in Japan a variety of other similar names are used to describe this concept. However, as the understanding of the functions of clothing has shifted from a physiological to a psychological conceptualization, and further to a social conceptualization, the meaning of clothing itself has also expanded from the mere physiological to encapsulate psychological and social meanings. The increasing emphasis on these psychological and social meanings has resulted in differences in the impressions of words referring to coverings for the body, such as “clothing” and “dress/apparel.”

The term i-shoku-ju in Japanese refers to clothing, food, and shelter, and is made up of three Chinese characters representing these three respective meanings. Each of these words corresponds to a stage of human physiological and security needs, which are well known in association with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. This hierarchy is often represented visually as a pyramid, with the most fundamental and basic needs positioned at the bottom two layers of the pyramid. Interestingly, in Japan, “clothing” is placed before “food” in the hierarchy, although this does not necessarily mean that Japanese people give greater importance to clothing than to food.

1-2 Meaning of Fashion
The word “fashion” has always been related to the concept of “trendiness”, and is often used to refer to clothing and related social phenomena. As a result, the term “fashion psychology” has come into increasingly wide use in recent years. Fashion psychology involves approaching the phenomena related to fashion (trends, style and clothing) at the levels of the individual, interpersonal relationships, populations, and society/culture from a psychological perspective. The targets of research are not the clothing themselves, but rather the overall psychological and social functions of different aspects of fashion, such as the meaning associated with clothing, clothing behavior, and social phenomena related to clothing and fashion. Contents include life cycle and fashion (fashion at each developmental stage), lifestyle and fashion (role of fashion in lifestyle, environmental problems), self and fashion (self-consciousness and clothing behavior, clothing behavior as a social norm), fashion and interpersonal relationships (clothing and uniforms and interpersonal behavior, lifestyle awareness and behavior of elderly individuals), perception and fashion (perception of colors and shapes, physiological function, comfort of clothing, work efficiency), populations/society and fashion (social phenomena and trends and fashion, the psychology of buying), and applied fashion and quality of life (QOL) (psychology of colors, fashion and relaxation, psychology of faces and cosmetics, fashion therapy).

However, a single universal definition of fashion psychology has not been agreed upon. Therefore, we first investigated the image of fashion psychology among female university students, who typically have an interest in fashion, and also aimed to elucidate the relation of fashion psychology to health, which is thought to be a part of fashion psychology.

1-3 Perspective of psychology of clothing
In The Social Psychology of Clothing, Keiser (1997:4) defines social psychology of clothing as being “concerned with the various means people use to modify the appearance of the body, as well as the social and psychological forces that lead to, and result from, processes of managing personal appearance. Fashion/dress scholars should not simply look at clothing as concrete, visible and material items but treat it in a more abstract sense.” Keiser classifies words relating to clothing into nine categories, including “clothing,” “costume,” “dress,” and “fashion.”

In Keiser’s findings, the psychology of clothing is presented not just from a physiological-psychological perspective, but also from the viewpoints of social/cultural psychology. It is significant that the subtitle of her book was changed from “Personal Adornment” for the first edition (1986) to “Symbolic Appearances in Context” for the second edition (1997); this itself reveals how the conception of the psychology of clothing expanded over this time frame. The Social Psychology of Clothing was translated into Japanese in 1994 and has been used as a basis for a considerable amount of research in Japan.
1-4 Perspectives of health and health psychology

1-4-1 Definition of health
At the International Health Conference in New York in 1966, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced its definition of “health”: “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Under this definition, the concept of “health” expanded from the physical to the mental/psychological, and then from the mental/psychological to the social. Although it has been many decades since this definition was developed, the conceptual expansion of “health” is similar to the transformation that is occurring with the concept of “clothing.”

1-4-2 Perspectives of health psychology and views of health
The American health psychologist Matarazzo (1980) wrote that “Health psychology is the aggregate of the specific educational, scientific and professional contributions of the discipline of psychology to the promotion and maintenance of health.” He highlighted various fields of psychology for the purpose of promoting human health. Matarazzo’s definition stems more from a perspective of behavioral medicine than from social psychology, but his concept has much in common with the many other health psychology definitions.

Clothing is associated with health through its connection with the body—clothing comes in intimate contact with the body and acts as the body’s interface with the outside world, literally serving as a “second skin.” Consequently, views of health—or frameworks for understanding and evaluating the phenomenon of health itself—can be considered to be associated with views about clothing through views about the body.

1-4-3 Health promotion
In 1986, exactly 20 years after the WHO announced its definition of health, the “Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion” was announced at the First International Conference on Health Promotion at Ottawa. The charter stated that “[h]ealth promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. [...] Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy life-styles to well-being” (WHO 1986).

The most important concept here is the idea that health is not the primary purpose of life, but is rather a way to improve everyday life. When people wear clothing to protect the body against heat or cold, clothing serves a specific purpose. However, if clothing is used as a means for forming impressions or for nonverbal communication, it can be a resource for enriching life.

The charter specifies eight prerequisites for health: peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity. Shelter and food are both included, but clothing—the other component of i-shoku-ju—is absent. The reason is probably that clothing is not generally considered to have a substantial direct impact on health.

2. Methods

2-1 Subjects
The subjects of the present study were 93 female university students, as they are typically considered to be interested in fashion. Subjects’ majors were Fashion Science, Art and Design, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. Consent was obtained from all subjects after explaining the purpose of the study orally.

2-2 Questionnaire
A questionnaire consisting of free answers about respondents’ image of fashion psychology, the Health-View Questionnaire (HVQ), and the Clothing Behavior Scale (CBS), as well as several questions about clothing, was developed for the present study.

With regard to the question about respondents’ “image of fashion psychology,” respondents were asked to give free descriptions of their image of fashion psychology. Responses to the free answer questions about the “image of fashion psychology” were grouped into categories using content analysis. The main methods of content analysis were encoding and categorization. Categorization was then performed based on this encoded content.

The HVQ, which was developed by Sugita (1999), involves a total of 55 items rated on a scale of five levels, from “I definitely don’t think so” (1) to “I very much think so” (5). The HVQ is composed of five subscales yielded by factor analysis: 1) harmony with others; 2) personal and social prevention; 3) “various values in health” and “mental and physical function”; 4) attitudes toward maintaining health; and 5) environment as a basis of health. “Harmony with others” is composed of 11 items, such as “fulfillment,” “desire,” “meaning,” and “mental stability.” “Personal and social prevention” is made up of 10 items, including “health insurance system,” “social security system,” “disease prevention,”
and “stress prevention.” “Various values in health” and “mental and physical function” involve 12 items, including “dynamic equilibrium,” “physical aspects of health,” “health diversity,” “psychosomatic elements,” and “natural healing power.” “Attitudes toward maintaining health” comprises 15 items, such as “understanding illness for growth,” “understanding illness as a turning point,” “foundation for daily life,” “basic lifestyle,” “mind-body balance,” and “nutrition.” Finally, “environment as a basis of health” involves 7 items, including “natural environment,” “climate,” “local environment,” and “living environment.” Furthermore, since the subjects in the present survey were young women, we added three additional items to the measurement: “beauty,” “clothing” (including hairstyling, makeup, and accessories), and “appreciation of food.” These three items were not included in the subscales; they were used only in the overall aggregate. Thus, the HVQ was ultimately implemented with 58 items.

The CBS, which was developed by Nagano (1994), involves 20 items rated on a scale of seven levels, from “totally inapplicable” (1) to “fits very well” (7). This scale is composed of four subscales yielded by factor analysis: 1) fashion consciousness; 2) tendency to think much of function and amenity; 3) interest in appropriateness for social situations; and 4) practicing economy. The “fashion consciousness” subscale refers to sensitivity relating to the popularity or fashionableness of clothing, and is made up of five items, including “good awareness of current fashions,” “always trying to wear the latest fashions,” and “keenly reading fashion magazines.” The “tendency to think much of function and amenity” subscale relates to the functionality and comfort of clothing and involves five items, such as “giving more importance to functionality than appearance when selecting clothes” and “choosing plain clothes that absorb moisture well.” The “interest in appropriateness for social situations” subscale relates to the social suitability of clothing and involves five elements, including “thinking that it is necessary to dress for the occasion” and “dressing appropriately according to the time and place.” The “practicing economy” subscale relates to the economics of clothing and is composed of five items, including “thinking that expensive clothes are unnecessary,” “choosing high-quality clothing even if the price is quite high” (and the opposite item on the scale), and “willingness to buy clothes that are not very desirable if they are inexpensive.”

The questions relating to clothing included the following: 1) Interest in clothing (including hairstyling, makeup, and accessories) was measured on a scale of 1 (weak) to 5 (strong); 2) As criteria for choosing clothing or accessories, subjects were asked to select one of two options (in this case the preferred color, or color that suits oneself); 3) Most important factors when choosing clothes (design and color or comfort and functionality); 4) Tendency in criteria for choosing clothes (matching one’s preference for the size or style of clothes, or choosing clothes that suit one’s physique with respect to size or style).

2-3 Procedure
A questionnaire was administered during university classes by group investigation method between January and May 2010. Of the 93 respondents, 77 (83%) students (average age, 19.8 (SD=1.45) years) completed the free answer question and 16 did not. Incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analyses.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science 14.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL).

3. Results
Responses to the free answer question about the “image of fashion psychology” were grouped into five categories using content analysis. Keywords related to respondents’ image of fashion psychology were extracted from each of the answers, and from these meanings the content was encoded. The first category included responses referring to happiness or health through fashion (2 respondents, 3%), such as “What kind of clothing will make me happy?” and “I’d like to live more healthily and happily by knowing myself through fashion.”

The second category included responses that clearly referred to the relationship between fashion and psychology (24 respondents, 31%), such as “What kind of clothing influences the human mind?” and “I’d like to live more healthily and happily by knowing myself through fashion.”

The third category included responses that clearly referred to the relationship between fashion and psychology (24 respondents, 31%), such as “What kind of clothing influences the human mind?” and responses mentioning an interaction between fashion and psychology.

The fourth category included responses referring to self-awareness or impression formation with respect to fashion (28 respondents, 36%), such as self-expression, the fact that one’s first impression is influenced by clothing, and changes in impression among others depending on clothing.

The fourth category included other responses without a coherent theme (20 respondents, 26%), such as the meaning of and reason for wearing clothes, the relationship between humans and fashion, personal colors and fashion colors, interpersonal relationships, and similarities between fashion psychology and clothing sociology.

The fifth category included responses of “no/none/nothing” (3 respondents, 4%). Sixteen respondents did not respond to the free answer question (N.A.).

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The scores of the HVQ and its subscales were compared for each category of the image of fashion psychology using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). After excluding the first (happiness or health through fashion) and fifth (nothing) categories as the number of responses in these categories was low, there was no statistically significant main effect in the total score of the HVQ and its subscales among the other three categories. A sub-test (multiple comparison test) for confirmation showed that the score of the “relationship between fashion and psychology” category was lower than that of the “other responses” category, and this difference was marginally significant ($p<.10$) in the “attitudes toward maintaining health” subscale (Fig. 1). The “relationship between fashion and psychology” was considered to involve connections with other people, while “attitudes toward maintaining health” requires individual effort. In the other subscales, there were no statistically significant differences among the three categories.

Next, the scores of each subscale of the CBS were compared for each category of image of fashion psychology using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was no statistically significant main effect in the subscale of the CBS among the other three categories. A sub-test (multiple comparison test) for confirmation showed that the score of the “relationship between fashion and psychology” category was significantly higher than that of “self-awareness or impression formation” ($p<.05$) in the “tendency to think much of function and amenity” subscale (Fig. 2). The “relationship between fashion and psychology” was considered to involve the function (i.e., comfort) of wearing clothes, while “self-awareness or impression formation” emphasizes appearance rather than function. In the other subscales, there were no statistically significant differences among the three categories.

The free answer responses were further classified into two groups according to whether the response was framed from the perspective of the respondent ($n=20$) or others ($n=37$). The other 20 answers could not be categorized into one of these two classes. The scores for responses framed from the perspective of others were significantly lower than the scores for responses framed from the
For the other questions relating to clothing, a cross tabulation was created according to the category of the image of fashion psychology, and analysis was performed. Chi-square test revealed a marginal significance for only one question based on the two categories that represent tendencies when choosing clothes (matching clothes to one’s preference, or choosing clothes that suit one’s physique) and the category of the image of fashion psychology. (Chi-square test identified a marginally significant association; $\chi^2(2) = 4.9968, p <.10$.) In the categories “relationship between fashion and psychology” and “self-awareness or impression formation,” the proportion of respondents who chose clothing to suit their physique was four times greater than the number of respondents who matched clothes to their preferences. On the other hand, in the “other responses” category, there was virtually no difference in respondents’ image of fashion psychology as compared to the other categories. Respondents who chose clothes to suit their physiques were generally more numerous than those who matched clothes to their preferences, but the respondents who considered the psychological effects of clothing or utilized fashion for impression formation tended to think of clothing not simply as something to wear, but also as a means for other purposes, such as social communication.

4. General Discussion

Although only two respondents mentioned happiness and health through fashion and the subjects of this study were all female university students, the present results suggest the possibility of a “health psychology of fashion.” This term does not have an agreed-upon definition, but it is considered to refer to the field within fashion psychology that aims to improve the QOL and well-being of individuals and populations, encompassing the following contents within fashion psychology: relationships between identity and body image and clothing in the area of self and fashion; promotion of interpersonal relationships and relationships between the behavior of going out and health behavior among elderly individuals in the area of fashion and interpersonal relationships; activation of emotions and assessment of comfort of clothing in the area of perception and fashion; and the entire area of fashion and QOL. This field may also be considered to be an applied field of health psychology related to the QOL and well-being of individuals and populations that focuses on fashion as a method of aiming for a better and psychologically more wholesome life and contributes to mental and physical health. For this reason, counseling techniques (listening, acceptance, sympathy) may be used in approaches toward individuals. In this way, fashion is seen as a tool that can be used to enhance one’s emotions, interpersonal relationships and, by extension, life in general.

Many studies on clothing and fashion have identified relationships with health, happiness, and well-being (Noguchi and Hayashi, 2009; Bill, 2009; Tsuruki, Camara and Sorrells, 2012; Klein, 2008). However, because “happiness” and “feelings of happiness” may vary in depth—ranging, for example, from the sensation one feels when eating good food to an existential sensation that one feels when reflecting on one’s life—it is important to recognize these differences.
It is also important to educate young people and the elderly about the psychological and social aspects of clothing because, as Erikson (1959) points out, the developmental task during adolescence is identity achievement or identity diffusion. González and Bovone (2012) similarly proposed the theme of identity through fashion. Fashion may be useful in establishing identity, but at the same time it can also serve to conceal inferiority complexes. Fashion education should not be merely about dressing up and being fashionable, but rather about dressing in a way that fits and suits oneself. Noguchi and Hayashi (2009) reported that dressing stylishly helped to motivate elderly people to go out more frequently. In this way, fashion can also be used to promote health and QOL. Loschek (2009: 133) quotes an interesting comment from the Japanese fashion designer Yohji Yamamoto: “When fashion is clothes, it is expendable. But when fashion is a form helping us to understand everyday life, it is essential.” Therefore, “fashion literacy education” might be a more appropriate expression than “fashion education” for what is needed—in other words, what is really needed is awareness of the psychological and sociological implications of fashion. As described above, one of the eight prerequisites for health is income. Of course, it is not necessarily the cases that people who are economically well off are also fashionable, but whether a particular person dresses stylishly is undoubtedly influenced by his or her economic situation. It is certainly possible, with some creativity, to dress stylishly even with inexpensive clothing, but this would be pushing the limits of fashion’s power. The economic aspect of the CBS is also tied to sustainable fashion.

5. Conclusion

By conducting a survey on the image of fashion psychology, we identified attitudes toward “health” and “happiness.” Health is associated with fashion through the body and with happiness through the mind. In this way, we demonstrated the possibility of a “health psychology of fashion.” Furthermore, our findings suggested the need for education on “fashion literacy.”

References


Nirvana* through Fashion

* Nirvana- a state of perfect peace and happiness

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Abstract
Although Happiness means different things to different people, the overall experience is the same and that is of elevated self-esteem and greater optimism. In one word it is a feeling of “well-being”, fairly different from pleasure attainment which is generally short-lived and more often laced with a sense of guilt. Aristotle said

“Happiness is so important; it transcends all the worldly considerations”

As we set out to examine the common space between Fashion and Happiness, they almost never seem to overlap, existing in seemingly isolated bubbles. Fashion bubble is at its brink, bursting out with stories of unethical means, environmental hazards, ill-fitting merchandize, deadstocks and overconsumption. It is not as if the fashion makers and the fashionistas do not realize the importance of happiness, on the contrary, all profound fashion experiences be it selling or buying are laden with deep satisfaction and improved sales as much as the exclamatory sighs of joy and wonder.

In this fleeting life and shortest time experiences, fashion has to play a role larger than its credited for: to give us all that we are seeking from ourselves and redeem us of the burdens of desire and to reveal to us our happy and wise selves. In short, Fashion has to be a response to the real world. It should offer us the ability to interact with the prevailing environment and be in the present (here now).

Research shows that lasting happiness comes from a sense of purpose and meaning and the consumer today is seeking all this and more from things luxe and fashionable. Just as industrialization and factory made brought in its wake a high regard for handcrafted, so does digitization bring with it a craving for emotional empathy and yearning for lasting happiness. Consumer aspirations from fashion have gone beyond “product quality” to “product experience”. A few steps more and we look for “nirvana” through fashion.

Just like any other creative act, Fashion may be viewed passively as a reflection/gratification or actively as a change agent. The gap between ourselves and our fashion has to be bridged. It has to absorb all change and adapt to new influences and explore deeper potential.

In this paper, I propose to explore fashion as a change agent with a decisive focus on raising the “Happiness Quotient” of the Fashion maker and the buyer by raising the awareness on issues relating not only to beauty and aesthetics but social, spiritual and environmental.

The paper intends to present a new formula of making fashion that inspires lasting happiness.

Introduction
Way back in 1999, Tere Agins released her book called “The End of Fashion.” It was a story from Balenciaga to Banana republic, from class to mass, from art to commodity, from elitism to democratization of fashion and a triumph of “marketing”. The elitist exclusive fashion had ended and mass fashion of “brands” had taken over. The focus was on providing carefully profiled masses with what they asked for and in a very organized manner. Globalization was truly visible as the elites and the masses of countries across the globe shared their idea of fashion through common brands and labels. Even developing economies like India had begun organizing domestic retail envisioning the free trade and uncertain exports in the near future.

Ever since, “Fashion” became the most visual barometer of social change, a sort of sign system. Fashion trends revealed to us the zeitgeist (the preferences of the times) in a scale much larger than before. Martin (2010, pg 14) defines a trend as the direction in which something (and that something

Keywords
Multidimensional
Stimulation
Story
Emotional Quotient
Reason and Value
Social and Capital
Inclusiveness

THE POWER OF FASHION
can be anything) tends to move which has consequential impact on culture, society or business sector through which it moves. A decade or so later, customers in the west, look hugely dissatisfied with the present global ecological problems, economic uncertainty, wars and conflicts and very fast technological changes. Around us, we see constant revival of styles, craving for nostalgia, and seeking of comfort we once knew. Everyday stories of overconsumption, unethical means and exploitation of labour at production sweatshops in Asia, only further deteriorates the happiness quotient of the shopper, burdening their minds with a sense of shame and guilt. The buying values of a customer have thus been shifting from buys that are merely functional and beautiful to those that are also emotionally engaging, environmentally safe, creating positive social impact with a sense of purpose and meaning.

The massive turnaround is not just due to the fact that number crunching, contract making and programming activities can be outsourced to cheaper labor markets, but also because surrounded as we are by function and functional products, people want things with greater meaning and creativity. (David Shah, 012, Textile View). Luxury brands that have done best in recession are the ones with the product built on craft. “It has gone beyond questioning what is in our food. People want transparency about manufacturing of other products. They want to know that their clothes tell a good story.” (UK Elle). Today’s fashionista feels alive by abiding by the rules and being engulfed in the firing intensity of the social game by being highly connected rather than disconnected. Up till now, it has not been an exaggeration to say “the one who has the most things when he dies wins” but, the power of consumption is being questioned and there is change in attitude and way of life. The suitable expression for the future could be “The one with most insight when he dies wins” (David Shah, 010 Textile View).

In short, the customer wants to be happy and wise.

If we want to build a new system of consuming which not only enhances self esteem, expresses identity, displays status and sexuality but most importantly also creates happiness, it can only be done by offering ourselves the ability to “interact with the prevailing environment” and be in the present now.” The focus is more on materialistic values... It should be about giving with humble involvement and commitment to be the change you want to see in the world” says Jeroninio Almeida of The Joy of Giving Movement. In these times, Fashion has to play a role larger than ever, that of a change agent, a tool (not a barometer) created by synergy of designers, manufacturers, retailers and fashion media with a decisive focus on issues relating not only to beauty and aesthetics but social, environmental and spiritual.

Objectives and Methods

This strong synergy between ethical fashion and an aware buyer entices me to firstly explore the methods being practiced in utilizing ‘fashion’ as a tool for social change and secondly understand the ‘new elements of design’ in socio cultural context in creating exemplary fashion business, with a larger objective of creating perfect happiness in current scenario. Clearly, my field of study pertains to India where I see most potential, many stories, and a high emotional ground ready to be explored and a growing awareness amongst the middle and upper middle class about both social and environmental concerns while being rooted into conservative Indian culture. I have drawn from case studies of two successful and sustainable fashion brands in India namely Fabindia and Anokhi that have made a remarkable impact to the artisan and craft community of the country while engaging in profitable business both in India and overseas. These case studies have been built based on literature reviews, articles, blogs and relevant website search and telephonic interviews with designers and stakeholders. I have also tried to fortify my findings with my own experience of working with rural Lambani artisans (embroiders) of Hampi cluster, in Karnataka in creating sustainable livelihoods for the beneficiaries below poverty level, under SGSY scheme of the Govt. of India. I worked as a Design Consultant for this project for 2 yrs (2006-2008) and my role was to organize design guidance and training for the Lambani artisans and enable them to adapt their skills to contemporary markets.

Literature Review

A literature review has helped set a background to understand the context and connect. The search led to many articles, books, journals, interviews and blogs mostly all in favor of the idea of sustainability from environmental concern than social context and least from socio cultural. Happiness has not been on the agenda in the fashion business yet as everyone seems to think that a lot will have to be “given up” to get the relief. Relief and Security, warming and warning are the buzzwords in the western media. Economies of scale in the fashion business are so large that the word “Happiness” is believed to be at the most introduced superficially by a smiley or advertising campaign than actually bring it about. However, there are some fashion brands in the west that have attempted to align their strategies to suit the current needs of sustainability in fashion for example. Monsoon, a UK based brand sources at least
a part of its merchandise from ethical sources, has set up a trust that works with disadvantaged communities in Asia, and **People tree**, a high end, fair trade fashion brand that works with rural/small scale communities in Asia and Africa, providing them with technical assistance and social support creating much happiness both for the maker and the end user. People Tree has evolved relevant strategy of design “we select from fashion forecasters, the trends that most suit the hand skills of our partners which is the other way round from the norms” says Tracy Mulligan, Head of Design People Tree.

My focus has been on the literature that presents the cases relevant to socio cultural context (with a sense of preserving cultures) and I believe that Happiness is intrinsically connected here with the way we “live and give” which is embedded in the culture we belong and not the current western priority of price, quantity and time.

Research states that consumers are most interested in a pattern change in current industrial processes. Consequently, consumers seek new ways of purchasing products towards which they feel attachment because of its quality and value (Niinimaki 2011).

“There is a need for redefinition of Fashion. Fashion has been hijacked by commodity-based fast fashion with priced product lacking in emotional durability. It can be a way of exploring beautiful things so that we can live the way we want to live (Dilys Williams: pg.65, Sustainable Fashion Handbook).

Two of the important strategies of the Ted's (Textile Environment Design Project) 10 sustainable design strategies is (1) **Design for Ethical Production** – Design that utilizes and invests in traditional craft skills, both locally and globally. It promotes ethical production and promotes and values workers’ rights, and sources fair trade materials. It includes designers acting as facilitators for sustainable and social enterprises in traditional craft communities. (2) **Design Activism** - To encourage designers to leave behind the focus on ‘the product’ and work creatively with the consumers and society at large. In doing so, designers become ‘social innovators’, using their design skills to meet social needs (Rebecca Earley: pg.87, Sustainable Fashion Handbook).

We have to find new ways of communicating, new ways of marketing and new ways of telling the story and the story must be true and transparent. Design involves responsibility. Designers today cannot only be designers; they have to be something of a philosopher. A designer has to convey a message that is true and authentic. These efforts need the whole company, a whole supply chain and engaged customers (Peter Waeber: pg.64, Sustainable Fashion Handbook).

**Fashion as a Change Agent**

**Fashion is not a brand but a point of view.**

Fashion reflects the prevailing flavor and fervor with élan. It is available to every strata of society, in its many avatars, simultaneously omnipresent in unbelievable forms in different societies across the globe. This Godlike quality of Fashion is more a virtue than a sin. It is more real than virtual. In recent times, this phenomenon called fashion has given us no time to introspect. Design processes have been cut short by fast fashion; design has become less inventive and more innovative.

Links between designers and makers of fashion have been severed and we have been focusing on short-lived, homogenized products. Clothes that communicate who we really are, do not display the resources and skills employed in their making. There is need to design a new model for Fashion system that is lively, creative, connected, democratic, participatory and inclusive as compared to the current representation that is abstract and remote with no connection between fashion and socio ecological system that supports it.

The new model for design process has to be based on associating directly with the customer and offering every stage at their altar revealing possibilities beyond beauty and pleasure into wisdom and care. The new process has to be driven by the people soaked in the concept of arts and culture as the very way of living and such an idea has to be accepted and adopted by larger players in the field.

The difficulty that the fashion industry faces is that in order to supply a future sustainable, ethical consumer is to alter its philosophy and multiple business models while remaining profitable. The answer lies in adapting to the change in the current psyche that yearns for emotional empathy and deeper content.

In a country like India, where progress has been projected as abandoning past skills and adopting western models, modernization devalues tradition, encouraging artists and craftspeople to look for other sources of employment. Increasing urbanization erodes traditional practices. There is no incentive for the next generation to perpetuate local arts, lifestyle and traditions. Crafts are perceived as more of a tourist attraction than a potential economic force. However, two successful homegrown fashion brands of India namely **Anokhi** and **Fabindia** have proven it otherwise. Known for their sustainable design practices and their socio cultural impact they have mastered the art of making business sense out of this opportunity. These brands are in high demand in domestic as well as international market for their fashion product that utilizes traditional craft skills. They train and employ...
artisans that once lived below poverty levels, have revived traditional craft skills and built for-profit organizations that establish a link between rural artisans and urban markets. Their sustainable design led strategies and practices have inspired me and enabled me to develop a four pronged model of successful and happy fashion.

**Design is not a point of view but a strategy.**

New design process must fulfill one criterion: it should not only be about a finished product in relation with the customer but about each step of the process in direct relation with the customer and the maker.

**I. Anokhi**

**Background**

Anokhi is renowned amongst its buyers for its prints, unique design sense, a range of colors and quality of product. For more than 30 yrs, Anokhi’s ideals have been those of conservation and development through design training marketing and project funding. The company is known for its good business practices and revival of traditional textile craft of handblock.

When Anokhi started, craft of handblock was dying in the region of Rajasthan due to increased prices of cotton, skill that had not discovered markets other than rural, finished product had neither finesse nor design suitable to urban needs. Anokhi, an enterprise by Faith Singh and John Singh focused primarily on reviving Rajasthan’s traditional techniques hand block printing that had lost local relevance, while simultaneously creating products for western audiences from local craft tradition. In the early years, Anokhi mainly exported to UK and slowly forayed into domestic retail with its first Anokhi store opening in Jaipur in 1984. Today Anokhi has stores in 5 states of the country besides exports. In addition to producing block printed textiles, Anokhi is known for its socially viable business practices. The brand Anokhi stands for generating livelhoods by providing sustained orders to local artisans and training them through workshops. Anokhi has created awareness to environmental issues by following sustainable practices by revival of age old techniques of vegetable dyeing and handblock printing. Anokhi has also opened a museum of hand block in Amber, near Jaipur. The museum communicates the work of past three decades, promoting and valuing the skill of craftspeople while archiving their story of creativity for posterity.

**Anokhi Design Philosophy**

At the heart of Anokhi design practice is the content of their product and not the face value. “Creating interface between craft and the market and providing for contemporary tastes from traditional craft base has till date remained our ambition” explains Pritam Singh, MD, Registhan Pvt. Ltd., the company that owns brand Anokhi. The design team of Anokhi is constantly experimenting and innovating, with modern colors and patterns to see how it can be applied to the craft to make it viable for modern urban markets while retaining its core traditional identity both in technique and material. Collections are designed to showcase specific and varied skills and traditional practices in innovative and appealing ways to include and sustain diverse craftspeople with diverse skills working from their own environments.

**Anokhi Business Strategy**

Ever since Anokhi, hundreds of such businesses of handblock have mushroomed in the province. Anokhi studios for design have served as design resource to many of them. Ex. Soma, works with families of block printers and provides sustainable incomes to these artisans. Kilol another brand that is built with the passion to combine block printed traditions of Rajasthan with textiles from other states brought about cultural diversity in traditional design. The ideals of Anokhi have been to see the region of rural Rajasthan flourish by virtue of its craft skills despite poor natural resources. Anokhi has simultaneously laid emphasis on needs of urban markets in order to generate steady demand and continuous orders to artisans. At the core of the strategy is the commitment to support the needs and aspirations of craftspeople using design and marketing tools in order to create a steady demand. Business in Anokhi is built to fulfill a socio cultural need where design and marketing are the tools and prosperity is a byproduct. The result of this effort has fruited into reinforced valuation of heritage craft skills thereby creating revival of craft culture, employment generation in the same area/region and no migration of artisans to cities in search of employment, the affirmation of cultural diversity, respect for cross community productivity, enhanced revenue, increased commercial activity and impact on local inbound tourism.

**Learning**

1. **Sustainable Development** - A consistent investment in concerns other than isolated economic gains, showing flexibility in aspirations that include factors such as ecology, culture and social upliftment at large, fosters growth and a sense of wellbeing. The key to sustainable development lies in the attitude of inclusivity. Tools for this development may be: buying from small village communities and artisans, skill upgradation and training of communities, using environment safe methods, reviving heritage techniques and crafts, actively scouting for newer markets, creating market links.
2. Social Inclusivity - The stable convivial relationship between the industry and its workforce supports quality. This relationship is fostered with positivity and happiness when workers feel valued, their differences are celebrated, basic needs are met and they can live in dignity. Social inclusivity goes hand in hand with the sustainability. Inclusivity means looking after the needs of the workers such as, investing in developing basic amenities that are lacking ex. infrastructure, schools, medical insurance, transport facility and safe drinking water. Applauding and rewarding their work, providing them with sustained orders and educating them on contemporary market needs is also a way of being inclusive and concerned.

3. Cultural conservation - It is from our culture that we learn to integrate social resources and factors promoting prosperity and happiness. In this technology driven world, we often lose our sense of belonging and feel a lack of emotional empathy. The virtual world created to satisfy our wants does not fill our emotional void. Culture comes in handy here as we feel a sense of wellbeing in staying connected and rooted in our heritage while stepping into future. Fashion that we wear next to our skin has a lot to contribute here. ‘Heritage’ is a resource. It is a unique opportunity/tool to build a bridge between past, present and future and therefore a great happiness mantra. Cultural and creative industries are best built imaginatively and around skill and skilled people; not the other way round.

Buzzwords for any prosperous business namely growth, quality and prosperity are met by investing in these elements of change. The three lucky clovers of the model of ‘happiness in fashion’ are to promote sustainable development, social inclusiveness and cultural conservation.

II. Fabindia

Background

Fabindia is a highly successful social enterprise started by John Bissell more than 50 yrs back in a quest to showcase Indian craft and handloom heritage to the world while simultaneously provide livelihoods to the rural artisans. The brand has a sales turnover of about 300 crores (2010-2011) and average growth in sales of about 35%, gross margin of 40% and 144 stores in 39 cities in India. The company currently sources from about 35,000 artisans (printers, weavers and woodblock carvers) in most states in India. Fabindia products are ‘craftmark’ certified which means that their processes and working conditions of the artisans are verified by the govt. authorities. Fabindia is known to invest in training and development of its suppliers. Fabindia employs more than 80,000 rural artisans. It stresses on inclusion of women weavers aiding in women empowerment. Exclusive suppliers and employees of Fabindia have more than 35% stake in the company.

Fabindia Design Philosophy

The Fabindia design team works with the artisans collaboratively to plan fabrics, color palettes and share inspiration. Design and production teams visit the artisans regularly to know their capabilities and understand their problems. The orders (designs) are planned based on the capability of the artisan groups. Store managers and staff continuously give feedback about customer preferences to the design team. Adaptation from Indian styles and patterns are preferred.

Fabindia Business Strategy

Fabindia trains its employees to understand the importance of being friendly business model. Fabindia’s relentless focus on effective direct sourcing from craftspeople forms the core of its business model. Its strategy is to procure products directly from rural weavers and also making them direct shareholders in Fabindia: “Most of the artisans we work with have never known any income source in their lives other than a daily or per piece wage. It is a huge leap for them to own shares in a company” says Smita Mankad, MD Fabindia. It is a social partnership based procurement process company. In this rural suppliers model there are two levels of suppliers; national and regional based. Though we already have cooperatives in the country, Fabindia model scores over them because “cooperatives do well in aggregating small producers, in making the whole more than the sum of all but they do not allow individual ownership of property, discouraging entrepreneurship and better production and therefore do little to alleviate poverty” says Bissell. Fabindia has set up 17 supplier region companies (SRC) for the purpose of aggregating its artisan suppliers and making them partners in the company. The SRC’s are based in different craft rich regions of India. SRC’s create value for member artisans in three ways; give craftspeople sustainable jobs, an investment opportunity and appreciation in the value of their shares. The SRC’s have assured orders from Fabindia. Fabindia has a lot of goodwill in rural areas. Fabindia helps in arranging micro finance to these artisans. Trust rather than agreement is driving force for managing supply chain process.

Learning

4. Inclusive Capitalism - “A lot of poverty in the rural areas is because of the fact that there are very few ways for people to own assets or property. There are not many divisible assets to own” says Bissell. When a company does well, its workers (not just the top management) should get their share from this wealth. Rewarding the workers for their role in creating profits by paying them a
share of the same fosters increased happiness, efficiency, motivation and dignity that in turn work towards greater wealth creation. Broad based profit sharing could mean stock options, investing in worker cooperatives, buying medical insurance for supplier artisans or offer micro level finance/loans.

The fourth lucky clover of the model of ‘fashion for happiness’ is about financial partnering with the maker-the capital inclusiveness.

III. Cluster Development Initiative (SGSY Scheme)

I served as the IDC (Internal Design Consultant) for the Cluster Development initiative from 2006 to 2008. In this period, as a part of the core facilitator of the project, I studied the lifestyle of Lambani artisans of Hampi cluster and was responsible for developing, designing and documenting the SHG (self help group) skill upgradation, design development and product diversification programs for about 1802 artisans and about 198 SHG. The stagewise upgradation strategy devised was as follows. A diagnostic study was conducted in Hampi to gain an understanding of design potential and the producers.

I. Baseline survey was conducted to identify 2000 beneficiaries in lambani embroidery and banana fiber craft. Motivational camps for mobilizing beneficiaries were conducted in eight villages covering 421 beneficiaries.

II. SHG(self help group) development and skill assessment- Initially product development workshops were held and later SHG formation was found to be an important requirement.

III. Design Development and skill upgradation- With the formation of SHGs, a workshop model was developed for sustainability covering prototypes/new designs development, costing and production cycles separately. While design workshops focused on developing new designs, costing and production workshops gave the SHGs decision making power on wages rates and the responsibility of delivering quality within a timeline. This approach built capacity among the SHGs to plan and organize production in a systematic way. 24 workshops were conducted covering 642 beneficiaries.

IV. Student–Artisan workshops added to the two way learning process and substantial sensitization of the students to the indigenous craft resource and to the artisan about urban taste and market requirements.

V. Production Viability of the relevant products developed during workshops was studied. Dry runs of sample production and assessing the market potential.

VI. Finding local resources and linkages for procurement of raw material involved easy and cheap resources as well as experimenting with available resource of handloom ikal and khadi materials and come up with relevant designs. Hand Loom cluster needed to be added to support Lambani craft. Bellary district already has handloom centers for both silk and cotton.

VII. Study of design and market viability through “im” store and collating sales data and feedback from the customer and store manager.

VIII. Planning technological thrust - lambani artisans were given training in tailoring; to this end 14 sewing machines were procured and installed. Tailoring programs were conducted to stitch soft furnishings, accessories and garments.

IX. Design Strategy included two pronged approach in workshop model

- Designer- artisan workshops
- Student- artisan workshops

Methods included
- Working with themes that enabled limiting colour and designs in each range.
- Using contemporary indian vocabulary
- Expanding product categories and range to enable wider customer base. New categories
- inproducts included easily marketable accessories like keychains, scarves and stoles, bags, embroidered fabric jewellery and most importantly garments.
- Creating products with higher perceived value by using richer raw material (ex. Silk).
- Reducing the amount of craftsmanship per pc. to increase the production and lowering cost price per pc.
- Using better finishing techniques for expensive, well finished look.
- Using raw material available in close- by clusters and creating design synergy.
- Cross cultural design: Using design ideas from across the world to enhance international appeal. We organized workshops of lambani artisans with students from Swiss Textile College, Switzerland who were on an exchange program with NIFT at that time. We developed “lambani biscornu,” the French pincushion design successfully adapted to create embroidered hangings and throw cushions.
- Creating an identifiable insignia, in this case a “hampi doll” (designed by myself) using embroidery technique by lambani artisans.
On culmination of this tremendous experience of grassroots intervention in craft design and having played a key role in this endeavor has given me insights into ethical, sustainable craft design and value for real stories in selling of a product.

Learning

**Design for Happiness** - For designers/design students to play an active role of a change agent, continuously developing new ways of creating happiness, through designs that generate a sense of well being, the new elements of design have to

- **Tell a Story** - Design for happiness is about fundamental attitude of creating bridges between social concerns and urban markets through the design process. This can be achieved by actively scouting for opportunities of social/socio-cultural upliftment offering design potential and working towards skill upgradation, training, design marketing and planning technological thrust for the communities in a sense of preparing them for a competitive market readiness.

- **Create Multidimensional Stimulation** - The focus has to shift beyond product into appreciating people, resources and heritage of a community. Protect, conserve and further art, culture and craft traditions of a region. Fashion has to offer experiences that are authentic and spirit uplifting.

- **Have Emotional Quotient** - Need to integrate the idea of ‘We’ not ‘I’ as we move into the arena of relationships. Fashion has to lead from across cultures (cross-cultural design) and why not if we all are searching for ‘happiness’ after all.

- **Build on Reason and Value** - ‘Responsible’ not ‘fast fashion’. Create fashion that is not ‘in’ or ‘out’ but chooses ‘continuity’ over ‘change’ where clothing is a vehicle for social, cultural and environmental issues and give sufficient reason for buying, where a consumer feels partnered in a larger scheme of creating happiness. ex. Poverty alleviation, revival of culture, promotion of arts etc.

There is need to appreciate culture, craftsmanship and artistry with a sense of respect and revalue handmade. These new elements of design need to be integrated and nurtured in our fashion school curricula generously.

Conclusion

‘**True Happiness is… not attained through self gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose**’ - Helen Keller

Fashion Industry has prospered in the wake of modernization, information technology and greater exchange of ideas yet its ideals have remained isolated and individualistic. It continues to work in stifling ways to generate wealth, not accepting the larger social and environmental factors and undermining its own insurmountable potential to generate happiness while making profits.

To relieve itself of this myopic view, the tools should obviously be ‘inclusive’ not ‘exclusive’ and attitude more uplifting and generous. The focus has to be on relationships that bring prosperity at both the ends. “More inclusive means more sustainable. Companies, particularly large ones must adopt business practices that ensure that everyone-stakeholders and not just shareholders derive benefits from the business.”We once thought” writes Harvard’s Michael Porter “that if business just increases its profit, what’s good for the business is then good for society…..we need to think differently, what’s good for society is good for the business.” (Towards a more inclusive capitalism: Henry Jackson Initiative; pg 12). This kind of growth is envisioned as long lasting. Examples and case studies in this paper have pinpointed to fashion brands, the new strategy for developing businesses by nurturing relationship with ecology, conserving cultures and giving back to society rather than isolate and destroy the very attributes that support it. To build business around socio-cultural opportunities or enhance the existing fashion business by adopting a socio-cultural need and turn their business into a happy win-win model. Designers have new role to play in this renaissance of happiness, by developing products or designing profound fashion experiences that tell a story, offer stimulation beyond material into spiritual that titillates emotion and gives a reason to buy.

The suggested ‘four clover’ model of ‘fashion for happiness’ with its key elements of sustainable development, social inclusiveness, cultural conservation and inclusive capitalism generates the business attitude that promises to deliver the ultimate happiness and creates the safety net for all. Profitability through social impact is the new win-win mantra that drives both happiness and a positive change, the ultimate **nirvana through fashion** by simply plugging the causes of social disparity, offering true value in a product, connecting back to the culture we belong and above all giving us the reason and a worthy purpose to go on.
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Abstract

Purpose Accessories are no longer viewed as add-ons. Fashion accessories come in a variety of product types. Socks are one such accessory that people are not so particular or conscious about. There is led awareness about quality or brand of socks. Consumers do not put much time or effort in choosing a pair of socks. Socks are very useful for absorbing the sweat produced by the feet. Health socks are also called diabetic socks or compression socks which help to improve blood circulation, regulate the moisture levels of the foot and are antibacterial. Wearing health socks is a relatively cost effective way of protecting the feet. The health socks are made of bamboo yarn and have the qualities which help relieve foot pain for diabetes patients or blood circulation problems in feet. Bamboo yarn has natural absorption, wicking, anti fungal and odor prevention properties. Non-diabetic patients can also choose to wear these socks as it not only solves health problems but also gives comfort and can be used as a fashion item. Colorful socks have recently become popular among the fashion-conscious and can be mixed and matched in seemingly unlimited combinations, which open up new and exciting fashion possibilities. Colorful socks with qualities of health socks will surely attract people and become every buyer’s choice including youth, diabetes patients, and office going people, old age people and many more.

Research Methodology: This study explored whether Indian consumers are aware of health socks. This study found out the inclination of people towards buying health socks. The author reviewed secondary literature, analyzed consumer choices and preferences to launch it as a commercially acceptable product. Non-probability sampling was used for primary study and a structured questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents within the Delhi market.

Practical Implications: Understanding the socks-market in India, consumption of socks by consumers in terms of number and seasonal requirement would help to design positioning strategy for promoting health socks as a fashion product. This research will help to launch a medical product as fashion product, bringing happiness to many.

Originality/Value: This paper will demonstrate the consumption of socks and the existing gap in the market.

Introduction

Socks are worn by all ages and have a strong impact on the health and hygiene of the wearer. In this research paper an attempt is made to promote health socks as a fashion accessory in India which can take care of foot problems for diabetic and non diabetic people thus bringing hygiene and comfort to enhance health and happiness in consumers’ lives.

Accessories market: India

Accessories are no longer viewed as add-ons. The urban Indian market for apparel accessories in 2008 was estimated at Rs 9.1 billion and reached Rs 12 billion in 2012. About 57% of the market at present is catered by unorganized sector, hence creating a huge potential for branded and organized sector. Purchase location for accessories is usually large traditional streets and neighborhood markets (Ace Global Private Limited, 2009).

Diabetes leading to foot problems

Diabetes is a disease that mostly concerns the blood sugar levels in our body and makes its patients prone to bacterial, fungal and yeast infections. Bacterial infections show up in areas on the foot. The signs of a bacterial infection include redness, swelling, warmth, pain and tenderness (Rehm,
This is the main reason special socks have to be used to provide protection from these problems.

**Health Socks**

Health socks are useful in improving blood circulation, regulate the moisture levels of the foot and are anti bacterial. Also called as diabetic socks or compression socks, they are a cost effective way of protecting ones feet. These socks have qualities which help relieve foot pain for diabetes patients or blood circulation problems in feet. These health socks are made using bamboo yarn which has natural absorption, wicking, anti fungal and odor prevention properties. Health socks are perfect for people with diabetes and also sportsmen. They are also useful for anybody who wears socks for long hours.

**Importance and need of health socks**

Everyone can benefit from health socks and they can be the first line of defense against unwanted foot problems such as athlete’s foot, foot odor, blisters, corns, calluses, and swelling. Diabetic patients need to take care of their feet much more due to the nature of the problem and doctors advise the same. India has the second largest population of diabetic patients accounting 61.3 million diabetic in 2011 and estimated to be 101.2 million by 2030 (IDF Atlas, 2012). Thus the need of such a product rises much more and would be a boon to many.

**Purpose of Study**

Socks are an accessory used by every individual in their day-to-day life and its importance as a fashion accessory is being felt. Thus this study will explore if Indian population is aware about health socks. This study would also help to find out the inclination of people towards buying health socks which can be positioned as fashion accessory.

**Limitation**

- The product is targeted to a niche segment that wears socks for long hours or are diabetic patients or non diabetic.
- Sample size taken for the primary research conducted could only cover Delhi / NCR due to convenience.

**Research Objectives**

This study explores whether Indian population is aware about health socks. This study also aims to find out the inclination of people towards buying health socks. Based on findings, a product strategy can be planned for marketing health socks as a fashion accessory.

**Literature Review**

**Fashion Accessories’ huge market in India**

Fashion and accessories is the largest category in organized retail and had a 38.1% share valued at Rs 298 billion in 2007. The segment has driven the retail boom in India and has opened many opportunities for large as well as global retailers to enter the segment. The growth in fashion accessories market has been driven by increasing desires of people to look good and feel good, initiating innovations by fashion designers in this segment. It has surged with CAGR of more than 14% during 2012-2015 (Indian Retail Industry, 2009).

**Socks: A fashion accessory**

For years, fashion dictated that when it comes to suits, the socks should always match the slacks. If there’s one must-have accessory to add a spark to an otherwise staid suit, it’s a pair of brightly colored or patterned socks. "Socks are the new tie," says Rich Stober of Accessory Exchange in New York, who supplies socks to department stores in the United States. "This wasn’t happening four years ago. A guy buys a suit these days, and he wants to get socks to go with it.‘ Though ties have represented one of the few opportunities to personalize corporate attire, more and more men are adding a peep of tangerine or a pattern of polka dots to an otherwise conservative grey, black or navy suit. Socks with bright stripes and jewel tones give a flash of individuality to a suit. But the effort to perk up historically monochromatic menswear isn’t restricted to the corporate world. Workers in more casual environments have also whole-heartedly embraced bolder hosiery. "I have been in meetings where people look down and notice my socks, and there is this universal sign, almost like a gang sign, where they nod and pull up their pant leg a little to show off their socks” (Walks, 2012). This is evidently showing that this spark of fun (happiness) is very important to the wearer.

**Diabetes in India**

With a shift in eating habits and the adoption of a sedentary life style has led to the increasing prevalence of life style diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, metabolic syndrome and cancer, all across India in the last few decades. In India, diabetes is expected to rise from 2.0 crore in 2000 to 4.6 crore by 2015 (Pancholia A.K, “Life style changes of Indian families & its impact on Health”). India continues to be the “diabetes capital” of the world, and by 2030, nearly 9 per cent of the country’s population is likely to be affected from the disease, warns the fourth edition of the World Diabetes
Atlas (Thacker N, 2009) launched by the IDF at the 20th world diabetes congress in Montreal, Canada. Hence for these sedentary, stressful life styles and diabetic patients preventive and precautionary measures are of paramount importance.

**Health Socks: Benefits of Bamboo**

Foot care hygiene happens to be very important for both diabetic and non-diabetic patients and socks made of Bamboo fiber or bamboo viscose can contribute to this. Bamboo is a natural fiber grown without pesticides or chemicals. Extremely soft like rich cotton fiber. It has a thermo-regulating quality which helps keep feet warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Diabetic patients often have difficulty with temperature regulation due to circulatory problems. Bamboo provides excellent wick protection - 60% better than cotton alone. This helps the foot to stay dry and reduces the risk of fungus on the toenails or athlete’s foot. Bamboo is hypoallergenic, non-irritating and great for sensitive skin. People with diabetes have extra dry and sensitive skin. Bamboo is odor resistant, antibacterial, and antifungal and has antistatic properties. Bamboo fits the foot snugly, hugs the foot without feeling bulky; this feature reduces the risk of rubbing which leads to blister formation and foot complications. Bamboo is renewable and sustainable - it grows quickly and regenerates easily without replanting since it is a grass. (Kleinman, 2012)

Bamboo textiles have many fantastic properties that in combination make this a truly amazing product. It is breathable and cool, has a nice lustre; extremely soft with fast water absorption performance; and antibacterial. Because the cross-section of bamboo fibre is filled with various micro-gaps and micro-holes, bamboo cloth has much better moisture absorption. It has a natural sheen that feels like silk or cashmere, but has the advantage of being machine-washable. This natural fibre is hypoallergenic, absorbent and fast-drying. It is naturally antibacterial and will not hold odour. Like other natural fibres, it allows the body to breathe as the socks absorb the sweat from the body. It is also the most sustainable of the natural fibres. Because of its natural antibacterial properties, it needs no pesticides. It is also 100% biodegradable. (Gomati C. and Manoharan M., 2009)

**Existing Health Socks Brands**

Dr. Scholl’s socks are specially designed to help relieve tired, achy feet and legs. Dr. Scholl’s products are available to suit a variety of foot care needs. Their line consists of socks, including diabetic socks, therapeutic socks, compression socks, athletic socks and careers socks. Products are available in sizes for both men and women.

**Problem Statement**

The initial exploratory research showed that the Indian Fashion Accessory market has a big share in the total market size with an increasing scope. Further, it shows the need and relevance of the health socks due to high number of diabetic patients. In order to provide the right solution and fill in the need gap of a product for the feet which is health benefiting and fashionable as well, this research focuses on the health socks.

This research focuses on finding out if there is awareness of health socks in the Indian market. It further focuses on the scope of positioning health socks as a fashion accessory.

The objectives of the study were to:

- To study the awareness of health socks in target market.
- To identify the possibility of conversion of the health socks into a fashion product.
- To check the feasibility of the product and launch the brand based on the feedback.

**Research Methodology**

A descriptive research design was used to gain an insight into consumer’s awareness and willingness to purchase health socks, perceived usefulness and health supporting offered as major factors. Primary data was collected for the research. An undisguised structured questionnaire, consisting of open ended, dichotomous and multiple choice questions, was used for the research. The questions were designed on Likert scale has also been used to understand the behavioral intention and preferences of the customers. The sample size used was 100 respondents. The study was conducted in New Delhi, national capital of India. The respondents were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. Respondents were basically morning joggers in District Park of a few localities of New Delhi, Students and mothers of young children. The statistical tool used in the research has been done by using simple mean, percentage and chi-square test.

Out of 100 respondents the sample were divided into demographic profile of respondents with gender differentiation of 54% male and 46% female. 24% of respondents belonged to age group 18-25, 19% to 25-35, 31% to 35-45, 24% to 45-55 and only 2% were above 55 years. Almost one fifth of respondents belonged to business class, students and housewives category each. Almost 40% were employed and,17% students and only 2% retired. Almost 80% of respondents did not have any foot related health problems. The rest of the respondents either were diabetic (13%) or had foot allergy (16%) or had swollen or numb foot (12%).
Findings and Analysis

Socks’ Purchasing Habits

About 70% of respondents had more than 10 pairs in their wardrobes. 70% of respondents throw away their sock within 2-6 months. 47% of the sample population bought socks every 2-4 months. It shows that socks are an item being bought by every individual on a regular basis.

62% of the sample were making purchases themselves and 75% read the label before buying the product, to gain knowledge about the various aspects and features of the product. 42% of the sample read fabric content and 68% read price. 24% of the population paid Rs.100-150 and 35% Rs.150-200. As they related quality with price. The results showed that mostly people go to shop their socks from retail stores because they gave a huge variety in designs, colors, size and better quality.

Awareness and Ownership of Health Socks

38% of the population is aware of bamboo yarn whereas 62% is not even aware of bamboo yarn and its features. 81% of the people did not have a pair of anti odor or anti bacterial socks as it’s a new concept and not easily available in the market, 19% of respondents owned a pair of such socks.

Findings show that consumers read the label to seek information of the product. However health socks are new to the market and consumers are willing to buy health socks at a premium price.

Scope of Health Socks Based on Health Conditions

Chi-square test was done to find if only the people with diabetes and foot allergies were willing to buy health socks. The result is shown in Table 1(a)

| Table 1(a) Willingness to Buy Health Socks for people with Diabetes N=100 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                  | Willingness to buy | Total           |
|                                  | Yes | no            |                 |
| Diabetes                        | % within Diabetes | % within Diabetes | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| % within Diabetes               | 16% | 84%           | 100.0% |      |
| Non Diabetess percent           |     |               |          |      |
| Diabetes                        | % within non Diabetes | % within Diabetes | 100.0% |      |
| % within Diabetes               | 78.2% | 21.8%          | 100.0% |      |
| Total                           | % within Diabetes | % within Diabetes | 100.0% |      |
| % within Diabetes               | 81.0% | 19.0%          | 100.0% |      |
| % within Diabetes               | 100.0% | 100.0%         | 100.0% |      |

Pearson Chi-Square | 3.538 | 1 | .050

Percentage of people with diabetes was 16% and all diabetic patients were willing to buy health socks and 78.2% non diabetic patients were also ready to buy health socks (p=0.05).

The exact value of chi square is .053 which is significant for the population.

| Table 1(b): FOOT ALLERGY N=100 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                  | Willingness to buy | Total           |
|                                  | Yes | no            |                 |
| Foot allergy percent            |     |               |          |      |
| Yes                             | % within Foot allergy | % within Foot allergy | 93.8% | 6.2%  | 100.0% |
| % within Foot allergy           | 18.5% | 81.5%         | 100.0% |      |
| No                              | % within Foot allergy | % within Foot allergy | 78.6% | 21.4% | 100.0% |
| % within Foot allergy           | 81.5% | 18.5%         | 100.0% |      |
| Total                           | % within Foot allergy | % within Foot allergy | 81.0% | 19.0% | 100.0% |
| % within Foot allergy           | 100.0% | 100.0%       | 100.0% |      |

Pearson Chi-Square | 2.012 | 1 | .140

Out of the sample population for foot allergy 93.8% of them agreed to buy health socks and despite having foot allergy 6.2% disagreed to purchase health socks. The exact significance was .140 which was invalid for the population.

Scope of Health Socks Based on Comfort

Sample was informed of various comfort factors. Table 2 shows consumer’s preference towards comfort features in socks was highest for soft, smooth and breathable.
Scope of Health Socks Based on Quality
Sample was informed of various quality features. Table 3 shows the performance feature customers gave priority were strength, stretch-ability, and moisture absorbency.

Table 3: Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Abrasion resistant</th>
<th>Colorfastness</th>
<th>Moisture absorbent</th>
<th>Stretchable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N Valid</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>N Missing</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.4810</td>
<td>2.2222</td>
<td>2.3256</td>
<td>2.1250</td>
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</table>

Scope of Health Socks Based on Cost

Table 4: Would you buy health socks?

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<th>Options</th>
<th>Percentage (n=100)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
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<td>No</td>
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Table 5: Willingness to pay for Health Socks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indian Rupees</th>
<th>Percentage Willingness</th>
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<tr>
<td>200-300 INR</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-400 INR</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-500 INR</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 500 INR</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 81% of population who wanted to buy health socks, 63% of the sample population would like to buy a health socks within 200-300 INR, and 28% would be willing to pay 300-400 INR. Whereas only a 6% would like to pay 400-500 INR and a 2% would pay above 500 INR.

Developing Health Socks as a Fashion Product
Consumer’s preference for length of socks, color and design was looked into. Socks being an important accessory had to be designed combining elements of fashion along with comfort and quality to make it the users delight.

45% of the sample population preferred wearing ankle length socks and 41% of people wanted full length socks, 8% of people preferred ankle length sports terry socks and 10% thumb socks were preferred only by females.

Consumer’s preference about the designs in socks is more towards plain socks (mean=1.28 where 1 is most preferred, and 5 is least preferred) as compared to designer socks (mean=2.48) where 1 is most preferred, and 5 is least preferred). The result for the most preferred color in socks were black, white and grey and the least preferred were green, pink, orange and red.

Socks designs for launching in the brand were divided into 3 categories: men’s, women’s and kids. The designs were shortlisted according to the consumer’s preferences. 10 samples in each category were selected out of which each customer selected 5 of their choice. The ones with the highest ranking were finalized.

Out of 12 designs 6 designs with the highest frequency were shortlisted as being the consumer’s preference. Design No.1, 8, 2, 4, 11 and 9 were finalized in the men’s category (see Annexure 1). In the women’s category design no 2,3,3,4 and 7 had the top five frequencies and design no 1, 8 and 10 had same frequency being on the 6th position (see Annexure 2). The design not chosen for the kid’s category was 5,4,1,7 and 3 (see Annexure 3).
Pilot Marketing – Findings and Analysis

A small pilot run was done with a sample population of 10 by distributing free samples of the product and taking their feedback on the product. The sample was of all age groups and from the fashion industry who had knowledge to understand the product.

- Out of the sample population 100% of people said that the socks made their feet feel comfortable which proved that the health socks is reliable product which can help people to take care of their health, comfort and bring happiness to the wearer. The feel of the socks was soft, comfortable and breathable. All three features were found in the socks which made the socks a quality product.
- 80% of the people did not face any pilling problem whereas 20% did face a problem mentioning the pilling percentage was very low.
- 100% population said the product was moisture absorbent which is the most important feature socks should have as our feet is the most perspiring part of our body.
- 90% of the population did not find their socks losing shape after sometime whereas a 10% still faced shaped retention problem.
- 100% of the population agreed that they could wear the socks for a long duration without facing any irritation which proves to be a great compliment for the product. Added feature of fragrance also made the product more desirable.
- When asked if people would prefer buying this socks over other socks, 100% of the population was willing to buy bamboo socks over other materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Comments of sample population</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor Garment Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor Fashion Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailer for children’s clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailer for Men’s Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur - Boutique owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student of Fashion Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home maker</td>
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</table>

The brand name finalized was Ease socks as it was defining the product very precisely. The socks aim to provide ease in the lives of consumers. The socks made out of bamboo give our feet comfort and make them very easy to carry for a longer period of time.

Identification and Establishment of Brand Position

The brand, Ease Socks, has defined itself as representing a quality product with a feature that not many companies have access to. Not only does the product incorporate both a simple look and sensational feel, but also it has provided a solution to people with diabetes and other foot problems. Ease Socks delivers high quality socks in which a customers should expect never to have a foot allergy or irritation. Competitors may provide similar quality socks, however, none in which will have equivalent results. The perceived value in the consumer’s mind is very important to Ease Socks position. The brand is positioned to encompass the beliefs and values of our target market. Ease Socks not only provides socks constructed of superior materials, but also with colours and designs of the consumers choice.

Brand Logo

With an aim to create an image that is memorable, reliable, recognizable, likable, and credible a logo was created representing an innovative product that nurtures the consumer’s active lifestyles.

The brand image of Ease Socks seeks to represent the quality and value of the product it provides. In addition to the brand logo and image the brand slogan provides further advancement in building a strong position. Ease Socks’ slogan is: “Premium eco friendly socks”

Conclusion

Through this research it is found that the awareness of health socks and benefits of bamboo is very
low making the scope for this product high. Also after recognizing the fact that a natural product like bamboo is being used as a raw material 81% of the sample population agreed to buy the product if offered.

The secondary data depicts the population of India being own 1.22 billion, of this diabetic people are estimated at 50.8 million. This research depicted that 100% diabetic patients were willing to buy bamboo socks and even the people who did not have any health related foot problem were also interested in buying the product with the sample percentage being 75% which also proved to be significant for the population in the analysis.

Consumers are ready to adapt the concept of health socks. The brand name was finalized as “Ease Socks”. The feedback of the pilot run showed that the product is feasible to be launched in the market as 100% satisfaction was received from the customers who used the sample product for one month.

The average disposable income of the Indian urban consumer is increasing hence the market for all consumer products is expanding, including for fashion accessories. (Ace Global Private Limited, 2009). Health socks have a promising market in India. Health socks will ensure no pain for diabetic patients. It is a good example of how fashion can bring happiness.

References
Annexure
Annexure 1
Range for Selection

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THE POWER OF FASHION FOR HAPPINESS
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## Annexure 3

### Kids Category

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A Study of Color Psyche as a Happiness Quotient in Fashion

Nithya Venkataraman & Vibhavari Kumar

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FASHION TECHNOLOGY, INDIA

Abstract
Fashion has always been accepted as a medium for self-expression and one of the key components for any fashion product, apart from silhouette, fabric and embellishments, is color. It is an established fact that psychological and emotional responses are tuned to the wavelength, intensity and value of colors; and many experiments have been instrumental in the synergy of these elements. Indicators such as socio-economic events, fashion icons, fads and short term trends and even changing weather patterns influence people to pick a particular group of colors for their attire. However, the pattern for this choice, apart from other factors, is often closely determined by the demographics of the wearer. Consumers belonging to particular age, income, and occupational groups seem to share common platforms against which they pick the color for their dressing. Thus, an observation of varied demographic profiles across a single day, yields different choices of colors- and the variation ranges from the hue to the intensity of the color in question. The reasons for this choice may be multifold- changing outlook towards “what is well-being” as one progresses with age, presence of different role models across different age-groups, change of lifestyles with age, and peer-group influences.

This paper seeks to explore the connect between age group and the choice of color for apparel as a happiness quotient. The study is limited to the Indian market, which within its vast diaspora itself presents multiple regional, religious and locational differences. The study also seeks to explore how different age groups respond to the social calls of formal, informal and traditional dressing, and pick colors relevant to the same. It also attempts to look back at historical and generational attitudes towards groups of colors, and to analyse if these may be relevant indicators on why certain colors are associated as “happy colors” across the studied group.

Introduction
Fashion, in its current context and meaning, is often the most common misnomer. Far from an expression of just trends that happen over the purview of design, it encompasses communication over a wide compass. It is consciously or unconsciously a reflection of a changing socio-political scenario, a symbol of strong social undercurrents, a method of expressing belongingness with a social group, a revolutionary and evolutionary entity, and a mark of technological development of a society. Over and above all this, fashion is an individualistic statement, and is adopted by every person to primarily express his/her emotions, feelings and identity.

However, fashion assumes complexity in terms of the components that together make its being. Elements such as shape, silhouettes, textures and forms define garments; and the combinations thereof, make the vast mosaic of fashion products that every individual is connected with. The key element which every adopter of any fashion product closely associates with is color. “Colors can relate to our emotions and feelings” (1). Indeed, as Pablo Picasso states - Colors, like features, follow the changes of the emotions.

The complexity of color association is partly an inbuilt process in each individual; and an outcome of learning over years of cognitive development. “Not only are there strong personal preferences, the origins of which may well be unfathomable, buried deep in the psyche of the human mind, but there is also powerful cultural and ethnic colour symbolism” (2). Responses to color are thus a combination of individual psyche and shaping factors through culture, religion, region, occasions and societal norms. As the human psyche evolves with age, these factors, needless to say, go...
The understanding of Happiness

impact on the “happiness” quotient of the wearer, remains to be still explored. However, the co-relation of demographics of the wearer with color preference; and its perceived

supported by Guilford and Smith (1959) and McInnis and Shearer (1964) (5). Dorcus(1926), Dt George(1938), paved way for gender and color co-relation. These have also been
color”. Explorations have yielded a variance in the reactions to color with gender- Eysenck(1940), related emotion was highly dependent on personal preference and one’s past experience with that

color”. Explorations have yielded a variance in the reactions to color with gender- Eysenck(1940),
preference”, where, through an experimental study, Naz Kaya and Helen Epps state that “Color –
related emotion was highly dependent on personal preference and one’s past experience with that
color”. Explorations have yielded a variance in the reactions to color with gender- Eysenck(1940), Dorcus(1926), Dt George(1938), paved way for gender and color co-relation. These have also been

supported by Guilford and Smith (1959) and McInnis and Shearer (1964) (5). However, the co-relation of demographics of the wearer with color preference; and its perceived

impact on the “happiness” quotient of the wearer, remains to be still explored.

The understanding of Happiness – As any other state of emotion, happiness is a state of mind which is pleasant to be in, but hard to define. Studies in human psychology have theorised on the “feel-good, do-good phenomenon” (Salovey, 1990) which proposed that “a mood boosting experience” has resulted in people to “do good deeds” (4). It also theorizes on the aspect of “positive psychology”, wherein a state of happiness assumes that of subjective well-being- a ratio of positive to negative feelings. With such intangible connotations, happiness becomes an area that is non-measurable; however, as it is a universally accepted and understood state of mind, it is largely a term that can be associated with a “happy” or a “positive” feel.

In the case of India, the impact of environmental concerns assumes paramount importance. With diversity in language, culture, religion and practices, colors tend to borrow diagrammatically opposite understandings across the huge diaspora of this country. Folklore, scriptures, and mythology add more color to the notions of color- leading to a multicultural mosaic that exhibits varied hues and shades. With an emerging global market and an astute and internationally travelled Indian citizen in the fore, a blend of contemporary understanding and traditional practice is part of every Indian fashion adopter. It becomes imperative, thus, to see how notions of color change with diverse backgrounds and upbringing.

Exploring colors as a medium of expression, we note that nomenclatures of color play an important role. Colors have terminologies that indicate specific attributes. A Hue refers to the name of the color; the Value indicates its lightness or darkness; an Intensity or Chroma, its brightness or dullness. Temperatures of colors signify warmth or coolness. Groups of these colors are generally perceived to have common characteristics, endowing them with specific meaning and relevance. For example, if we specifically look at Red – a color dominating the warm hues “spectrum- has always been a source of attraction in terms of its relevance to expression. Psychological attributes to this color vary from positive connotations (passion, love) to negative connotations (violence, danger, war). In their study on “Color and Psychological Functioning: The Effect of Red on Performance Attainment”, Elliot, Maier, Moller and Friedman, and Meinhardt, focus on the relation between color and psychological functioning, specifically, that between red and performance attainment. Roberts and Owen base their study on “Distinguishing between Perceiver and Wearer Effects in Clothing Color-Associated Attributions”, to derive that “evolutionarily-derived color associations can bias interpersonal judgments, although these are limited neither to effects on raters nor to the color red”. These studies lead us to question - Is Red a stronger and a more influencing color vis-a-vis the others in the Spectrum?

As a general outlook, colors assume symbolism which is considered applicable for most cultures. Though there are strong differences in the associations, the nature and category of color underpins a generalised perspective for each color. Borrowing inferences from “The Beginner’s Guide to Colour Psychology” by Angela Wright, colours “relate respectively to the body, the mind, the emotions and the essential balance between these three”.

Do colors assume meaning with Social status? Studies indicate that “Clothing of young people subgroups, different cultures, primitive races and gay communities, helps to understand how the values of specific social identities are expressed (Crane & Bovone, 2006)” (7). Specifically with respect to the Asian audience, Subhani, Assan and Osman, through their study on “New Article of Clothing translates the Mood of an Individual “opine that dressing is considered as the factor for representing the social status of the person (8). Darcy Donahue presents in her paper “Dressing Up and Dressing Down: Clothing and Class Identity in the Novelas ejemplares “, the reference to “Carmen Bernis’s excellent study, El traje y los tipos sociales en el Quijote,” and says “it is clear that apparel had become an increasingly codified system of distinguishing among levels of society and professions” for even the late Sixteenth century Spain (9). Further studies trace the origin of color as social identity from the early Grecian period. “In Western Europe, imperial purple (and at times ultramarine) was the colour of the robe worn by Madonna.
Cardinals could only dress in purple robes with a red hat until the mid-fifteenth century, when they were allowed to wear scarlet or crimson red robes with a vermilion hat. In The Netherlands, the Virgin was clothed in scarlet. The senators in Rome would also wear scarlet or crimson violet (Gage, 1993) (10).

In the Indian ethos, again, colors assume meaning in terms of social identity. Marriage, betrothal, motherhood are all considered hierarchical social identities; dress and accessories being the key indicators to the general public about the change therein for the individual. In fact, these indicators assume prime importance in the Indian functions devoted for the same, and donning them becomes part of an event in such incidences. Thus, vermilion assumes importance as an indicator of marriage in most parts of India. Green reflects in the accessories (Bangles, neckwear) in some states of southern India, while the same accessories are indicated in Ivory and offwhite colors in other parts of the country. Traditional dressing in maroon and deep red is associated with marriage in one state of India, while whites and golds dominate wedding attire in the neighbouring state.

With a country blessed with indigenous practices, do such cognitive responses to color play a role in the preference of a certain palette for the urban Indian woman, when it comes to choice of clothing for social identity? In the contemporary context, global connotations to power dressing are built by terms such as “White collared” and “Blue collared” jobs. Greys, blacks, and navies still dominate the Mens’ formalwear market. The Womens’ formalwear markets differ with the inclusion of beiges and browns. What makes neutral color tones such a preferred option for indication of hierarchical growth in professional life? Is it a common feature across age groups, and do notions of religion, region and culture influence this selection?

Exploring the complexity of religion, it is important to remember that religion is an important part of culture, and that in every religion colours have their associations (11). Durkheim, the eminent
sociologist, defines religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things”. It is an immense exercise to co-relate religious symbols to color associations, given the sheer number of practices and sub practices that are held globally. Any preference on color assumes “standardised” meanings when it is applied to combined practices, especially in the reference to religion.

“In Christianity- black is symbolic of death, red for the commemoration of martyred saints, and white as a symbol of purity, innocence and holiness. In Buddhism, the four elements air, fire, water and earth are identified in the Kalachakra-tantra with four different colors: blue (or black), red, white and yellow, respectively. For Islam, green and gold are the colors of paradise. However, as in Western Culture, white is used to symbolize purity and peace. For Hinduism, red is seen as a symbol of happiness, and found on the bride’s dress, the groom’s robe and scarf, and in the sindoor, the holy red powder, that the groom places on the forehead of his bride, welcoming her into his life as his partner” (12).

It nevertheless poses an interesting question- Does preference for color change with respect to the taught adherence to color shaped by religious practices? Research has also sought co-relation of colors to geographic location. Climate, terrain and necessity for protection against vagaries of weather imply connotations to colors. These are further propounded by cultural and social associations.

Jaensch’s research indicates those who live in climates with a lot of sunlight prefer warm bright colours; while those from climates with less sunlight prefer cooler, less saturated colours (13). For an Indian tropical climate, summers, winters and the monsoon bring out different associations with color. It is common to see the parched and arid desert lands of Rajasthan and Gujarat bring alive a bright mosaic of colors on the dress and accessories of its native women.

Choungourian (1968) showed that colour preferences are not identical across countries. He found that red was the most preferred colour by Americans, green by the Lebanese and blue-green by Iranians and Kuwaitis. Jacobs et al. (1991) found red to be most strongly related to China, purple to France, green to both France and Italy and, while the American subjects associated the USA with blue, other Asian subjects related her with red. Similarly, orange is the favourite colour in The Netherlands, since her monarchy is the House of Orange (14). It is also pertinent to note that linguistic barriers for color nomenclature can impact the preference for colors. Benjamin Whorf’s Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis proposes “that a person’s language determines and limits what the person experiences”. For example, certain languages do not have a distinction between Red and Orange. Colors like “mauve” and “beige” are not part of the linguistic diaspora in India, and hence do not form the preferred colors for many rural and sub-urban communities.

In the case of India, the cultural connotations assume diversity. The linguistic, regional and sub-regional populations offer diversity in case of color unlike any other nation. (Refer Annexure: I)

A few examples are-

a) A Phiran from Jammu and Kashmir can be maroons, reds or greens. However, it is worn as a unisex garment- the color being the differentiator for men- where it is usually a greyish tone

b) Women from Haryana, belonging to the Jat or the Ahir community, can be recognized by their attire of Lehenga, Odhni and Angia. However, while their predominant colors are red or yellow, the Rajput woman, who follows the same attire, differentiates it with a white body and a silver fringe.

c) The Rajasthani and Gujarati woman, on the other hand, splashes her attire with a bright melange’ of colors, adding the sparkle of mirrorwork and beads – much to offset the dry desert palette that they reside in (Fig:1).

d) The state of Uttar Pradesh witnesses two ends of the color spectrum- while the rich Benarasi Saree boasts of high chroma colors with a vivid sprinkling of gold, the subtle Chikankari uses pastel shades and white, with delicate tone on tone embroidery.

e) Chanderi and Maheshwari sarees from Madhya Pradesh have a bright or a subtle tone, but are interspersed with motifs in delicate gold.

f) The women of Assam wear a traditional Mekhla Chadar- A two piece outfit resembling a saree. A typical mekhla chadar is made of white or golden Assamese silk with prominent thread work done in red along the lower border

g) The southern state of Kerala has a traditional Mundu-Veshti, much alike the Mekhala Chadar of Assam. Keralites have a natural attraction towards purity and this can be seen in their elegant traditional costume which is of white and off-white color (Fig:2).

Colors differ with each part of the country, for attires that are as diverse. Each of these garments becomes a strong symbol of identity for the particular state.

**Exploring the relationship between color and gender, leads us to question-**

Does gender determine the choice of colors for dressing? Do notions of “Blue for boys and Pink for Girls” hold true? Gender studies with colors have yielded interesting results.

Radeloff (1990) has found that women were more likely than men to have a favourite colour. A similar
study by Greene (1995) examined the colour identification and vocabulary skills of college students. The results showed that women recognized significantly more elaborate colours than did the men (15). The studies, nevertheless, prove that women are closer and sharper perceptors for color than men- making them an ideal base for studies on color perception.

Color and Age - This brings us to a pertinent question- Are colors “taught” through experience over a period of time? Are perceptive changes towards “happy” colors associated with the biological age of the viewer? Research proposes that “Younger children are attracted by strong, warm and intense colours. As time progresses colours become less violent and softer shades appear; colours “cool down”. This process continues throughout life, with older people finding “subdued” colours more attractive” (16). For an Indian urban population, does this preference change with age? Do different age groups respond differently to colors?

Research Questions
The immense scope of color-emotion association leads us to a few questions, which the researchers seek to understand through this study. Due to the nature and complexity of demographics involved, the researchers have focussed on urban women, belonging to a metropolitan city, as their area of study:

a) Does age group of the respondent signify their preference to a select group of colors?
b) Does age affect the way colors are perceived as “happy” colors?
c) Does age affect the way “formal” and “informal” colors are segregated?

Research Design
The research is quantitative in nature, using the questionnaire/survey method. For ease of data collection, the respondents were selected across 3 groups, indicative of possible shared connotations to terms due to their common stages in the family lifecycle and their common groundings on culture- Group 1: 18-25 years 
Group 2: 25-50 years
Group 3: 50-80 years
For the questions intending to know their preferred colors, warm and cool colors were offered as groups for selection.
The sample for this survey consisted of an eclectic mix of cultures and religion, and covered an urban Indian woman, SEC A, residing in a metropolitan city.
The total sample size is 50.

Limitations of the research:
1. Sample size was limited to 50
2. Study was limited to Bengaluru
3. Study was limited in gender to women

Discussion
Based on the collected data we observe:

Sarees (Non ocassional)
For Sarees (Regular wear), we find that the most preferred color tones remain as reds and maroons across age groups. Group 2 (18-25 years) seem to have the highest preference for reds and maroons amongst the 3 age groups.

Sarees (Occasional)

For Occassionwear, reds and maroons still dominate the color preference. Interestingly, Group 3 (50-80 years) seems to have a stronger preference for this color group, for occassionwear sarees.

Salwar Kameez

Salwar Kameez is more preferred in blues and greens. Predominantly, Group 1 (25-40 years) seems to have a preference for this color group. Group 3 (50-80 years), seem to prefer whites and offwhites, which have been very sparsely selected by the other groups.
Kurtas

Kurtas, like Salwar kameezes, seem to have the same color preference as blues and greens. Group 1 (25-40 years) seem to have a markedly high preference for blacks and greys than the other groups.

Shirts

There seems to be a clear preference for whites and offwhites for shirts; there seems to be not much variance in this preference over the age groups.
Trousers

There seems to be a clear preference for blacks and greys for trousers; there seems to be not much variance in this preference over the age groups.

Shoes

Shoes have a strong bent towards blacks and greys. Groups 1 and 2 (18-25 and 25-40) seem to be okay to experiment with whites and offwhites, but the older group plays conservative.
Dresses

While the overall preference for dresses seem to be directed towards blacks and greys, it is interesting to note that blues and greens seem to have a clear domination for Group 1 (25-40 years).

Tops

Blacks and greys seem to be the preferred colors for tops. The preference is marked for Group 2 (18-25 years). Yellows and oranges, interestingly, seem to be popular only with the older age groups (25-40 and 50-80).
Color for a Bright Sunny Day

A “Bright, sunny day” seems to be associated with yellows and oranges across age groups. However, the older group (Grp 3 – 50 to 80 years) seem to have the highest association with this color. The image is associated with white only for Group 1 (25-40 years).

Color for a Job Interview

White seems to be the closest associated color for a job interview. Other colors, such as black, navy and “others”, seem to be surprisingly preferred by the older group (50 to 80 years).
Color for a Beach Holiday

“Multicolored” seems to be the closest association with a beach holiday, across age groups, followed by blues and greens. Reds and yellows appear for this association only with Group 3 (50 to 80 years).

Color for a Rainy Day

Greys and blues score highest for this association. However, there is no clear skew in terms of preference when this is seen age group wise.

Colors of a Marriage

Magentas and pinks seem to be the clear winners for “Marriages”. This color also figures strongly for the older group (Grp 3).
Easy availability seems to be the most preferred reason for selection of the outfit for the day. This is specifically so for Groups 1 and 2. Group 3 (50 – 80 years) seem to be more experimental, with weather and color figuring in their reasons.
Favourite Color

There seems to be a clear “Favourite color” for dressing, across all age groups. Group 1 (25-40 years) scores highest in this, while the youngest group (18-25 years), have almost 40% of respondents saying “No” for a favourite color.

Most Suited Color

Reds still seem to be the clear winner as the color which suits the respondent best. This is highest in Group 2 (18-25 years), which is the youngest group. The Oldest group (50-80 years) indicate a preference for Neutral tones as well.
Reason for Understanding Suitability of Color

The reason for selecting this color as the most suitable seems to be largely skewed towards a perception that it looks good on the respondent. Friends and family, communication etc do not appear as reasons for Group 2 (18-25 years), the youngest group.

Color which respondents “wished” suited them

On the other hand, blacks and whites seem to have a higher score when the respondents needed to decide what color they “wished” suited them best. There seems to be clear agewise preference for this, with Group 1 (25-40 years) having preferences for blues and greens, Group 2 (18-25 years) having preference for blacks and whites, and Group 3 (50-80 years) having preferences for pinks and magentas.
Reasons for “Wished” Color

Upon quizzing on the reasons for the selection of their “wish”, the strongest reason seemed to be that this is the respondents’ favourite color. All 3 age groups also seem to be equally influenced by colors “in trend”. Opinion of Family and friends do not appear as reasons for Group 2(18-25 years).

Happy Color for Regular days

Reds again seem to be the preferred color to make the respondents “happy” on a regular day. However, this is not a clear preference, as greens and pastels also appear in this list on an almost equal volume. However, reds still remain a strong contender for a “happy” color for the youngest as well as the oldest group. Group 1(25-40 years), however, do not agree with this and indicate stronger preference for pastels and greens.
Happy Color for Dull Days

The “happy” color for a dull day follows the same preference, as for a regular day. Reds are still the preferred colors for inducing happiness for the oldest and youngest group. Group 1 (25-40 years) still looks towards pastels and greens for inducing happiness.

Conclusion

The research, though across a small cross-section, produced very interesting observations. In line with the surmise that previous and “learned” associations to color do play an important role in preferences, tints and shades of reds seem to be the favourite color for Indian women across all age groups, perhaps due to the strong association of red as an auspicious color in Indian culture. However, for selection of colors for shirts, trousers etc, which are not Indian traditional wear and are borrowed from the west, the color psyche differs. These have a stronger association with blacks and whites, presumably influenced by the global culture.

Interestingly, the concept of reds and associated colors (magenta, maroons etc) seem to be an aspirational color for the women of older age groups. This certifies that age group is a determinant factor in associating certain colours with happiness.

Indian women also tend to pick colors based on their own perceptions and are rarely influenced by family and friends, or with respect to what they want to communicate. Color is still a very intrinsic and individualistic phenomenon for both selections in outfits as well indicating happiness in what they wear.

Though there is a marked influence of culture on the “Happiness quotient in fashion” associated with color psyche, it seems that the individual is the one who largely determines this factor. Group 1, the middle aged group, seems to be the most indecisive group with no distinct colour choices. Groups 2 & 3 have “red” as the most preferred colour indicating happiness quotient, with respect to choice and occasion.

References

Data retrieved from http://process.arts.ac.uk

Annexure

Colours of Rajasthan:

Colours of Kerala:

Fig.1: Bright against the colourless desert
Fig.2: White/Off white against the lush greenery
Abstract
Craik (1993) states, ‘Like it or not, fashion exerts a powerful hold over people – even those who eschew it’. The paper discusses the circulation of African fashion in the western market and in Africa. It investigates whether western luxury fashion brands and designers are exploiting the ‘ethnic trend’ in their use of the African culture and land as inspiration for their collections. Despite being a source of inspiration for western designers for years, Africa does not seem to have benefitted from this attention or its own rich culture. The study investigates the factors behind the arguably slow rise of the African fashion industry on the global market. In the past few years, the ‘ethnic style’ has been a regular trend in fashion forecasting and on the high street. This discussion focuses on the power, importance and impact in social, economic and terms of fashion both in western markets and on the African continent. This study recognises that Africa is a big and vast continent with thousands of ethnic groups and so it focuses on the way in which African fashion has been presented and consumed as a homogenised concept.

The study combined both primary and secondary research methods to gain a better understanding of African fashion and its consumption as well as the African fashion industry. While the wider secondary research approach considered related themes across the sub-Saharan Africa in general, the primary research’s scope was narrowed down to a case study analysis of two selected central African countries namely the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia. Observational studies were carried out during trips to Kinshasa (DRC) and Lusaka in Zambia. Interviews with fashion industry professionals in Africa and in the diaspora in London provided valuable qualitative data. It was important to obtain current views on the topic of African fashion and the ‘ethnic’ trend seen on the high street, in the luxury sector and designers in the western markets. The discussion outcomes wish to analyse the developing power and influence of the African fashion market and propose an investigation into the future of the African fashion industry on the international market. The current attention on Africa and its potential is positive for African fashion and its consumption worldwide. The study wishes to discuss that although western brands are exploiting Africa and its cultures for profits, there is great potential and opportunities for the African fashion to succeed and impact its power and influence in the global market. However, it will be the responsibility of African fashion, its creative forces and its power to ensure the success of this industry.

The discussion wishes to contribute to the debate regarding the power, influence effect of African fashion on the African and western markets.

Introduction
Rationale
“Africa is a melting pot of influences; you can call it ‘ethnic’. But it is also important that this
The past five years have seen an unprecedented explosion of the African fashion and fashion design industry on both the continent and the world stage. The ‘tribal trend’ has become a perennial of fashion forecasting. There has been a rise in the use of African prints and many African inspired collections have been seen on the catwalk, with Burberry Prorsum’s Spring Summer 2012 collection being the most prominent. This collection took the African print to the global stage (Oliver 2011) and what used to be seen as mostly a niche market is now seen as one that has wide commercial appeal. It is moving from being part of the Safari or Resort collection of luxury designer brands to becoming mainstream with more and more designers looking to Africa for inspiration. The huge celebrity following is adding to the interest, which has also increased because of African fashion weeks such as Johannesburg and Lagos that are now covered by world media and established western publications such as Drapers (Moran 2011) and The Guardian (Morgan 2012).

This paper discusses African fashion and its global circulation recognising that African fashions are as diverse as the countries of Africa, but will concentrate on the way in which African fashion has been taken up as one unitary concept. It will also analyse the suggestion that global western brands are exploiting the “ethnic” trend to their own end without benefiting the cultures that are inspiring their collections.

Africa is a huge continent not a country. There are more than 50 countries; each with their own cultures and traditions, thousands of dialects and each ethnic group has their dress. For years it has been a rich source of inspiration for artists around the world. Many important western art movements from the early 20th century sculpture to cubism to Picasso’s 1907 seminal piece Les Demoiselles d’Avignon were greatly informed by African cultures.

This African inspired fashion is not a new trend. As with art, so with fashion, Africa has been an inspiration for many designers for years. Global luxury fashion house Yves St Laurent was one the first with its “Africa” collection in 1967. Other major fashion brands inspired by the African culture are Jean Paul Gaultier, Christian Dior and Christian Louboutin, just to name a few. The products of these western brands have been targeted to a specific global or western consumer rather than Africans; if they are targeted to Africans at all. Most of these fashion houses do not source nor do they produce their garments in Africa. There are very few African artisans and designers who are recognised for their work and the raw original materials they produce, hence Poole (2012) argues that the fashion produced is not benefiting the culture that is inspiring it.

Research for this study has found some cases of cultural misappropriation by western brands that did not reference the inspiration of their collections as being from African influence, instead presenting them as their own creation.

In Pre-colonial Africa, traditional dress played a central role in bringing together aesthetic expression, sexual attraction and social organisation (Rabine, 2002) and ornaments symbolized differences in tribe, membership, gender, rank, age grade and marital status. These ways of dressing were undermined by the ethnocentric European missionaries and colonialists in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Clothing made of animal skins violated western codes of nudity because it did not always cover private parts, so people were made to wear only western clothing prescribed by the Christian missionaries (Rabine 2002). The wearing of western dress was associated with a society moving from a state of primitivism to one of civilisation.

Craik, J. (1993) referencing Simmel, G. (1957) defined non-western dress as exotic and stable; reflecting political and national identities, social hierarchies and local customs. She suggested that non-western dress is costume because it is unchanging; it encodes deep meaning and projects group identity and membership (ibid: 18). Ethnic dress is regarded as non-fashion hence is presented and regarded as a passing commodity in the west. Eicher and Sumberg (1995) define ’ethnic dresses’ as opposite of western fashion. They say it is often referred to as traditional dress, which brings to mind images of coiffure, garments and jewellery that stereotypically never change. Whilst the ‘ethnic dress’ is not seen as fashion in its original raw state, its status is upgraded to fashion once repackaged by the global brands.

The impact of globalisation is that the customary clothing has become a hybrid of the dress common to the west. In today’s African fashion, most designers seek to depart from folkloric and ethnic obligations which all the while embracing the rich culture of African fabrics and finery (Geoffroy-Scheneiter 2006: 12). Pool (2012) makes an important point when she states, “African fashion is about more than just the usual cliché of animal prints. Kids in Accra watch MTV too, they take what they see and mix it with what they already have in their wardrobes.” With all things African at the centre of attention at the moment; Pool (2012) agrees with Xuly Bet’s Lamine B. Kouyate (Geoffroy-Schneiter, 2006) when she writes: “imitation is the highest form of flattery, but it is time for the
fashion establishments to give African designers the credit and exposure they deserve, rather than just ripping off their heritage.”

The African fashion industry faces many difficulties in its quest for global success. There are many challenges, some of which are economic. Juliette Omobang, founder and host of Yaounde Fashion week, recognises that there are real problems with regards to training and skills. She explains that “most designers in Africa don’t have the basics required for the industry and they do everything unusually” (Geoffroy-Scheneiter 2006).

A paper by the World Bank, *Africa can Compete* (Biggs et al, 1994) examined the requirements facing African producers in the EU market, in terms of price, quality, delivery and volumes. This paper also presented case studies describing the challenges African firms have in meeting these requirements. There is also data presented to show that, in countries where policy reforms have been pursued, exports of standardized products, like garments, are price competitive with their Asian rivals. This paper states that: “Mainstream buyers have made it very clear that they are prepared to source Afrocentric products in Asia if African country supply problems cannot be sorted out. This would indeed be unfortunate if African producers are unable to capitalize on a market trend inspired by their own culture.” Biggs (1994). Rabine (2002) suggests that in cases such as these, African producers failed to objectify their culture as a “Marketing trend” because of their culture and therefore they deserve to have their cultural artefacts taken from them. So Africa continues to lose out.

**Literature and Theory Discussion**

**Fashion Theory**

Craik (1993) states, “Like it or not, fashion exerts a powerful hold over people- even those who eschew it”. Designers are constantly seeking new ideas, themes from historical dress, non-European dress, popular and subcultures. She compares them to birds of prey that rob the nests of other fashion systems in a process of appropriation and cannibalisation. Loughran (2009) states, “stylistic borrowing across cultures began at least as early as the late thirteenth's century when Marco Polo brought the first Chinese artefacts into Europe” (2009:245).

Ethnic dress is not considered as fashion; as Craik (1993) notes:

> “Techniques of dress and decorations in non-western cultures are distinguished from fashion. They are regarded as traditional and unchanging reflections of social hierarchies, beliefs and customs. Non-western dress or ethnic dress personifies meanings of spiritualties, religiosity and fertility while encoding power relations.” (1993:18).

Thus the term fashion is rarely used in reference to non-western cultures. Simmel (1957) suggests that fashion does not exist in classless or tribal societies and Craik (1993) explains that ethnic dress is costume because it is unchanging, it ciphers deep meanings and projects group identity and membership whereas western dress is referred to as fashion because it changes regularly and is superficial. In today's fashion, elements of the African cultures are being used without thinking of the meaning of a particular ornament hence they are made into “disposable fashion”.

The consequence of these opposing definitions is that the similarity in operations of techniques of dress and decoration are usually overlooked. The pace of change may be less noticeable in cultures with less economical exchanges but they do occur. The techniques of dress have been regarded as fixed by the west in accordance with the way that anthropologists have conceptualised non-western culture as timeless and unchanging. Craik (1993), Craik (2009) and Rovine (2009) argue that this approach fails to acknowledge the subtleties of ethnic dress and confirms the European philosophy that western cultures are civilised and other cultures are pre-civilised and one of the stylistic consequences of colonization is the invigoration of ethnic dress and ethnicity as fashion inspiration. This paper agrees with Eicher and Sumberg (1995) that ethnic dress in the late twentieth century cannot be discussed without acknowledging the phenomenon of world fashion, because ethnic dress and world fashion are inter-related. There have been many factors encouraging the rapid change in the dress of many people. One of these factors is the adoption of non-indigenous items and styles of dress.

> “Ethnic dress is best understood as those items, ensembles and modifications of the body that capture the past of the members of a group, the items of tradition that are worn and displayed to signify cultural heritage.” Eicher and Sumberg (1995:299)

Ethnic dress is the opposite of world fashion, where world refers to western dress. It visually separates one group from another. It is often known as traditional, which brings to mind images of adornment that stereotypically never change. Craik (1993), Bennett (2005) and Eicher & Sumberg (1995) agree that
fashion is a process involving change. In the case of Africa, where there are numerous ethnic groups and tribes, each ethnic group tends to have their own traditional dress. However there is also the national dress, which represents a country. This is a result of the different religious identities and political allegiances in the early 20th century. In most situations, when men were recruited to participate in work and labour away from their villages, they were required to wear what is considered western for a better chance of employment. For instance, in Kenya, labourers knew they would receive a higher wage if they applied for work wearing shorts and shirt, and subsequently spent their first pay cheques upgrading their clothes. (ibid 1995:303) The observations carried out on trips to Africa concurred with Eicher and Sumberg (1995) and Maynard (2004) who also observed that in many cases, ethnic dress appears to be daily wear for females whereas men seem to replace this attire with western trousers and shirts more readily than women. The change is also attributed to globalisation as culture and religion were seen to work hand in hand.

Consumer Culture Theory

Consuming fashion

‘Fashion is a commercial, industrial art, concerned less with beauty than making money.’ McDowell (1994) in Miles 1998:90 in discussing consumer culture theories, fashion has been argued to be the sphere within which the products of consumerism are most expressed and endorsed as being a way of life (Miles 1998). As the ethnic dress appears to have been made fashionable, Miles (1998) attempts to answer the question of what makes something fashionable. He refers to McCracken (1990)’s theory that fashion is less of a language than a limited set of meaningless codes. An individual's interpretation of fashion is somewhat restricted by social conventions. He argues that there are three main ways in which commodities become fashionable.

“First, goods become associated with established cultural categories. This transition from a culturally constituted world to the actual goods ensures the transition into the fashion system. Secondly, existing cultural meanings are shaped by social elites and opinion leaders such as pop stars, who, therefore, disseminate cultural innovations and styles through society. Those consumers with less influence imitate these appropriations. Lastly, the fashion system radically reforms the cultural meanings invested in goods.” (Miles 1998:92)

The consumption of fashion was facilitated by four factors as suggested by Minchinton (1982) in Miles (1998). Firstly, there was a rise in income, which allowed the emergence of affluent societies. Secondly, family sizes were reduced, which resulted in people having more disposable income to invest in consumption. Thirdly, advertising became more professional and focused. Finally, marketing also developed with the emergence of mail order where the consumption of goods extended into the home. The emergence of a popular culture that demanded the appropriation of differences hence the transformation of fashion into a series of niche markets (Miles 1998: 93). The fashion industry became more responsive to the consumer’s needs during the post-Fordist production runs in the 80s. But some authors, such as McDowell (1994) do not agree that the fashion industry prioritises the needs of the consumers. McDowell (1994) critiques it as being an industry that sets out to change consumers’ spending habits so they come to believe that luxuries are necessities.

“Therefore the industry continues to exploit the feelings of social uncertainty and insecurity by offering the illusion that fashion can answer, or at least lead us to forget, the problems of everyday life.” (McDowell 1994:138 in Miles 1998:97)

The realm of consumption offers plenty of room for people to find profound meaning in their worlds and their existence, because at its roots, it is a social process as explained by Chin (2001). Slater (1997) added that consumption is accompanied by the development of retail infrastructures. Standardised goods are sold to a population that is seen as consumers who happen to be organised into classes and genders.

Impacts of Globalisation

“Globalisation has become a contemporary fact of life. All of us, whether we live in Europe, Africa, South America or the Philippines, are caught up in a vast network of transactional relations and interlinked patterns of consumption.” Maynard (2004:15) Globalisation has been mostly influenced by developments in systems of communication in the late 1960s. Giddens (2003) suggests that most people think of globalisation as “pulling away power or influence from local communities and nations into the global arena. He explains that it is indeed a consequence. He goes on to also suggest that
globalisation is the reason for the revival of local cultural identities in different parts of the world (2003:13). One could agree with his view as it helps to explain the revival of African fashion both in Africa and in the west. Ethnic minorities including Africans are celebrating their cultures in expressive ways. One of the impacts of globalisation is that the customary clothing has become a hybrid with the dress common to the west. Rouse (1989) says “we cannot interpret the clothing of other societies, we cannot understand their significance, if we have not learned the code.” (1989:27) She explains further that in many ethnic societies, there are strict codes of dress for the wearing of traditional clothes. The colour, the type of fabric or even the way a piece of fabric is tied on the body, all act as signs and carry social meanings. We find that many designer houses do not have this in mind when producing their “ethnic inspired” collections. They do not understand the significance of the culture that has “inspired” them hence they do not convey it through their campaign. In some cases, such as Matthew Williamson’s 2008 collection, one could say that design houses trivialise these cultures. The fashion industry produces new styles each season as marketing strategy, so the “ethnic” styles introduced by the western brands are to make money and not to celebrate or send a distinct message to the public about the culture behind their inspiration. Rouse (1998) also argues that it is the buyers who decide to make styles “fashionable” as in the case of African style and the fashion media reinforces this in the way they present the garments. Craik (1993) and Bennett (2005) also add that, the media and designers, all appeal to the desire for the exotic. There is a demonstrated demand in Europe for African products. There is a familiarity with Africa in Europe, which contributes to the development of business relationships. There appears to be renewed interest in the African continent and more generally interest in authentic ethnic products. African clothing designs and art for the home have become fashionable, as have ethnic products (Biggs 1994). The Frankfurt school suggested that late capitalism refined the system of control using the seductive pleasures of mass culture products to cheat the masses into an easy acceptance of the capitalist consumer system (Bennett 1995).

African Dress - The Inspiration
The African ethnic dress has many variations depending on which part of the continent you are from. They have been in existence for centuries and because they have been unchanging, they have been referred to as a source of inspiration and not fashion. Whilst some of them have undergone change over the years, some ethnic groups have managed to resist the change and maintain their culture values. Some examples are the Dinka tribe of Sudan, the Massai tribe of Kenya, the Kuba people of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Ndebele people of South Africa.

The African Inspired Fashion
The Maasai tribe is a unique and popular tribe due to their long preserved culture. They have held on to their traditional way of life despite civilisation and western culture influences. This has made them a symbol of Kenyan culture. The Maasai warriors have been the source of inspiration for many fashion collections including John Galliano’s 1997 Haute couture collection for Christian Dior. The tight beaded corsets in collection indicate the Dinka men’s position in the age-set system of the tribe; it also inspired the Christian Dior shown in 1997. Each group wears a color-coded corset: a red and blue corset shows that a man is between fifteen and twenty-five years old; a yellow and blue one signal someone over thirty and ready for marriage.

The Ndebele dress is characteristically colourful and varies in textures. The Ndebele wife wears copper and brass rings, called Idzila, around her arms, legs and neck to symbolise her bond and faithfulness to her husband. A married woman is always covered with a blanket, called Nguba, which is decorated with beads to record significant events throughout her lifetime. The Ndebele dress has also inspired contemporary fashion brand Dior and Christian Louboutin

The Impact of the Slave Trade and Colonisation
Africa’s dress was influenced by its colonisers, who took possession of the land after the slave trade and imposed their dress on the indigenous people in their quest to modernise them. Hence it is an area of history that cannot be ignored when speaking of African fashion today.

The Slave Trade and its Legacy
The BBC article, The church: Enslaver or liberator, Reddie (2011) suggests that experts and theorists often explain that the state of the continent today is still the result of the slave trade, which took place in the continent.

The transatlantic trade also created the devastating conditions for the subsequent colonial conquest of Africa by the European powers. Along with colonialism came religion; which also uprooted long established traditions and contributed to the notion that what is western is better. In Pre-colonial Africa, traditional dress played a central role in bringing together aesthetic expression,
sexual attraction and social organisation (Rabine 2002).

Post-colonial identities in African dress
Speaking of modification of dress and decoration in non-western cultures, Craik (1993) notes that indigenous languages and local dress codes were all stifled as if the possession of a new visible identity worn on the body ensured the possession of a new ‘modern’ identity. She adds:

“Clothes became a weapon in the struggle between colonisers and colonised. First the colonisers used clothes to impose the authority of western ways; later, local people used indigenous clothes to resist that imposition”. (1993:27)

Eicher & Sumberg (1995) observe that in numerous places, ethnic dress appears to be the everyday wear for females. Men seem to replace ethnic attire with trousers and shirts more readily than women replace theirs with western alternatives. Demand in the labour market away from the villages, was a factor in redefining the clothing practice in the continent.

Rovine (2009) states, “while the drive to colonize and convert Africans led to coerced or forced adoption of western clothing, it is important to recognise that the presence of western styles in Africa often constitutes a creative adaptation rather than a capitulation.” (2009:135)

“A major factor informing the construction and articulation of ethnic identities through fashion has been cultural displacement. Forced to relocate to different parts of the world due to a variety of reasons, including slavery, poverty, and religious or political persecution, displaced ethnic minority groups invariably utilise cultural resources such as dress and music, as a means of marking out new cultural spaces for themselves. This is particularly common among the youth of ethnic minorities.” (2005:113)

The Celebration and Exploitation of Ethnic Styles
African form and design have stimulated the creativity of western fashion designers for many years (Loughran 2009). The African cultures have been adopted to renew high fashion’s seasonal sensibilities. This aesthetic in high fashion was to draw attention to these cultures whilst manipulating them for commercial ends (Whitley 2005:82). In Beyond Desire, the authors have explored the interconnections of global fashion and have concluded that fashion is not designed to provide its audience and consumer with any accurate, global perspectives. Poole (2013) and Akiib (2013) explained in their interviews that it is a good thing that everyone is inspired by Africa and the current love affair with all things African is very positive. They agreed with Whitley (2005) that fashion is all about making money; and new collections need a story to seduce the consumer. And stories are often inspired by a particular era or they can be geographically linked to a particular region.

The Celebration of the Ethnic Style
African fashion has been a big trend in the last few seasons. The mainstream fashion media and celebrities alike have celebrated it. Beyoncé Knowles and Black Eye Peas’ Fergie just to name a few have worn these trends. The celebrity following has played an important part in the consumption of African fashion. High street chains such H&M, Topshop, Aldo and online retailer ASOS reacted to customer demand and stocked African prints garments.

The Portrayal of Africa in Western Fashion
Loughran (2009) suggests that exoticism and the allure of otherness have a long history in European fashion. The colonies were seen as a source for aesthetic inspiration and exotic raw materials like tropical woods and ivory for consumer goods. Bennett (1995) also suggested that designers feed the desire for the exotic through pre-formed expectations prompted by the media. Western designers such as Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood, John Galliano and Yves St Laurent have long drawn on the vibrancy of African cultures for theirs collections (Alderman 2012). More often than not, when a trend or collection is labelled tribal or ethnic, the same imagery are shown; such as leopard prints, animal skins and raffia.

Over time, many African designers and journalists have voiced concerns about the ways in which western designers adopt the visual language of Africa. Jennings (2011), Poole (2013) and Otas (2013) argue that it is nice that western fashion industry “borrows” from Africa but often their collections represent the cliché of what the perception of Africa is. It is somewhat difficult to hail these collections as a celebration of Africa. Loughran (2009) observes that often-frivolous language and upbeat sales pitches in magazines accompany these collections. But most of the information is not intended as ethnographies and are often inaccurate. They are not intended to educate but seduce and sell the
Poole (2013) strongly argues that using terms such as tribal, ethnic and safari when referring to an African inspired collection is a cheap trick and very cliché. In her opinion it is a practice that has been going on for a long time and consumers will always be given this short hand by the mainstream media. But that is not progress for African fashion and this need to change. It is now up to Africans to tell their own story.

**Cultural Misappropriation and Exploitation**

Rovine (2009) notes that a lot of attention on non-western fashion in academic circles had been focused on Asia, which has also been a source of “exotic” inspiration for Westerners much like Africa; as well as a producer of internationally renowned fashion designers such as Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo; but this has not been the case for Africa. Rovine’s statement raises concerns of exploitation of African dress and fashion. While Africa’s profile in international fashion circle is currently highlighted as a source of inspiration for western designers and a current trend with a big following, a lot of African designers who are also engaged in innovative transformations of African styles receive little to no attention in the international fashion media (Rovine 2004, Poole 2013, Otas 2013, Kitoko 2013, Akib 2013 and Ademiluyi 2013) An article by Rotiwa (2012) on the blog One Nigerian boy, claimed that Burberry's Spring/Summer 2012 collection was inspired by their visit to the Nigerian label Jewel by Lisa on a trip to her studio in Lagos, Nigeria. Although their collection was a result of their visit, Burberry did not credit their source nor did they reference the collection’s apparent African influence.

There have been numerous cases where western brands have done more than borrow from other cultures. Theorists and fashion professionals argue that fashion has always been about appropriation of other cultures and it has long been in the business of feeding the desire for the exotic. But in some cases, issues emerge when designers or brands do not reference the source of the creation. One case is that of Urban Outfitters, who sold a “vintage dress” without acknowledging the origin of the dress as being Ethiopian dress. There was an outrage in the media when a girl of Ethiopian origin posted a picture of her wearing the traditional dress. The dress on the Urban Outfitter’s website showed this. The company claimed that it was part of the “Urban Renewal” vintage collection, a one-off item whose design they could not verify (LaVecchia, 2013).

Another example that caused an outrage was designer Matthew Williamson who did not reference the inspiration for two dresses in his Spring/Summer 2008 collection. The dresses were so similar to Ethiopia’s traditional dress; that the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Oxfam launched an investigation into the matter (Lee, 2007). A spokesperson for Matthew Williamson’s company issued the statement “The design team derived inspiration from various African countries and tribal groups. Matthew Williamson strives to gain recognition not only for the traditional dress of Ethiopia but also for other African communities. He had no desire to offend such communities” (Haileselassie 2007)

Christian Dior’s 1997 collection was promoted and marketed as a Maasai inspired collection, acknowledging the African connection. Further research has shown that the collection had not been referenced properly. The neckpieces were indeed Maasai inspired but the beaded corset on the evening gowns were from the Dinka, a separate African tribe.

Christian Louboutin’s Ulona shoes are another example of a western brand that did not reference the source of their inspiration. The shoes bear an obvious resemblance to the artwork and dress of the Ndebele tribe of South Africa but this has only been pointed out by bloggers who have written about it.

**Exploitation of Labour**

Vivienne Westwood in collaboration with Yoxx.com started an ethical fashion programme in Kenya as part of the International Trade Centre. Their aim is to create fair and dignified employment for 70,000 women in Africa with the slogan “Not charity just work” (Vivienne Westwood 2011). She and other designers such as Ilaria Fendi and Edun have been producing goods with the locals and selling them in the west under their brand. But when asked by Suzy Menkes (IHT conferences 2012) about labelling their product “Made in Africa”, their answer was that they would rather not do that. Their refusal to acknowledge the craftsmanship of these women leads to the conclusion that western brands are exploiting the locals for cheap labour. Otas (2013) strongly argued that western labels are going to produce their goods in Africa because it is cheaper. “You do those things in the name of Fair Trade, the labour is intensive but you pay them peanuts then you come to Europe and sell it for how much?” That is exploitation.
The Importance of Fashion in Africa
Fashion and clothing trade is one the biggest industries in Africa alongside agriculture and telecommunication. Fabric and dress have always been a way for people to express emotions as mentioned earlier. The impact the fashion system has on global markets and the important role that the industry plays in the financial sector of the global economy makes it relevant to address the role that fashion assumes in African countries. The growing amount of African fashion and accessories boutiques in European capitals also indicates new market trends and demands (Loughran 2009:257)

What is African Fashion?
It is a challenging task to define what African fashion is, given that Africa is a continent of 53 nations with diverse people, cultures, traditions and sense of style. Poole (2013) argues that the term “African fashion” is wrong and misleading and it shouldn’t be used so freely. Africa is a vast continent where we find a lot of ethnic groups, each with their own identity and style. In her interview she explained that when people speak of African fashion, there are issues around cultural appropriation and stereotype. Fashion magazines and papers in the west always refer to African fashion with headlines talking of “Tribal fashion” or “Ethnic Fashion”, terms, which irritate many Africans.

“African fashion is not one thing. Fashion from Ethiopia is very different to the fashion from South Africa: which in itself may be different to the fashion in Nigeria; which in itself is different to the fashion in Ghana. So often these fashions are not shown differently. And unfortunately in the mainstream fashion press, they show the “homogenised” idea and that’s what designers sell to us.” (Poole 2013)

The Future of African Fashion
One of the positive effects of globalisation is that now there is a rise in the celebration of culture by various ethnic groups (Giddens 2003). This may be explained as a way to hold on to the uniqueness of a group in the face of the homogenised culture brought on by globalisation. As Rovine (2009) notes, the influence of the west on African style has been well documented, and often described as a loss of Africa’s traditional cultures in the face of overpowering globalisation. Despite this influence, you can still find ethnic groups who have been able to resist the transformation from traditional to western and retain their strong cultural and moral framework. The people of the Maasai and Dinka tribes are an example of such ethnic groups. And they are still a source of inspiration for many designers worldwide.

Conclusion
The structure of fashion has seen a big change in the last fifty years, both in the west and Africa. Fashion has many ways to communicate and its inspiration is still multicultural. With so many western designers and media paying homage to Africa and its culture, it can be said that the African presence has laid a valuable foundation for the future. “As both the western and African fashion systems begin to converge on some levels, a universal fashion system may become a reality. The work of fashion designers all around the globe will continue to display foreign aesthetic forms (Loughran 2009) as the allure of exoticism will always entice consumers.

Despite all the political and economical problems, there is a strong belief amongst African professionals that aid is not the way forward but it is important that Africa’s top entrepreneurs are actively involved in developing the continent. It is up to Africans to capture the momentum and take the continent forward.

The future looks bright for Africa as the gaze of the world is finally fixated on the continent for trade and not just aid, as it had been the case for decades. And a more structured fashion industry has the potential to help the development of a better economy.

References
The Fashion Industry in India and its Social Responsibility

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Abstract
In many developing countries, the export-oriented garment industry, catering primarily to Western markets, has spearheaded economic development. Employing mainly young women with limited or no education and few alternatives, the industry is often characterized by long hours of work at low wages, insecurity and poor working conditions with little concern for health and safety standards. This paper uses the organization Market Place: Handwork of India as a case study to analyze the sustainability of an export-based model of apparel manufacturing that also has a stated mission to engage in fair trade, use locally sourced materials, and employ low-income women artisans. Market Place has its roots in SHARE, a non-profit organization formed in Mumbai in 1980 to help low-income women make hand-made quilts for sale. The quilts were sold in the United States through exhibitions and home sales. Since then SHARE was restructured to encompass multiple independent cooperatives. In 1986, MarketPlace: Hand work of India was incorporated in Chicago to sell the products through catalogue marketing. MarketPlace is an excellent example which highlights the contribution and value of indigenous arts and crafts to fashionable attire and home decor for sale abroad. It is an innovative, not-for-profit organization which combines the experience of running a business with a variety of support programs designed to effect meaningful and lasting change in the lives of low-income women in Mumbai. The paper draws on interviews with the founders of the organization, women artisans who work for MarketPlace, Production Heads and the Project Coordinator to investigate the long-term sustainability of such an organization. The paper investigates how the use of traditional hand-crafted textiles and artisan’s skills are employed to produce high-value, fashionable apparel and home decor with an Indian touch for an American clientele. The paper also analyses the aspects of the organization that draws women artisans to work for it; the impact of their work and income on the women themselves and on their families and how it contributes to the social and economic development of the communities to which they belong. The women workers attend programs that offer educational and enrichment opportunities designed to help them overcome personal, cultural and financial obstacles. These women use their training and earnings to improve the lives of their children by providing them with education and better career opportunities. The artisans have also become social activists and use the skills they have learned in the workplace to improve conditions in their communities. Worker empowerment, social entrepreneurship and social responsibility are other aspects that will be addressed in the paper.

Introduction
The export-oriented garment industry is considered an avenue for developing countries to grow their economies, enter the global trade market and gain valuable foreign exchange. The Ready Made Garment (RMG) industry has been credited as a primary driver for East Asia’s entry into export-led growth, paving the way for growth in other economic sectors as well. Moreover, the entry of females into waged labor is seen as a positive as it provides the income needed to lift them and their families out of poverty.

However, the RMG industry is also known for its lack of enforcement of safety standards, a disregard for the health of its workers, low wages, long work days and in particular for the manner in which it uses young female labor as an expendable or easily replaceable resource. Scholars note that instead of being partakers of development, women are systematically being denied their share of the benefits brought about by globalization (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2004).
Economist Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999) uses the term “development” to mean an improvement in the standard of living in a country through increased opportunities for its citizens. If this definition is applied to the garment manufacturing industry, it may be difficult to establish conclusively that the industry has brought about improved well-being and opportunities along with economic development, as often the economic gains of owners and subcontractors is at the expense of workers in the industry.

This paper aims to explore and analyze the viability of an alternate, progressive model for garment manufacturing, particularly for female workers through a case study of an organization based in the city of Mumbai, India. Marketplace: Handwork of India is an innovative, fair trade, not-for-profit organization that manufactures and markets apparel and home decor made by low-income women residing in the slums of Mumbai. The products are marketed in the United States through mail order catalogues, specialty stores and the Internet. I aim to demonstrate in the paper that garment manufacturing that takes into account the constraints faced by women workers and accommodates their need for flexibility, autonomy and a living wage can lead to profits and socio-economic development for the workers.

For this study, the founders of the organization, the heads of the various Production Groups, the artisans who execute the products and the Project Coordinator were interviewed to collect data and investigate the long-term sustainability of such an organization.

Garment manufacturing – An industry dominated by female labor
Worldwide, production of garments follows cheap or fast labor. While a limited amount of clothing manufacturing takes place in developed countries, it is more often outsourced to countries with low labor costs, and is known to move even within the developing world in response to lower wages, a phenomenon known as “re-sourcing”. As the industry moves in search of cheap labor the “comparative advantage of women’s disadvantage” (Arizipe & Aranda, 1981) has made them the cheapest and hence most preferred labor in the industry.

Most female employment in the garment industry is in factories or workshops, although large numbers work out of their homes on a piece-rate basis for manufacturers or their intermediaries (Carr, Chen, & Tate, 2000). Workers in factories and workshops are often subjected to sweatshop conditions, working on “flexible” contracts for low wages in inadequately ventilated rooms, denied bathroom breaks by their supervisors and even subjected to sexual harassment by male supervisors (Raworth, 2004). Workers are subjected to extreme exploitation and sweat shop awareness organizations estimate that 85% of sweatshop workers are young women between 15-25 years. Sweat shops exist because companies want to minimize costs and hence look for places with the lowest wages and human rights protection. Such workshops are found all over Central and South America, Asia and certain regions of Europe and even in American cities like New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Companies like Nike and Gap spend millions on advertising and CEO salaries while the workers barely get enough to feed and clothe themselves and their families (Women and Sweatshops, 2001).

Women are generally discriminated against in terms of access to higher paid positions. They are considered only as sewing and finishing helpers and machinists. It is rare to find women working as cutting masters, production managers, supervisors, finishing and machine operators or who draw regular salaries (Absar, 2001). Moreover, the owners and sub-contractors engage in ‘double book keeping’ to hide the long hours put in by employees. A Sri Lankan garment worker received a paper bag with her pay printed on it. Inside the bag was another paper with her overtime pay attached. Workers are cautioned not to show the second piece of paper to outsiders and inspectors when they are questioned (Raworth, 2004).

Garment manufacturing in Asia
The ephemeral nature of the garment industry can be gauged from the fact that over the course of the last few decades, even within the developing world, the industry has moved from countries such as India and Sri Lanka to others that have still lower wages, such as Bangladesh and Cambodia (Ahamad, 2012). Today, China and Bangladesh hold first and second place respectively in the volume and value of garments manufactured within their territories.

The RMG industry in China employs over 15 million people, most of whom are young women migrants who have to work 10-12 hours (at times even up to 15-16 hours), dismissed at short notice and not paid on time. Labor laws are not followed by 90% of private companies, 60% have no written contracts, 90% have no access to social insurance. This is tantamount to economic bondage as the employees pay in advance for the work visas when they begin their contract and are even made to hand over ID cards and pay deposits. Being migrants they are unaware of their legal rights and entitlements (Raworth, 2004).

Bangladesh is another destination for garment manufacture as wages are very low. The national minimum monthly wage is as low as USD 38 (Kulkarni, 2013). Pope Francis has compared the conditions
under which they earn this amount to slave labor (Weerasooriya, 2013). Officially about 43% of Bangladeshis live below the poverty line. Women make up an estimated 80% of Bangladesh’s four million workers in the textile industry (Evans, 2013). According to Dr Mustafa Mujeri, the Director General of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, workers rights are not given importance, especially in the garment sector; safety aspects are neglected, leading to many tragic incidents (Kulkarni, 2013).

Recently 1,129 garment workers perished when Rana Plaza collapsed (Scholte, 2013). The fire at Tarzeen Fashions killed over 100 workers. This has turned global attention to safety standards and it is hoped that there will be better safety standards and working conditions for women who dominate the work force (Pasricha, 2013). However, the industry is also considered a vehicle for the empowerment of women in Bangladesh, as garment workers become earning members of society who can effect change. Dowry rates and early marriages have declined, and the women are gaining independence (Scholte, 2013).

In the global market, India was ranked as the fifth largest exporter of garments, trailing Bangladesh, Hong Kong, EU-27 and China. The RMG industry continues to be an important employer as well as earner of foreign exchange, accounting for 39% of the total textile trade (GOI, 2013).

The RMG industry in India too, is insensitive to its women workers. There is no job security, non-completion of unrealistic targets or minor mistakes may lead to termination while verbal harassment to increase production is common. Late reporting, leave taken for personal or medical reasons often result in suspension or even termination. An extreme case reported is of a woman who was not allowed to leave work when she developed labor pains and lost her baby because she did not reach the hospital in time (Singh, 2009).

Training needs are often not recognised by factory owners. A researcher of women workers in the garment sector in Bangladesh, suggested to factory owners that the women be trained to become supervisors, leading to promotions, increased wages and reduced work hours. The Head of one factory responded that if the women were trained, they would not obey the male supervisors and it would be difficult to control them (Patternsson, 2011).

In Pakistan, UNDP sponsored ‘GEN-PROM’ a project aimed at creating job opportunities for women through skill training. KSA Technopack, (experts in the apparel sector) was hired for the training. Satellite Training Units were established in select factories to act as recruitment and training facility to provide scientific training. Along with interviews, tests were conducted and administered through a recognised and standardised procedure. Through this project a total of 587 Master tailors and 10,028 workers were trained and employed. Supervisors reported that 81% of the trained workers were better than existing workers proving that scientific training was beneficial (UNDP, 2009).

Although the garment industry continues to look for low wages, recent research indicates that many consumers demand information about the conditions under which goods are manufactured. The results of a study by Professors at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University showed that a segment of consumers are willing to pay more for clothes that carried signs about fair labor practices (MIT Political Science, 2012).

MarketPlace – the Organization

MarketPlace evolved from small beginnings. In 1980, two sisters living in Mumbai founded Support the Handicapped’s Rehabilitation Effort (SHARE) a non–profit organization with just three low-income women. The women were taught to hand-sew patchwork quilts, which were then sold through home sales and exhibitions in the United States. By 1983, the number of women involved with the project grew to 75. Subsequently one of the founders moved to Chicago and in 1986, Marketplace: Handwork of India was incorporated in Chicago as a non-profit organization with SHARE (in Mumbai) responsible for supplying the products. In 1990 the first catalogue of women’s apparel and home decor products characterized by traditional hand woven fabrics, tailored and embroidered by the artisans was published. By 1992 there were over 120 artisans working for SHARE. The larger numbers necessitated organizational restructuring and as a consequence multiple independent co-operatives were formed.

Today, there are seven independent production groups which supply to MarketPlace-Chicago. SHARE is responsible for the social development and leadership building of the artisans and develops several programs to facilitate empowerment (in consultation with the artisans). MarketPlace, Mumbai oversees the business aspects of the endeavor including skill and management training, production coordination, and the involvement of artisans from the different groups in Design and Quality control.

The Production Groups (PGs as they are called) are Arpan, Ashiyana, Ghar Udyog, Nirmaan, Puspanjali, Sahara and WARE (Women Artisans Rehabilitation Enterprise). Of these Arpan and Ashiyana are ‘women only’ co-operatives while the rest have a few men also.

There are tailors, embroiderers, quality checkers, supervisors and cutters in the groups (Fig 1). At
times women double up as quality checkers, supervisors, tailors or cutters. Embroidery artisans are more in number (55%) as it is easier to train the women for embroidery as compared to tailoring which requires more skill.

The women range in age from 18 – 60 years with 63% of the women being above 36 years (Fig 2). In contrast about 80% of the women in the RMG industry in India are women between 21-25 years of age (Singh, 2009). In China there is significant discrimination against women workers over 35 years (Domoney, 2007).

The literacy rates of the artisans range from illiterate to college educated; with the majority having completed Middle school (Fig 3). Most women have not had much opportunity for education.
The majority of the women artisans (82%) are married (Fig 4).

Loyalty is strong among the artisans and many have worked at MarketPlace for long periods. In the more established Production Groups, artisans have worked for longer periods, as compared to the newer groups, where the period of employment is shorter. Overall 37% artisans have worked for over 17 years (Fig 5).

Slums are an integral part of Mumbai and are not purely residential; 6.7% of households double up as commercial spaces (Census India, 2011). Almost all the PGs are located in the same slums that artisans live in. As a result, the amount of time spent travelling to the workplace is negligible and it is possible for them to return home during working hours if required.

Artisan handicrafts are the second largest source of employment in India. At MarketPlace, all products are of cotton fabric that is mostly hand woven and hand printed and sourced from small / medium scale entrepreneurs located in different parts of the country. *Ikats* and *Kalamkari* fabrics are sourced from Andhra Pradesh, *Bagh* and block prints from Madhya Pradesh and Batik /resist techniques from Udyog Kala Kendra at Uttan near Mumbai. All products made at MarketPlace incorporate a small amount of embroidery or other handwork in order to provide employment to embroidery artisans.

MarketPlace is a Fair Trade organization where artisans receive fair payment per piece of work. When questioned how the wages are fixed, a PG Head said “the time taken to complete a task by a fast worker and a slow worker is averaged to determine the piece rate that will give a minimum wage”. In 2010 the rate was calculated at Rs. 28 per hour but in 2013 it has been raised to Rs. 35 per hour, clearly indicating that as living costs rise, the wages at MarketPlace have also risen.

**How Marketplace Functions**

The President and Vice President of MarketPlace, along with the designer from the US, visit Mumbai twice in a year to conduct Design workshops (one each for Fall/ Holiday and Spring/Summer
collections) and plan the production. Colors for the seasons are planned in advance and tested by printing swatches using existing blocks. Meanwhile new blocks are designed (in the US) and carved (in India). Once the colors are approved, swatches are developed using the new blocks and sent to Chicago for approval. The designer from the US designs the collection based on her knowledge of the American customers preference and sends it to Mumbai. She visits Mumbai a few days before the commencement of the Design workshops to personally check on the progress and make necessary changes. Garments are designed in simple styles to ensure minimum wastage of fabric. Sample garments are made ready before the design workshop. To develop and plan the embellishment, around fifteen embroidery artisans attend the design workshop. Neither too much nor too little embroidery is approved as it would result in the garments being too expensive or artisans reduced earnings respectively. Once the products are finalized, the team from the US returns back. Two samples per design are made of which one is sent to Chicago where they are reviewed and the collection finalized, subsequently production orders are placed.

Work is distributed among the PGs depending on their size, infrastructure and capability with the group leaders taking the final decision. The PGs order the fabric independently. After stitching/embroidering the products, quality checking is done at a central facility by women from the PGs; the goods are then packed and shipped to the US from where it is sold.

MarketPlace has various social programs, which functions under SHARE and are coordinated by a Project Coordinator. These programs have brought about change in the lives of the women and their families. According to the President of the organization, “Marketplace is about giving women a chance to prove themselves, make a difference and bring about change that will benefit their daughters and sons and the society at large.”

Unlike typical garment manufacturing units where managerial positions are usually staffed by men, MarketPlace has few men on the rolls. The ‘master cutter’ at one PG is a woman who had worked in a private firm at a higher wages but shifted because of time flexibility. She likes the work environment which she characterizes as friendly and home-like. Three of the production groups are headed by women and most groups have women as tailoring and embroidery supervisors.

Earlier, the Production Groups were restricted to manufacturing for MarketPlace alone, but between seasons the artisans did not have enough work to sustain them. Workers in the garment industry tend to be recruited under flexible contracts: hired during seasons of peak demand and laid off when production slackens. In an effort to ensure that the artisans have continuous work, MarketPlace has encouraged the groups to produce for the local market during the lean periods, while protecting the distinctive MarketPlace ‘look’ for their export business.

When asked how he was able to pay fair wages for the local products, a Production Head answered “Local products are stitched in less time with minimum embroidery and hardly any importance given to the finish; for the export market more time is devoted to get a perfectly tailored and embroidered product. The difference in time balances the wages.” Quotes from the artisans are printed in the catalogues, which decreases the distance between artisan and customer. Marketplace also has a blog where customers can add their comments.

A Women-centered Approach

The aim of MarketPlace is to uplift women and give them and their families a better life; it is seen that 92% of the artisans are women and they are permitted to join a PG only if they are unable to find jobs elsewhere. The Project Coordinator visits the home to check on the genuineness of the applicant’s status.

Developing Skills through on-the-job Training

Some women who join the Production Groups come with basic sewing skills, however they lack the expertise required to execute quality products in an efficient manner. Realizing the importance of training, SHARE has started a training cell named Umang. A sewing expert has been appointed to train the newcomers to sew with speed and accuracy; an in-house trainer follows-up with the training. The scraps left over from cutting waste are used in training and made into strips/squares. The patchwork pieces thus created are converted into a variety of bags and accessories and also incorporated into some garments. In order to motivate them, trainees are paid a small stipend. Once the trainee has acquired the necessary skills, she joins one of the Production Groups and starts stitching simple garments, graduating to more difficult garments with time. One of the artisans knew how to sew but still underwent training. When interviewed, she said “The training was very useful. I realized how important it is to stitch perfectly.” With pride she added “My work and speed have improved so much that I now earn almost double of what I got when I joined six months back.” This artisan is a graduate who had worked in a private company in a clerical position. According to her “The work environment and job satisfaction is much better here, I would never want to change jobs again.”
Transparency and Flexibility
SHARE and MarketPlace ensure that the artisans are involved in decision-making at all levels. The wages paid for the products are prominently displayed on a board in the work area. This transparency ensures that the women are not cheated of their just wages. Artisans interviewed for this study unanimously stated that one of the reasons they are happy working for MarketPlace was because of time flexibility. Eight hours per day is the norm for tailoring work. Except during the sampling period, all the embroidery artisans take the work home to do it in their spare time. The tailors report for work at 10:30 am after completing their household chores. With a short lunch break in between they continue to work till 6:30 p.m. A few women report later as they have responsibilities which prevent them from coming earlier. An artisan with an infant starts work late. She waits for her husband, (an auto rickshaw driver) to come home after his night shift to take care of their infant. In the evening the husband drops the child at her mother’s place as she works till 8 pm. Another unmarried artisan said that she works from 2 – 6 p.m. When asked why she worked such short hours she said “I have an invalid mother, whom I have to take care of and also complete the household chores before I come.” She is however happy that she can work for four hours each day and earn some money. Yet another artisan said “I like to work here because I am able to attend the PTA meetings at the children’s schools, attend to sick family members or visit them in hospital and even rush home in an emergency”. Flexibility that MarketPlace offers in integrating work and family responsibilities has enhanced the family life of the artisans (Littrell & Dickson, 2010).

Empowerment and Leadership
The “Leadership by Design” approach adopted at MarketPlace empowers the women and they have been successful in bringing about positive changes in their lives and their communities. Because of organizational restructuring, women had to shoulder more responsibilities and wean away from SHARE. As the artisans began to manage their own co-operatives, they learned how to source the fabrics, manage their finances, control and plan production and quality and also have a fair idea of design. SHARE continues to facilitate social and educational programs, which provides support to groups and individual artisans. Global Dialogue, Social Action and Armaan Club are three of the major initiatives and a Project Coordinator (specialized in Social work) is responsible for planning and implementing the programs along with the women.

The Social Action program aims to get the co-operatives involved in their communities and bring about change. Experts from diverse fields are invited to address the artisans and advise them on problems they face in their daily lives. The artisans themselves identify social problems within their communities and have been instrumental in opposing deeply entrenched and widely prevalent issues such as domestic violence. The women staged street plays to highlight the negative consequences for the victims and families of domestic violence. One group initiated a sanitation drive and asked neighbors to stop throwing garbage outside their doorways and demanded that the municipal authorities pick the garbage regularly, resulting in a cleaner environment. Members of another group took up health issues for women and children and sought health care training offered through a social service agency. On completion of the training, the women visited other Marketplace groups and educated them on health issues.

A visit to a police station was arranged to encourage the women to seek the help of police when required. The women have also addressed issues such as poor supply of clean drinking water, corrupt ration storekeepers, health, education and legal issues and have been successful in their endeavors. The Reserve Bank of India is trying to promote financial inclusion and it is reported that only 46.8% of slum dwellers availed of banking services (India Census, 2011). To improve their financial literacy, a group of artisans attended a program presented by Citibank, where they were taught the fundamentals of money management, credit, saving, investing, household budgeting and financial planning. Artisans have been encouraged to open bank accounts and when interviewed, they reported that they are unable to save on a regular basis, but try to deposit a small amount whenever possible.

Training in yoga, stress management, spoken English are a few of the other programs organized for the women. A health camp for detecting anemia showed that 85% of the women were anemic. Supplements were provided to the women to overcome the deficiency. All the artisans have been provided with Artisan photo ID cards, issued by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Government of India. Besides enabling the artisans to apply for any of the schemes promoted by the government, the card also provides them with free stalls at any exhibition organized by the government.

Global Dialog is a program that facilitates communication between the artisans and the customers. A theme is selected for the catalogue and the artisans express their views on the themes. Feedback of the customers regarding the products is also printed in the catalogue. In contrast, in other garment industries, most workers don’t even know the destination of the products they help manufacture.
Armaan Club aims to empower the children of the artisans and provide them out of school enrichment. The children have been attending karate classes which train them in self defense; football coaching is conducted in collaboration with an NGO 'Magic Bus'. The children have been trained in computers, and a seminar was organized for Career Guidance. They have also gone on overnight camps. Although not highly educated themselves, the education of their children is a priority for the artisans. The results of the data collected reveals that almost all the children go to school. Most of the older children have completed the Secondary level, while others are pursuing studies in Commerce, Pharmacy, Hotel Management and IT. Two of the girls have become Software and Aviation engineers. Post graduation in Computers and Business management are other achievements of the children. All mothers interviewed reported that they were able to support the education of their children only because of the additional income they received from work and also the exposure that they and their children received from the various programs organized by MarketPlace.

The well being of the artisans is of paramount importance. When a ‘global assessment of satisfaction’ study was conducted, MarketPlace artisans rated satisfaction with life prior to working for MarketPlace at an average of 2.3 on a seven-point scale. Interestingly, the rate of satisfaction with life increased to 5.7 after working for MarketPlace indicating that well being enhanced as a result of their work (Littrell & Dickson, 2010).

When women are part of a group they share ideas and learn from each other, find support in times of difficulty and get the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns which helps them overcome isolation (Jones, 2012). MarketPlace provides such an environment. Living wage is the minimum income required for a dignified level of living. The Asia Floor wage calculated assumes that the workers are fully employed, but at MarketPlace, there is under-employment yet the artisans are better off than their counterparts. During peak production periods, 62% of the artisans are able to earn a living wage. When the earnings from slow and high production were averaged, 44% of the artisans earn a living wage, of which 58% are tailors and 38% embroiderers (Littrell & Dickson, 2010).

Marketplace believes in inclusiveness and there are a few disabled artisans who would never have found employment elsewhere. The fellow artisans are very accommodating and help them whenever required. The outcome of empowerment and leadership is seen in the career path of one of the middle aged artisans. Many years back, the President of MarketPlace saw much promise in her and sponsored her participation in a Para-social course at Tata Institute of Social Studies, a premier institute located in Mumbai. She has been instrumental in many social programs in her neighborhood and was elected Municipal Ward President. In her present position she is able to sanction many government facilities such as loans to buy equipment which help the women generate additional income. She has also been instrumental in forming small cooperatives among the women in her ward which helps them avail of loans and save as well. As Municipal Ward President she has many duties to fulfill and so has recently left MarketPlace. She credits her success to the training and encouragement she received while working at MarketPlace.

Challenges Faced at MarketPlace
According to the President of MarketPlace, challenges are many; the low literacy levels of the artisans was a major challenge in the early years. During quality checking the artisans could not write the code numbers properly in English and one alphabet would be mistaken for another one resulting in much confusion. The motto of MarketPlace is to make the artisans self reliant, so they did not resort to outside help and the problem was solved by using rubber stamps. All products were given Indian names like Savita Jacket, Mansi Tunic, Geetha Dress, Kesari Pants instead of alpha-numerical codes, making it easier for the artisans to recognize the product. The younger artisans who joined later are marginally more literate so the problem is less acute.

Advanced technology adopted by the industry is another challenge as the speed of production has increased with computerised printing, embroidery and stitching. MarketPlace has grown organically and much of the work is hand done resulting in increased production time and expense. Although not a part of main stream demand, a niche market exists for these hand worked products in the United States.

Efforts have been made to get the Production Heads to think more analytically. However complacency and contentment with existing practises and fear of the unknown probably prevents experimentation or exploration.

Keeping true to the mission of MarketPlace and conducting business quickly and ethically is challenging. The production groups are given 50% in advance, to facilitate purchase of fabric and product execution. The money is recovered many months later because of long lead time. Orders are
placed without knowing the exact demand of the customers, but based on past experience; this often leads to inaccurate decisions resulting in financial difficulties for the organisation. Customers are now used to quick delivery as ‘on-line’ shopping companies are able to deliver goods in 24 hours. MarketPlace takes a minimum of 5 days (if the products are in stock) and longer if they have to be ordered and received from India after the customer has placed the order.

Conclusion

Indian philosopher Swami Vivekanda said, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.” From the inception of MarketPlace, the welfare of the women artisans has been of paramount importance; every effort has been made to help them generate income and elevate their position in society. The women are selected based on their needs and not on their skills unlike other RMG industries where skills are tested before appointment. Even disabled women are given an opportunity to work at MarketPlace. Through training programs, workshops and interactions with experts, women artisans obtain resources, skills and the confidence to be independent and challenge discriminating practices. These women have been instrumental in bringing about change in their families and communities. As artisans are involved in all aspects of the business, including purchase, production, quality control and management, they learn to take independent and collective decisions. This in turn is reflected in personal empowerment and collective action for the improvement of their immediate neighbourhoods and the community in which they live.

The working environment is comfortable and friendly with an empathetic approach towards the artisans, unlike the sweat shop conditions existing in many garments industries.

While women hardly ever hold supervisory or managerial positions in most RMG industries, at MarketPlace there are women Production Heads, Cutters and Supervisors. Additionally, MarketPlace is a preferred place of work because of the flexibility it offers its women artisans. Workers in many of the leading apparel-exporting countries earn little more than subsistence wages. At MarketPlace, artisans are paid fair wages with no discrimination between men and women. Producing for the socially conscious customer who is willing to pay more for clothes that are produced by workers treated fairly and humanely ensures that MarketPlace is able to live up to its motto of “Dignity not Charity”.

References


The Social and Economic Impacts of ‘Cool Biz’ and ‘Super Cool Biz’ Fashion in Japan

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Abstract
In Japan, there is a basic norm in men’s business fashion styles: suits and ties even in the summer time. This was changed drastically in 2005, when the Minister of Ministry of the Environment, Yuriko Koike proposed the ‘Cool Biz’ fashion, in order to decrease carbon gases which were made by over air-conditioning in the summer. Despite the long business fashion tradition, this ‘Cool Biz’ was widely accepted by most businessmen, because the traditional style of business fashion was not actually preferred due to the humid and hot climate in Japan.

In 2011, there was a disaster of the Great East Earthquake, which caused nuclear plant accidents leading to energy supply problems. In summer 2011, there was a severe shortage of electricity in many areas in Japan and many Japanese had to be conscious about sustainability and the environment. Many actions, including ‘Super Cool Biz’, were made to save energy in Japan. We think that the social concept of ‘Cool Biz’ and ‘Super Cool Biz’ was one of the largest impacts to energy consumption.

In this paper, we will discuss 1) the social and economic effects of Cool Biz and/or Super Cool Biz, 2) the changes in Cool Biz and/or Super Cool Biz fashion, using Picture Mining methods. We will make a review of history of men’s business fashion from the social, economic, cultural point of view to understand the fashion effects of Cool Biz and/or Super Cool Biz. Then, we will look into the changes using pictures taken in research from 2011 to 2013. In this analysis, we will introduce Picture Mining methods, a new research analysis method for surveys using pictures and images.

1. Introduction
In Japan, there is a long fashion tradition of summertime business fashion styles. Even in the middle of the summer, no matter how hot it was, it was the norm to wear a business jacket and tie. It was so strict that most of the Japanese thought that no projects could change this tradition, but in 2005, when the Minister of Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Yuriko Koike proposed ‘Cool Biz’ fashion, it drastically changed. The objective of her proposal was to decrease carbon gases which were made by over air-conditioning in the summer. Afterwards, in 2011, there was a disaster of the Great East Earthquake, which lead to severe electricity supply shortage, due to meltdown of nuclear plants. The MOE made a new project, ‘Super Cool Biz’, extending the period of Cool Biz fashion styles and admitting diverse fashion styles.

There are reports regarding the impacts and effects of Cool Biz fashion styles, but there are few studies including Super Cool Biz fashion. In this study, we will first examine the history of business fashion styles in Japan to understand the Japanese businessmen’s fashion mind. We will divide the history into three eras, 1) before 2005, 2) 2005-2011, 3) After 2011, and identify each era’s characteristics. After understanding the history, we will discuss about Picture Mining, a new methodology of research, and use the methods to analyze the pictures of Cool Biz and/or Super Cool Biz (we will call this ‘Super/Cool Biz’ from now on) collected during 2011 to 2013 to determine the social and economic impacts of Super/Cool Biz fashion styles.

2. Men’s Summertime Business Fashion Styles in Japan
2.1 Before 2005: Era of business suits
The origin of the jacket of the contemporary business suit that businessmen wear today is the English
lounge jacket, first appearing in the late 1840s. Around in the 1860s, the jacket was combined with the vest and pants, which were made from the same fabric, as lounge suits. They are the basic models of the modern business suits (Yoshimura, 2007). The lounge suits were introduced to the United States as business suits and later became one of the men's styles in business scenes. In Japan, it was introduced in the Meiji period in the 19th century, and it became a more popular and common business fashion style after World War I. In the 1920s, these suits were widely accepted as the business fashion style among the upper class.

After World War II, during the late 1950s and 60s, there was an increase of population of businessmen in Japan, due to a sharp increase in economic growth. During this period, many Japanese businessmen thought of business suits and ties as necessities, rapidly making this fashion style a norm in Japanese society. This business suit style was called 'Dirty Rats Style' then, because everyone was wearing the same kind of dark black colored suits like rats. One reason everyone wore the same suits is that in Japanese companies and society, it was thought that unique and individual styles of fashion disturbed order and harmony. Another reason is the convenience of the combination of suit and necktie, which could be used on semi-formal occasions, such as in weddings or funerals just by changing colors of ties (white is for weddings, black is for funerals). It became a kind of uniform for the Japanese businessmen to wear business suits (Ishitani and Amano 2008).

In the late 1960s, there was a change in trends in the Japanese business fashion style. The suits became more colorful and fashionable, which was called 'Peacock Revolution'. Shirts, which were only white before the revolution, also became colorful. The business fashion styles became diversified. Along with the increase in demand of suits, ready-to-wear business suits became more popular. Westernization of lifestyles generated a large consumption of these business suits, and in the 1970s, low priced, large size specialized stores for men's business suits opened in the many suburban areas. The market for business suits rapidly grew during this period.

In the1980s, Italian designers’ fashion was introduced in Japan, and Italian designed and tailored business suits, such as Giorgio Armani became popular. Designs and styles of business suits were influenced by the fashion designs of these famous designers, often much more expensive than ready-to-wear ones. One the other hand, not only the large suburban retailers but also the General Merchandise Stores, started to sell cheap business suits, produced in China with a low cost, which made a mainstream for the business styles in Japan.

So, in Japan, we can define the 20th century as an era of business suits. Wherever and whenever, from business scenes to formal occasions, the Japanese businessmen wore these uniformed type business suits, a unique and original Japanese business fashion culture.

2.2 2005-2010: Introduction of Cool Biz

Until 2005, there was a basic norm in men's business fashion styles in Japan: suits and ties even in the summer time. Businessmen even wore jackets to be neat, tidy and to be polite in the summer, no matter how hot it was. It was considered even rude and lacked respect if you didn’t wear a jacket and tie even in the hottest days in middle of summer.

This was changed drastically in 2005, when the Minister Yuriko Koike of the Ministry of Environment (MOE), proposed the 'Cool Biz' fashion, in order to decrease carbon gases which were made by over air-conditioning in the summer. The main concept of Cool Biz, ‘No ties, no jackets’ were introduced and implemented from June 1, 2005. The word Cool Biz meant being ‘cool’ in both temperature control and being stylish.

At that time, the Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and government officers themselves practiced Cool Biz fashion for promotion and campaigns, which were expected to be widely accepted. The apparel manufacturers and retailers made marketing strategies for this, producing and selling open-necked shirts so that the men’s fashion will look tidy even without ties.

But, in fact, there were opposition movements during these first five years. During the oil crisis in 1979, there was once an energy saving fashion called 'Short sleeve jacket' (Izuishi, 2010). The design was not fashionable, stylish, and it was completely a failure. Many fashion critics pointed out their views of the importance of the traditional business suit and tie and emphasized that it was a standardized summer fashion style for businessmen in Japan (Tsujimoto, 2007).

Despite the worries of the critics or the long business fashion tradition, Cool Biz fashion was widely accepted by most businessmen, because the traditional style of business fashion was not actually preferred due to the humid and hot climate in Japan. But, many men considered Cool Biz fashion as just taking off the ties, still wearing their dark colored suits. The first years of Cool Biz fashion are represented by these ‘uncool’ fashion styles, but definitely, it was a revolutionary event in the Japanese business fashion styles. Objectives for Cool Biz fashion, which had both climate solutions and stylishness, were not achieved so actually it is not appropriate to call this period Cool Biz fashion era. Instead we can identify this period as ‘the era for traditional business styles without ties’.
2.3 After 2011: After the Great East Earthquake and Super Cool Biz Fashion

2.3.1 Great East Earthquake and the ‘Super Cool Biz’ fashion campaign

Cool Biz fashion was perceived as a ‘traditional business style without ties’ during the first years, because most men could not liberate their minds from the traditional business suits, which they had worn for many years. It was difficult for Japanese men to wear temperature controllable clothes in a cool, stylish and casual manner, especially with items in total coordination, such as shoes and belts. Few men could totally coordinate themselves as the ‘real’ Cool Biz fashion (both climate solution and stylish), and it was even said in blogs in the internet that ‘Cool Biz fashion has ended’ around in 2009.

But the environment of Cool Biz fashion suddenly changed. On March 11th 2011, there was the Great East Earthquake in eastern part of Japan, resulting in a meltdown of the nuclear plant in Fukushima. The Japanese economy had to face a severe shortage of electricity right after the earthquake in March, for example: planned blackouts were carried out in the suburban areas of Tokyo. It was clear that there will be a shortage in electricity supply in the summertime.

In late May, the MOE announced a new program to control energy. This was the ‘Super Cool Biz’ fashion. Since 2005, Cool Biz fashion was practiced from June to September when temperature is extremely high. The new program was to accelerate the Cool Biz fashion starting from May and ending it in October. Along with extending the period of the Cool Biz fashion, MOE introduced Super Cool Biz fashion for the core period (June to September). The program, which lasts for 6 months (Cool Biz fashion in May and October, Super Cool Biz fashion during June to September) was promoted to control electricity demand. The difference between Cool Biz fashion and Super Cool Biz fashion is the range of admitted business fashion style (MOE, 2012). Most of the fashion, which were admitted as Super/Cool Biz fashion are very casual, maybe not appropriate for business occasions (Table 1).

2.3.2 Economic and Social Impacts of Cool Biz fashion and Super Cool Biz fashion

It might be still early to discuss about the impacts of Super Cool Biz fashion, because the third summer has just ended. The impact of the first year of Super Cool Biz fashion (2011) is hard to measure because of the sudden announcement and implement. At the moment, few official announcements from the MOE have been made for the impacts of Super Cool Biz fashion. Though there are limitations, we can assume the economic and social impacts referring to the impacts of the Cool Biz fashion from 2005 as follows:

1) Energy consumption, which is a very important part of economic activities, was saved to make an efficient macro-economic production and distribution system.
2) New fashion items were consumed, which impacted the economy.
3) A social impact of changing fashion minds, which made men more fashion conscious.

We will discuss about the first and third impacts of Super/Cool Biz fashion in the next section using Picture Mining Methods. We will not handle with the second impact, for it is impossible to discuss the
matter with the pictures we collected. But this impact has been discussed in many reports such as the reports from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, that there is a certain effect in the economy.

3. Methodology: Picture Mining Methods

3.1 The concept and backgrounds of Picture Mining

3.1.1 Definitions and concepts

Picture Mining is the explorative method that takes useful information from pictures, static or moving images. It is often compared with the methods of text mining. The Picture Mining concept includes observational research in the broad sense, because it also aims to analyze moving images (Ochihara, Edo, Hiroi; 2010).

Recently, Picture Mining has been adopted in the marketing and research field. The reasons for this can be explained with the environmental changes surrounding pictures. It has two aspects, one is a change in the technological environment and the other is a change in the social environment. The technological environment, such as low price digital cameras, high information transmission speed, low costs for information transferring, and high performance and resolution of the cameras of mobile phones. The social environment has been influenced by the changes of the technological environment. Diffusion of mobile phones with digital cameras, downsizing and light-weighting of cameras have brought taking pictures into our daily life. As a result, there are no longer resistances in taking and processing pictures (Ochihara, et al., 2010).

3.1.2 Methods of Picture Mining

Ochihara et al. (2010) explains the analyzing process of Picture Mining with the following 6 steps;

1) Make picture cards for each of the photos
2) Record information from the questionnaire on the back side
3) Turn the questionnaire side above, classify, group, sample or abstract characteristics
4) Turn the picture side up, analyze for findings (repeat steps 3 and 4 for achieving findings from the pictures)
5) Confirm the findings found from step 3 and 4 with all of the pictures
6) Use other quantitative and/or qualitative methods for confirming findings.

The method of turning over the picture side and the information side is used so that the least bias level will influence the findings of the research. To use this research, there must be at least few researchers simultaneously analyzing the picture, avoiding subjective decisions. Quantitative analysis would be a means to avoid this too. In this study we will use these methods of Picture Mining to analyze the impacts of Super/Cool Biz.

3.1.3 The significance of Picture Mining in fashion analysis

Ochihara and Edo (2012) explains the validity of Picture Mining classifying research into language-dependent research and language-independent research. They emphasize that language-dependent research and analysis, such as questionnaire and surveys, have higher risks of bias than language-independent analysis. This bias occurs when 1) researchers encode the questions to communicate with the respondents, 2) respondents decode the questions, 3) respondents encode their answers to the given questions, 4) researchers decode the answers of the respondents. This happens severely when the situation is especially difficult to encode and/or decode. Fashion is one example of this situation (Edo, Kitakata and Yamasaki; 2013).

In fashion, there are many qualitative studies including the use of pictures. Fashion magazines often investigate fashion trends using observation and picture research. This is meaningful because it is difficult to explain one’s fashion just with words. The words have diverse meanings, which can lead to a misunderstanding of each other. For example, the color ‘red’ is different among cross-cultural countries. If you use a picture as a media for communication, there is a possibility that these misunderstandings are dissolved. It can be assumed that the more abstract a concept or definition is, the more the bias might exist. Methods of Picture Mining will be helpful in fashion research.

3.2 Picture collection and methodology

Pictures for this study were collected during the summer of 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Table 2). Samples were collected from an internet monitor system. To compare seasonal difference, most of the pictures of 2011 and 2013 were collected in August, while the pictures of 2012 were in June. Each year, females of ages 20 to 59 years, under employment were asked to send pictures of two male colleagues’ Super/ Cool Biz fashion. Instructions of photographing were given, for example, to take from under the neck to their feet standing without a pose. Picture samples were also shown. The purpose of these instructions was to standardize the taken pictures so that we could make an accurate analysis as
possible. When sending pictures, the respondents answered a simple questionnaire. It included respondents’ demographics as well as the demographics of the subjects in the photos. The internet was used to collect these pictures. 71 pictures in 2011, 124 in 2012 and 158 in 2013 were collected. After initial discarding of 24 pictures (2011), 17 (2012), 86 (2013), respectively, which were insincere or did not obey instructions, the pictures were used for the initial quantitative research. Although Picture Mining is a qualitative analysis, minimum results from the quantitative analysis are necessary. For the qualitative analysis, we discarded 1 picture (2011), 14 pictures (2012), 11 pictures (2013), which could not resist color analysis. The qualitative analysis was made by 4 researchers major in research and/or in fashion, including the authors in the manner of the most appropriate way mentioned before.

### Table 2. Picture Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pictures collected</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>August/July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of respondents</td>
<td>20s: 16%</td>
<td>20s: 16%</td>
<td>20s: 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30s: 17%</td>
<td>30s: 70%</td>
<td>30s: 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40s: 20%</td>
<td>40s: 34%</td>
<td>40s: 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50s: 18%</td>
<td>50s: 4%</td>
<td>50s: 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of subjects in photos</td>
<td>20s: 19%</td>
<td>20s: 17%</td>
<td>20s: 32%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30s: 11%</td>
<td>30s: 49%</td>
<td>30s: 78%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40s: 21%</td>
<td>40s: 31%</td>
<td>40s: 32%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50s: 13%</td>
<td>50s: 20%</td>
<td>50s: 11%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60s: 7%</td>
<td>60s: 7%</td>
<td>60s: 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial discarding</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Pictures for quantitative analysis</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pictures for qualitative analysis</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 Results

#### 4.1 Quantitative Analysis

**4.1.1 Types of Super/Cool Biz fashion**

Super/Cool Biz fashion can be analyzed from what people wear. Because of non-jackets and ties, basically, the Cool Biz fashion style is a combination of tops and pants. Statistical data shows that there are some changes in what people wear. In the year 2011, due to the effects of the Super Cool Biz campaign and energy shortage after the disaster, 26% were wearing non-Y shirts, most of which were Polo shirts (Table 3). Though Polo shirts were admitted in the Super Cool Biz fashion criteria in 2012 by the MOE, its use decreased to 11% in 2012, and 18% in 2013. The reason of the decrease in 2012 is because of the picture collection season (It was in June in 2012).

The color of pants has changed during these 3 years (Table 4). 28% are beige colored pants in the year 2011, but it decreases to 8% in 2012 and 7% in 2013. In Japan, beige colored chino pants are very popular and we can figure out that this was often used as Super Cool Biz fashion in 2011, even if they are considered a lit bit too casual.

### Table 3. Type of Cool Biz (Tops)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y-shirts</td>
<td>white 39</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>color 19</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>patterns 1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Y-shirts</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. Type of Cool Biz (Pants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cool Biz Pants</td>
<td>black 45</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beige 5</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gray 10</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other 10</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Suits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2 Coordination of Super/Cool Biz fashion

The coordination change of Super/Cool Biz fashion can be seen due to the use of chino pants (Table 5). The use of non-Y shirts combined with beige pants were 17% in 2011, but has decrease to 2% in 2012 and 3% in 2013. Polo shirts and beige chino pants were worn during the severe periods as Super/Cool Biz fashion, but many businessmen have recognized it was too casual in the business occasion. As a result we can see a tendency to recur to a more formal business fashion style, such as increase in business suits in the year 2012 and 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>black</td>
<td>white Y</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>color Y</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non Ys</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beige</td>
<td>white Y</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>color Y</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non Ys</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gray</td>
<td>white Y</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>color Y</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non Ys</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>white Y</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>color Y</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non Ys</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Business suits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Combination of Pants and Tops

4.2 Qualitative analysis

4.2.1 Short sleeve shirts

One of the findings we achieved from the qualitative analysis was the change of short sleeve shirts. In 2011, 39 out of 46 (85%) were wearing short sleeve shirts (both Y shirts and Polo shirts together). As a social impact of Super/Cool Biz fashion, many businessmen were conscious of the energy shortage, the air conditioning temperature inside buildings, which lead to a use of short sleeve shirts. In 2012, there was still an energy shortage issue, but it was not so severe as the one experienced in 2011. Also the people were prepared enough, and as a result, 63 out of 93 (67%) were in short sleeve shirts. In 2013, the wearing of short sleeve shirts even decreased more to 36 out of 61 (59%). This decrease in short sleeve shirts should be studied in context with the temperature and the electricity consumption (Table 6 and 7). Due to energy saving campaigns in 2011, and with many wearing short sleeve shirts and casual fashion, electricity consumption in the Tokyo Area (the data includes household consumption) was 11 to 19 % below the previous year during June to September. Everybody had to admit these casual styles even if they thought that it was not really appropriate in business scenes. In 2012, people wearing short sleeve shirts decreased because the picture collection was in the end of June, when it was not so hot compared to 2011. We can see this from the average temperature in Table 6.

We have to discuss the decrease in 2013. Although the average highest temperature in 2013 was 2 Celsius degrees higher than in 2011, people preferred to wear long sleeve shirts than short ones. We can discuss several reasons for this preference. The first reason for this is that people became less conscious to energy problems, using more electricity and cooling down rooms, making it resistible to wear long sleeve shirts. Maybe this lead to and being much more sensitivity in office dress codes, which also let people to wear long sleeve shirts. Second, people might have started to recognize the real ‘cool’ concept and fashion (not meaning fashion for physically cool temperature) as defined in Runyan et al. (2013). Short sleeve shirts, especially short sleeve Y-shirts looks untidy, because of the wide armholes compared to long sleeve shirts and this makes the silhouette unstylish.
We assumed the economic impact of Super/Cool Biz fashion, related to energy consumption, from Picture Mining methods, fashion such as Super/Cool Biz fashion considered as a temporary power and its impacts are limited. There might be an impact on real ‘cool’ styles. Next, we will discuss about the social impact for changes in men’s fashion consciousness.

4.2.2 Fashion, designs and styles
The first impression which came from comparing the pictures of each year is that the Super/Cool Biz fashion is very neat and tidy in 2013. Before discussing the reason for this, we will first take a look at 3 characteristics of the changes during the three years. The first is the change in shirts. The point is not the tangible characteristics of shirt, but the styling of them. Compared to 2011 and 2012, most of the subjects in the picture do not let their shirt outside their pants, instead they kept them tidy inside, so that they look neat.

Second is the change of fashion items, such as belts and shoes. Because Super/Cool Biz fashion is coordinated with simply a shirt and pants, we can assume that men’s consciousness to fashion changed to other items. For example, the color of belts has changed significantly. The color of brown belts was 5 out of 46 in 2011 (11%), 8 out of 93 in 2012 (9%), and 11 out of 61 in 2013 (17%).

Third is the silhouette of the pants. We have mentioned before that the color of pants has changed from beige to other colors, and discussed that the use of chino pants has decreased. This might be one of the reasons for the change of silhouette, but in the year 2013 it is evident that the pants are much slimmer (the hems are getting slimmer too) than the other two years. Evidently the fashion consciousness is changing, and men are getting more conscious of being cool. This ‘cool’ does not only mean the coolness related to temperature control, but also being tidy, neat and fashionable. There were proposals made from the fashion business side of fashionable and sophisticated Super/Cool Biz, and this might be one of the reasons for this change. We will need further research and discussion from different approaches, but from Picture Mining findings, we can say that there is definitely a strong impact of Super/Cool Biz on social and cultural changes.

5. Conclusion
As data mining or text mining, Picture Mining is dependent to an explorative and qualitative analysis. Viewing the pictures each year, respectively, some findings were made for the assumptions of the impacts of Super/Cool Biz. The economic impact of Super/Cool Biz was temporary and limited, but we found that there was a social impact on changing fashion minds of Japanese men. Most of these findings of Picture Mining could not be represented by figures or statistical verified data. There are limitations of this research, but it would be very useful in setting up new hypotheses for Super/Cool Biz impacts that should be studied further in the future.

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Abstract
You've got a big arse, Julia. Get over it. When Germaine Greer offered this advice to the (then) Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, on national television in 2012 social media and the traditional media were quick to condemn Greer.

The initial consensus was that one icon of feminism, Germaine Greer, was disparaging the physical appearance of another icon of feminism, Julia Gillard. Greer's statement was however taken out of context by most social media users and popular media outlets. Her criticism was actually directed at Gillard's dress sense, in particular the cut of Gillard's jackets.

The fact that Greer was actually referring to Gillard's dress sense did not appease her critics however and Greer's feminist credentials were again condemned in the media and in academia.

As the first female Prime Minister of Australia, Gillard has been subjected to scrutiny of her appearance and dress sense unprecedented in Australian politics. This phenomenon is not new or unusual. The focus on women's appearance and the pressure on women to conform to society's ideals of beauty and fashion have been widely condemned by feminists, including Greer.

But was Greer's reference to Gillard's dress sense simply a betrayal of Greer's feminist values or a signifier of the role of fashion literacy in contemporary society? It has been argued that Greer's reference to the cut of Gillard's jackets was a metaphor for Gillard's political failings.

This paper will examine the value vested in fashion literacy in contemporary society and argue that fashion's role in fashioning identity has evolved to a state where fashion literacy has broader implications for the individual and society. The notion that fashion literacy is not simply a cultural or aesthetic consideration but is a powerful indicator of ability will be explored.

The value placed on aesthetics in the contemporary environment has transformed the appearance of the visual world. As design has become democratised, aesthetic capital has trickled down from the cultural elite to the masses. Access to well-designed products, as well as to design knowledge and skills, has created an environment of aesthetically literate consumers, who can also create and critique. In a world where everyone can now be designers and critics, those who inhabit the public space face heightened scrutiny of their appearance.

This paper was developed in response to a debate, which was conducted in the Australian media, over the appropriateness of comments made by Germaine Greer about the then Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard's appearance. The comments and the ensuing debate have been examined to explore the role of fashion literacy and its application in the contemporary public sphere.

Sociological and psychological approaches to fashion have been analysed to investigate the dichotomy between the public and the private inherent in clothing choice. Philosophical arguments concerning constructs of appropriate dress are also examined.

This paper argues that the democratisation of design and the age of aesthetics have transformed the role of those in the public space. Fashion literacy has become a vital component of cultural capital and de rigueur for those who inhabit the public sphere.

The focus of this paper is on fashion as an expression of modernity, as opposed to the rapidly changing nature of popular taste. The term design is used in its broader context as a discipline which includes fashion, and to denote the appearance of an object.
The debate: Germaine Greer on Julia Gillard.

When academic, journalist and noted feminist, Germaine Greer, said on Australian television that Julia Gillard, the then Prime Minister of Australia, had a “big arse,” (2012, 19 March) the reaction was predictable. Greer’s comments were broadcast on the ABC program Q&A (Question and Answer). Q&A features a changing line-up of influential panel members including politicians, journalists, business leaders, and cultural commentators who respond to questions on topical issues from the program’s host and the audience.

The theme for the night’s program was Politics and porn in a post-feminist world. Greer was responding to a question from an audience member on how the panellists would handle Gillard’s image problem, and her inability to connect with voters. (At the time Gillard’s government was half way through its term and struggling in the polls.)

Greer began by acknowledging Gillard’s difficult and unglamorous role and her strengths as a politician, including as a negotiator and administrator. Greer then turned the conversation to Gillard’s appearance:

> What I want her to do is get rid of those … jackets … they don’t fit. Every time she turns around you’ve got that strange horizontal crease, which means they’re cut too narrow in the hips. (2012, 19 March).

The startled response to her statement goaded Greer to continue “… you’ve got a big arse Julia. Just get on with it.” (2012, 19 March).

The Australian media and the public were quick to condemn Greer. A few days after the Q&A program aired, Mira Adler-Gillies, wrote on the ABC’s online news analysis and opinion site, The Drum that “Greer’s comments were deeply shocking” (2012), and that Greer had not only betrayed her own ideals, but also challenged the nature of contemporary feminism. Q&A host Tony Jones said on a later program that the ABC had received a, “torrent of emails”, over Greer’s comment (2012, 27 August).

The initial reaction focused on Greer’s reference to Gillard’s physique. Female politicians, and their appearance, have been the focus of the public gaze to a much greater extent than their male counterparts. As Australia’s first female prime minister, Gillard had been subjected to a level of objectification unprecedented in Australian political commentary. Criticism of Gillard’s appearance had up until this time focused primarily on her hairstyle and her body shape, in particular her derrière, neither of which conformed to contemporary western ideals. In this context, the focus on Greer’s reference to Gillard’s physique was justifiable. However as Greer qualified her statements in the media, it became evident that her criticism was directed at Gillard’s dress sense, and her jackets in particular.

In an article in (Melbourne newspaper) The Age, Greer acknowledged that, “… for women heads of government the issue of what they wear is crucial [and that] the female Prime Minister must appear groomed.” (2012, 5 May). Greer was not endorsing this view, but merely stating it as a fact. Greer returned to the original target of her earlier criticism – Gillard’s jackets.

> Julia Gillard isn’t a clothes horse. She’s a hard working professional politician, but she isn’t allowed to look like one. Hence the dreaded jackets … she looks like she’s wearing clothes that don’t belong to her. A jacket that rides up and creases between the shoulder blades is worse than no jacket at all. If Labour [Gillard’s party] is not to be annihilated at the next election, something has to give (2012, 5 May).

During an appearance on a later Q&A program Mutilation and the media generation (2012, 27 August) Greer returned to the theme of Gillard’s jackets. An audience member, alluding to Greer’s previous appearance on Q&A, challenged Greer’s role as a prominent feminist, and her focus on Gillard’s appearance, as opposed to Gillard’s capabilities and policies. Greer again attempted to shift the debate to Gillard’s dress sense and her jackets in particular, reiterating the argument that the jackets didn’t seem to belong to her.

Greer comments and the debate that ensued were conducted in (and encouraged by) the mass media. Greer’s apparent disparagement of the appearance of another woman, feminist, and compatriot, was an opportunity for the media to capitalise on the cultural controversy. The consensus was that Greer had gone too far.

As a prominent and widely published feminist and pioneer of the 2nd wave of feminism, Greer’s perceived focus on Gillard’s appearance was confronting to generations of feminists. Despite the achievements of feminism, the objectification of women’s bodies is even more pronounced and widespread in contemporary culture and the media. Not only was Greer perceived to be endorsing the right to objectify women’s bodies, she was also seen to be acquiescing to the constructs that
determine the perception of appropriate female dress. Greer’s apparent sanctioning of the demands placed on women to present an acceptable public persona was an anathema to the principles espoused by feminists (including Greer). Greer’s feminist credentials, (or lack of), are not the focus of this paper. However Greer’s comments are significant in the broader context of constructs of appropriate dress for those who occupy the public space in the age of aesthetics and democratised design.

**Female political leaders and codes of dress**

Karen Hanson argues that clothing is important in that it is “… stationed at a boundary between self and other, marking a distinction between private and public, individual and social” (1990, p.119). As such clothing, or more specifically getting clothing right, is also problematic, being “vexed by the forces of border wars.” (1990, p.119).

For those who inhabit the contemporary political sphere this conflict is subject to increased scrutiny and politicians must achieve a balance between the dual personas. In her analysis of political dress Margaret Maynard explains that, “For politicians one of the dangers lies in the difficulty of dressing to preserve trust, whilst still looking up-to-date and stylish” (2004, p. 51).

Contemporary western political leaders, both male and female, favour a style of dressing that relies extensively on men’s business wear, in particular the suit. The suit provides a pragmatic solution for those in the public sphere, requiring minimal investment of time and energy. Hilary Clinton went as far as acknowledging the role that her “six black pants suits”, played in her political success (Postrel 2004, p. 25).

The suit is the ideal medium for signifying the public persona. As an item of public dress the suit signifies the “reassurance” that Maynard says is provided by “an impersonal, serious code of dressing” (2004, p.54). The suit’s inherent values: quality, reliability, honesty, and conformity, parallel those sought in political leaders. Variations in style, materials, cut, and construction of the suit provide opportunities for wearers to display private preferences. However these variations are limited and subject to their own set of rules. These variations also impose the greatest risk to the wearer.

In her analysis of female politicians’ dress, Jane Goodall explains how the suit works to standardise the personal silhouette and, as such, helps to avoid the possibility of offense, confusion and inconsistency (2013, p. 58). Maynard equates standardisation and consistency to a disguise when she refers to public dress as “… a shield to play down personal differences” (2004, p. 54).

However the suit draws attention to the body’s extremities. Goodall explores the relationship between the design of the suit and the face where “… the visual accent [is] on the collar area, to draw attention upwards to the face” (2013, p. 47). The impersonal codes inherent in the suit are to a degree offset by the focus on this more private part of the body. Hair, accessories and personal grooming therefore attain increased significance. As noted earlier Julia Gillard had been previously criticised for her hairstyle. Hilary Clinton was also subjected to criticism of her hairstyle. Clinton’s later claim that, “… hair matters” (Postrel 2004, p.72) was apparently delivered light heartedly, but has deeper implications in the context of the conflict between the dual personas.

There are also inherent dangers in the impersonal nature of the suit for it exposes the wearer to a different set of criticisms. Maynard argues that the “shields” of public dress create barriers that “… demand that the viewer look far more attentively and to decode their micro details to detect signs of character, psychological difference and social position” (2004, p.54). Whereas leaders have historically relied on ostentation and display to maintain positions of authority, modern political dress has a different set of codes. The classic, minimalist aesthetic that permeates the design of suits, demands that more attention be paid to the foundations of the garment: material, cut and construction. Minimalism demands perfection and emphasises imperfection. The critics often have very little left to critique, except for references such as Greer’s to strange horizontal creases, or the cuts that are too narrow.

Greer’s advice to Gillard to get rid of those … jackets challenges the role of the suit, and the jacket, as the dominant dress code for female political leaders. Goodall argues that the suit and the power suit in particular, are too restrictive.

The fact that so many women in key positions are still trapped in the codes of power dressing is a reflection of the degree to which modern democracies shackle those in leadership to a set of negatives (2013, p. 58).

Greer compared Gillard’s clothing to that of Anna Bligh, former Premier of Queensland, and found Gillard’s choices deficient (Greer 2012, 27 August). Bligh frequently appeared in public dressed in short sleeved, tailored suits in bright colours that referenced her role as leader of a state that encompasses both sub-tropical and tropical environments. Quentin Bryce, the current Governor-General of Australia (and originally from Queensland) also favours shorter sleeves and brighter
colours. Bligh and Bryce are both recognised for their dress sense and exemplify the ability to successfully balance the public and the private personas.

**Fit for the job? Should politicians know how to dress?**

Concepts of appropriate dress are based on the social agreement that forms the basis of the battle between society (the public) and the individual (the private). From the classical Greek philosophers, to Rousseau and Kant, appropriateness in dress has frequently been equated with morality. For those in the public sphere this relationship is even more important. As Edwards explains, “…when the abhorred is on the backs of… the famous, these people become the subject of mockery, scandal or are somehow morally suspect” (2010, p. 4).

Media focus on those in the public space has intensified in the visual age. The media is awash with the minutia of personal appearance and judgements of appropriate dress. Edwards argues that the media driven visual and consumer culture removes objects of their function (2010, p. 3). And so appearance becomes fetishised.

Postrel traces the increasing interest in politician’s appearance to the 2000 US presidential election where media coverage of the candidates seemed, “obsessed with appearances” (2004, p.25). Even more revealing was the emergence of an ensuing dialogue that focused on the deeper significance of these sartorial flaws. Postrel refers to “… pundits [who] treated these [lapses in taste by politicians] as symbols of more serious flaws” (2004, p. 88). Florida Secretary of State, Katherine Harris’s judgement was apparently questioned on the basis of her eye make-up. “One wonders how this Republican woman, who can’t even use restraint when she’s waving a mascara wand, will manage to use it and make sound decisions …” (Postrel 2004, pp. 88 - 89).

The perception that inappropriate appearance is related to diminished ability raises the question that “… if you don’t know how to dress then what else don’t you know?” (Postrel, 2004, p. 72). The wearer is therefore judged twice: initially on their appearance, and then on their inability to make the right decisions.

The aesthetic nature of fashion and its relationship to morality is also central to the philosophical argument. Although aesthetics can be subjective, culturally specific, and hard to measure; fashion and design have entered a global space in which notions of taste and style have become increasingly uniform. The universal value inherent in clothing that fits well is also less subject to the vagaries of changing taste.

Streamlining and smoothness are significant manifestations of the contemporary global aesthetic. Technology has delivered smooth fabrics and close fitting garments and skin can be smoothed with cosmetic applications, and even surgery. As Goodall observes (2013, p.13), an inherent value of the suit is its ability to smooth and subdue the human body. Smoothness also implies control. In her article in *The Age* Greer noted that, “No matter how heavy her workload the female prime minister must appear ‘groomed’ that is without a hair out of place, uncreased and uncrumpled” (2012, 5 May). Gillard’s failure was based on her choice of jackets. The jackets did not fit – they did not achieve the requisite degree of smoothness. According to Greer, “a jacket that rides up and creases between the shoulder blades is worse than no jacket at all” (2012, 5 May).

Goodall proposes that Greer could also be criticising more than Gillard’s lack of dress sense. Goodall states that:

> At some level, the cut of the prime Minister’s jacket does matter, and that to get it wrong signals a lack of one of the many competencies required in the role … Gillard risked looking as if she was not cut out for the role of prime minister … the impression was there was a lack of fit” (2013, p. 46).

The use of the term “fit” is quite revealing. Fit can refer to the relationship between the clothing and the body, to the fitness or appropriateness of the garment, as well as to the fitness (of the wearer) to perform his/her function.

Greer’s comments were primarily focused on the appropriateness of Gillard’s clothing, in particular the cut of the jackets. Greer argued that the cut and fit of the jackets were inappropriate for someone with Gillard’s physique. As such Gillard presented an inappropriate image for a political leader. The jackets were not tailored correctly and Gillard’s inability to solve such a small problem (in her private sphere) could be an indication of her ability to solve problems associated with governing the country (her public sphere). Before she ran for public office, Hilary Clinton’s fitness was also questioned, as “… she seemed to either not know who she was or to be reshaping herself to fit whatever temporary image would suit her husband’s career” (Postrel 2004, p.101). Politicians who try to remain true to their own personal style however, like pre make-over Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel are also criticised for not...
projecting the right fit. Greer claimed that the clothing of Queensland premier, Anna Bligh “always seemed to belong to her” (2012, 27 August). Bligh’s clothes not only fit her – they fitted their purpose. Most importantly however Bligh’s clothing signified her ability to perform her role – she was able to achieve a balance between her public and private persona.

The democratisation of design and the age of aesthetics

Contemporary consumers have access to a vast repository of design knowledge and well designed products. Postrel refers to this era as the new aesthetic age. (2004, p.3). The new aesthetic era is a culmination of the economic and social changes that ushered in the increasing demand for consumer products throughout the 20th century. Coinciding with developments in mass production, mass distribution and mass marketing, this demand resulted in the availability of style for all.

The increasing emphasis on good design throughout the 20th century and growth in design schools since from the late 20th century has produced large numbers of design literate professionals. References to the term design or designer are powerful marketing tools. The use of the term ‘designer’ has only been used to describe something in the last few decades (Hamilton 2011, p.54), and the term is now used to imply inherent value. The widespread proliferation of well designed products has transformed the visual environment. The public space abounds with good design and within the private space aesthetics has permeated the realms of personal appearance and living spaces.

Aesthetic literacy, or the knowledge and application of design principles, was once the exclusive domain of the elites and the experts. Knowledge was closely guarded and time and devotion was required to master skills. In the 21st century new media and online technology are transforming the role of the amateur. The contemporary consumer does not just have access to a vast repository of knowledge but also the ability to create, share and critique. Widespread availability of affordable digital technology has contributed to the explosion in the number of do-it-yourself innovators and entrepreneurs. Knowledge of aesthetics and its application, once an exclusive preserve, is now available to all. Postrel claims that “… aesthetics has become too important to be left to the aesthetes” (2004, p.3).

One of the most visible signs of the new aesthetic age is the impact on personal appearance. “We are saturated with beautiful people” (Postrel 2004, p.26). From digital enhancement to cosmetic surgery, beauty has never been more available, or more desirable.

In her analysis of the proliferation of spaces and products devoted to personal grooming in this age of aesthetics, Postrel recounts an incident that occurred during a visit to a nail salon. As Postrel explains, nail salons are a relatively recent phenomenon, and a manifestation of the age of aesthetics. But it was the nail technician’s comments that surprised her. Postrel was questioning the value of spending a large sum of money on a designer toilet brush holder. The nail technician spoke at length on the merits, aesthetic and utilitarian aspects of toilet brush holders before concluding with an analysis of the feng-shui (2004, p. 59). The amateur can now become the expert and this development has changed the balance of power.

Fashion literacy as the new cultural capital

The role of aesthetics in the contemporary public and private arenas, together with the democratisation of design and fashion, has heightened scrutiny of those who inhabit the public space and subjected them to greater reliance on appearance as a signifier of ability.

The feminist critique of fashion’s tendency to objectify women, while still valid, has been besieged by the demands placed on appearance in the aesthetic age. Hilary Clinton, when discussing her new found appreciation of the role of appearance, claimed that she was led to believe that surfaces weren’t important (Postrel 2004, p.73). However, Clinton regretted her ignorance of the value of aesthetics. “Somebody should have warned me,” she said. “My education ripped me off” (Postrel 2004, p. 73). Both Clinton and Greer appear to accommodate their appreciation of the role of aesthetics within their feminist framework.

In the new aesthetic era we expect that those who inhabit the public sphere should be design and fashion literate. Edwards argues that while style is perceived to be innate, it relates more to making the correct decision and this in itself is a vital expression of cultural capital (2010, p. 4).

Fashion literacy is a vital component of cultural capital in the age of aesthetics. Gillard’s sartorial failings: her inability to achieve the correct fit in her jackets and her inability to choose appropriate clothing signify a lack of cultural capital. But it is what Postrel refers to as the “judgement of the mind” (2004, p.72) that is most at stake in the age of aesthetics. In the democratised design environment populated by do-it-yourself experts, entrepreneurs and critics, society places even greater expectations on its leaders. The expectation is that if I can do it, why can’t you?
References
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Abstract

Within the family, we wear clothes mainly for relaxation, sleeping, and domestic chores. Based on past transformations in clothes worn within families, it is possible to clarify the ideals of family life. Thus, in this paper, I will take up the apron for housewives after the Second World War. I will clarify the ideals of housekeeping chores and for those who play a central role in domestic labor, and then examine the power of clothing upon one's everyday life.

Family magazine and newspaper articles were used as research material. After the 1950s, the apron was worn not only for domestic chores in the family but also in relaxed family settings and in communication with neighbors. The apron is that of an everyday item of clothing for housewives, rather than simply a functional garment for housework. Since 1990s, the apron's frequency of emergence has changed.

There are three key background factors in the decline in the use of aprons:

First, there is the reduction of domestic labor. During the times when the apron was generally used in household chores, housekeeping consisted of hard labor, which involved the soiling of clothes. However, the simplification of household chores has reduced labor; thus, the apron is not necessarily used.

The second factor is the change in values toward clothes. The widespread trend of casual dressing has helped reduce resistance to seeing everyday clothes being dirty. Further, it may be inferred that with the availability of inexpensive clothes and the increase in the possession of clothing items, the awareness or desire to protect clothes has declined, thus lessening the necessity to protect them by wearing an apron.

The third is the image of the apron. After the 1950s, the apron played the role of helping shape the image of a housewife. The visual image of a woman in an apron devoting herself to household chores helped form the ideal image of a beloved housewife in the family. However, this fixed feminine image of an apron-clad lady also contributed to the disappearance of the apron. The awareness of the femininity of a woman in an apron has been denied since the 1990s, when women's participation in society began to increase. These facts—that women no longer routinely wear aprons and women's housework has been reduced—should not, however, necessarily be discussed on an equal footing.

In the 2000s, there have been both positive and negative views on the linking of the apron to household chores. There have also been cases in which some women held gentle, close sentiments toward the apron. Because the feminine aspects of the apron, which used to be premised on housekeeping labor by women, were sometimes overemphasized or denied, it consequently helped it become somewhat obsolete. On the other hand, because gender equality is assumed in the family, the apron helped strengthen the bonds among family members.

We may conclude that the apron has the power to generate life as a clothing item that gives a sense of ease and friendliness to people.

1. Research Purpose and Methods

In a family, we wear clothes mainly for relaxation, sleeping, and domestic work, depending on the time of day and intended use. Such clothes are often worn in private spaces among individual family members and seen only by themselves, not by outsiders. Thus, although we feel close to those garments, the reality remains that they are, in a way, hidden inside the lives of individuals, and seldom observed in public places. For this reason, little attention has been paid to changes in those everyday
clothes in conventional studies of costume history. As a result of investigating the changes in bedtime
clothes after the end of the Second World War, the author learned that those changes were related
to changes in housing space, family relationships of the users, and their living hours. The purpose of
this paper is to clarify that clothes in a family are closely connected to family living, and have the
power to create lifestyles and help build family relationships. Thus, we focused on the apron, a piece
of clothing for housewives in domestic work, as well as common clothes in the Japanese family after
the Second World War. The use of the apron is closely related to domestic work and the ideals of
those who engage in it.
In the European culture of costume, the apron was an accessory for the nobility up to early modern
times; to this day, it has been accepted as an ethnic article of clothing featuring strong handicraft
elements in central Europe. There has been a study done primarily on the aesthetics of its rich
ornamental qualities (Frosiq, 2001: pp.53-66). The apron was introduced to Japan in the Meiji era
(1868-1912) when many aspects of Western culture were imported into the country. There have been
studies on Meiji-era aspects of the apron, including the emergence of the kappa-gi (coverall apron),
a blend between the Western-style apron and Japanese clothing culture (Iwasaki, 2000: pp.60-69,
Toriimoto, 2000: pp.54-59). There has also been an analysis, from the standpoint of women’s housing
space, of the apron worn by Japanese women as a maternal symbol in the postwar years of democracy
(Misaki, 2012: pp.358-379). However, there has been no report on the apron in everyday life in Japan
that covers up to the present time.

For research material to survey the everyday life and awareness of people in postwar Japan, I used
the magazine Kurashi no Techo (Life’s Pocketbook) and general newspapers Asahi Shimbun and
Yomiuri Shimbun. To investigate the apron, we selected articles that covered the everyday aspects
of family life rather than fashion magazines advising on fashion fads of the day. Also, the apparel
industry journal Senken Shimbun was used in order to fully comprehend apron production and apron
sales trends in modern times.

2. Changes in the Use of the Apron

(1) Shifts in the Apron Market

How are aprons used in modern times? The JMA (Japan Management Association) Research
Institute released a fact-finding survey report on the ownership and use of the apron. According to
its results, of the 425 female subjects aged 20 years or older, approximately 1/5 of them wore an apron
on an almost daily basis. On the other hand, more than half of them did not own an apron, or if they did,
they seldom used it. Thus, daily domestic work does not necessarily equate to the use of an apron.

This type of consumer trend related to aprons can be seen in changes in their domestic production as
well. Between the late 1960s and the late 1990s, the number of aprons produced domestically
continued to decline after peaking in 1972 at 71,320,000, and dropped to 6,629,000 in 1998 (Fig.1). Although one reason for this could be the fact that inexpensive clothes began to be imported to the Japanese market from foreign countries, it was clear that the apron market had shrunk dramatically.

In the first half of the 1970s, news articles reported the opening of apron specialty stores by apron
makers, as well as the hosting of fashion shows just for aprons; a large number of aprons in a variety
of colors appeared on the market. Afterwards, when the apron market shrank, apron manufacturers
themselves became keenly aware that, “The apron has become an item that we can no longer sell.”

(2) Contexts of the Apron

By the early 20th century, the kappa-gi, a Japanese-Western blend, had spread and been adopted as
a piece of clothing for domestic work for housewives. As pointed out by Iwasaki (2000), in the Meiji era, the *kappo-gi* was adopted not only as a work garment in medicine and hairdressing, but also as a piece of cooking clothing for female students. However, afterwards, the *kappo-gi*, after having been recommended as domestic work wear for housewives by the magazine *Fujin no Tomo* (Women’s Friend)10, soon spread widely as an item of clothing for housewives. After the end of the Second World War, the apron was in one sense a symbol of housewives in Japan. *Shufu Rengoukai* (The Japan Housewives’ Association)11 began a political campaign with the slogan “Let’s improve politics from the kitchen!” using the rice paddle and the apron as its symbols. In protest demonstrations and election campaigns on the streets (Fig.2), women wearing aprons (including the *kappo-gi*) left an impressive and striking image, helping shape the apron as a symbol of housewife power.

In this research, the apron is premised to be a piece of clothing in the context of domestic work only. Yet, in reality, it was worn more extensively in daily life. One can verify this fact in the scenes of families relaxing, and communication with other people in the neighborhood. For example, in a 1950s magazine article in which people’s everyday lives were depicted, housewives all wore aprons, standing and talking with their neighbors (Fig.3), enjoying roller-skating with children on the road (Fig.4), and relaxing on the veranda with family members (Fig. 5).

Similar scenes—housewives enjoying volleyball in the neighborhood (Fig.6), having tea while chatting with family members12—could be observed in the 1980s. Here, rather than being characterized as a functional piece of clothing for domestic work, the apron was worn both inside and outside the family as an everyday garment for housewives. One can also infer that homemakers kept in close contact with their local community.

Still, as mentioned previously, the apron market had shrunk and the frequency of using the apron had diminished considerably. We could confirm this in a 2000s magazine article; the apron would not disappear, but the frequency of its use and the way it was treated changed dramatically.

3. The Background of the Decline in the Use of Aprons

(1) Changes in Domestic Work

First, one background factor that comes to mind is the reduction in domestic work. The quality and quantity of domestic work have been on the decline due to changes in housing spaces where housewives do their typical domestic chores of cooking, washing and cleaning, in household...
equipment and appliances, as well as in attitudes toward domestic work. In the case of cleaning, the change was from sweeping up trash with a broom and cleaning the floor with a wet rag to sweeping the floor with an electric vacuum cleaner and mopping the floor with disposable mop sheets. In the case of washing, the change was from scrubbing clothes with a washboard and washtub amid bubbling soapsuds (Fig.7), to employing an electric washer with one button to push to do the whole operation. Although there was an analysis in which the spread of home appliances did not necessarily reduce all of women's household chores, it is apparent that their domestic labor has been mitigated. As discussed in one magazine article, “When cleaning in the house, I try not to get my cuffs and shoulder tips dirty.” Those domestic chores represented hard labor for housewives that often got their clothes dirty. Thus, the apron was a necessity for domestic work. However, the aforementioned changes in the way domestic work was conducted helped reduce its presence; housewives did not always need an apron. As seen here, neither a sankaku-kin (triangle head scarf) nor an apron was worn when using a vacuum cleaner (Fig.8).

When it comes to cooking, there have been a number of elements in the last fifty years that have helped reduce the domestic work of preparing meals, namely changes in household facilities such as the kitchen sink, as well as in cooking techniques and technologies, food, and menus. The instantization of food products, simplified ways of cooking such as the use of microwave ovens, and the spread of the “eat-in” trend (purchasing cooked meals and eating them at home), all contributed to simplifying the task of domestic cooking, and then obviated the use of the apron. However, according to a report, the domestic cooking time on average in Japan is longer than that in Western nations, and that time has not decreased in the last fifty years. If the cooking time has changed little, the question is, why is the apron not used anymore? In an article about a housewife who had married into a Gunma farm family, she is seen adeptly preparing multiple bento box lunches (Fig.9), but she’s not wearing an apron. In this very typical everyday domestic scene, why doesn’t she use an apron?

(2) Changes in the Value Placed on Clothes
The primary role of the apron is “to protect the clothes one is wearing when at work” as pointed out in an article, which is the function to shield the clothes underneath from dirt and grime. In an article titled “Two Aprons From One Dress Shirt,” there is a suggestion about “converting the dress shirt your husband had discarded offhandedly into two aprons.” What is conveyed here is the waste-not want-titled “Two Aprons From One Dress Shirt,” there is a suggestion about “converting the dress shirt your husband had discarded offhandedly into two aprons.” What is conveyed here is the waste-not want-not attitude toward handling clothes with care, which the Japanese were beginning to lose long past the wartime and postwar years of material shortages. However, what really changed the value placed on clothes were the following: in the period of high economic growth since the 1970s, Japan is now in an age of mass consumption. “Sporty-casual” clothing items such as jeans, sweatshirts, jerseys, and pullovers have spread widely and have become established as everyday clothes. It is easy to guess what happened: the daily clothes became increasingly casual and “rough,” and as a result, the resistance to getting people’s clothes dirty has waned. One can see that change in this comment by a woman who does not use an apron, “My husband and I both have cooked in the kitchen in t-shirts and jeans.” In the present age of transitory fashion, inexpensive clothes are widely available, and the individual items of clothing that one owns have increased in number. Consequently, it is inferred, the attitude toward clothes has changed, and at the same time, the awareness to protect and take care of clothes in general has declined, reducing the necessity of wearing an apron to protect clothes.

(3) The Image of the Apron
1) Beautiful, Beloved Housewives
Next, let us examine the image people used to hold of the apron. The apron not only had practical functions but also played the role of helping shape the image of housewives as well as women. While the apron was a symbol of housewife power for the Japan Housewives’ Association, in daily life it helped choreograph the image of beloved housewives. For instance, a 1951 newspaper article suggests cute designs, stating, “If the women who work at home come up with more inventive, fun aprons, the whole family atmosphere will be brighter and the household chores more fun.” Similarly, another article introduces how to make cute aprons, stating, “Dirty aprons, damaged aprons. What makes the heart of every family member gloomy? It could possibly be the slapdash presence of one apron,” followed by “A cute apron will kindle a bright light in your heart and illuminate the heart of the whole family as well.” In another article run in the same period titled “That’s Because Nobody Would Look at Me,” a housewife laments her position in the family; the article advises, “To have a good reputation as a beautiful woman . . . let’s work dressed in a smart manner by, say, wearing a water-repellent apron, wearing work gloves, or wrapping your hair neatly,” implying that a housewife smartly dressed in an apron makes an ideally beautiful picture. Thus, housewives’ domestic work is tied directly to their aesthetics. Those articles all convey the idea that the figure of a housewife devoting
herself to domestic work is the model; the apron helps shape the ideal representation of a beloved housewife in the family. One housewife handbook explains how to dress oneself in the morning: “Make sure you put on an apron properly over everyday clothes” in case of an unexpected guest, thus making an apron-clad figure the final touches to the appearance of a housewife. The apron, therefore, was a device to positively measure household work as well as homemakers who were engaged in it.

Such an image-making quality of the apron can be also observed in the title of the culinary variety TV show “The Apron of Love.” In the show, female personalities in a heart-motif apron cook meals to be judged in a competition; the host of the show gives the key phrase “Cooking is a love.” If there is a love, Love is O.K.” to judge whether the cooked meal is good or not. The show highlights three elements: the act of cooking, the love infused in cooking, and the symbolic apron of love; three of them are all tied together. In other words, the apron is the proof of love for women who do domestic chores.

One can also read the female representation in the apron in newspaper articles reporting on men who cook and do household chores; the reporter typically uses the phrase, “Men are wearing aprons, too.” College students today have had the experience of wearing an apron in home economics class since elementary school. Despite that, reporters often depict the way a male student tackles cooking with the cliché, “in the refreshing appearance of an apron-clad man.” They still perceive the image of a man in an apron as special. Conversely, they still see the apron in the fixed image representing women.

2) Resistance to Female Representation

In an article about a female office worker who does not wear an apron on a daily basis, she gives the reason for it with a sense of resistance: “I felt that wearing the apron would make me be perceived as a typical dutiful wife and devoted mother.” Even today when the realization of a gender-equal society is being promoted, there is plenty to say on the roles of men and women in domestic work. The gender norm, which is often shaped by the media, is discussed repeatedly. In 1975, a women’s organization protested an instant food TV commercial for overemphasizing the stereotypical roles for “women to cook and men to eat.” In a detergent commercial run in the 2000s, those roles were reversed. This commercial with actors presented a new image of gender roles; people still talk about its impact, “Since detergent commercials predominantly use the apron-clad image of a housewife, this one was very new, very refreshing.” As gender-free trends have been quickly expanding, one can occasionally observe subconscious resistance to the way the conventional apron and women are automatically connected.

4. Men’s Domestic Work and the Apron

The way men perform household chores is depicted in a 1968 article. However, its context is that since they are a double-income married couple, they, out of necessity, share their domestic work; so the husband is labeled as an “apron husband.” As mentioned already, this phrase reflects the convention that the image of the apron and that of a housewife are overlapped.

Let us look at the participation of men in domestic work. If a company offers its male employees childcare leave, it is still much talked about. Or “The Photo Contest for Men Participating in Household Chores and Child Care” is hosted; the camera captures men called “Iku-Men (Child-Rearing Men)” and “Kaji-Dan (Domestic Work Men),” “happily tackling household chores and child care.” That such events are hosted by a prefectoral government reflects that men’s participation in domestic work is still deemed special. Though individual cases are varied, in general, more Japanese men are actively sharing household chores than in the past.

“Culinary researchers” who have appeared in the media in recent years do not necessarily wear aprons. For example, culinary researcher Kentaro enjoys cooking without an apron, in a casual outfit. What contributes to his popularity is perhaps his unpretentious home-cooked dishes, as well as his friendly appearance. Here, the stiff image of doing domestic work wearing an apron is replaced with his apron-less casual style as part of his fun and relaxed demeanor.

Examining articles on men and aprons, a 1991 article reports that unisex-type sets of aprons are popular for wedding gifts. The design is depicted as: “not tight in the hips and on the large side; plain or stripes; DC (Designers-Characters) brand;” it adds that less ornamental ones are selling well. As “sporty-casual” has been adopted as the everyday style, and overall fashion has become more gender-free, apron designs are also following suit. Furthermore, men’s aprons also emerged from the end of the 1990s to the 2000s. The apparel maker Ogiwara sells men’s aprons with “the strings are tied in the front, not in the back,” boasting characteristic colors, material and shapes. The reason for the string position is explained: “If the strings are tied in the back, that typically conjures up the conventional apron, with which some men may have image trouble. If you tie the strings in the front like a sushi chef, that puts you in the mood; you’re psyched up.” By envisioning cooks’ work clothes,
domestic work is now somewhat upgraded. An article on how men can voluntarily tackle household chores suggests that they adopt aprons and household tools in which men’s tastes are well reflected. A men’s apron has become a device to help enjoy and coolly conduct domestic work.

5. The Power of the Apron

In modern living, in what context or in what state of mind can the apron, a symbol of housewives, be used? One letter from readers states, “When I wear an apron, I feel fired up and excited; I feel like saying ‘I’ll work hard today, again, doing household chores!’” Some feel that the apron and domestic work are linked in a positive psychological state of mind. Thus, the apron is more than a piece of work clothes for domestic chores; it has a role of bolstering the motivation for domestic work.

In recent years, aprons in highly fashionable, cute designs have been rolled out as new products, targeting women in their twenties and thirties. From around 2008, there has been a trend of “nest-dweller consumption,” which means that consumers tend to stay at home and go out less, while fully utilizing catalog and online shopping. Apron sales have been on the rise thanks to home parties and adult enrichment classes in cooking, flower arrangement, and table coordination, where participants are encouraged to enjoy the apron in a fashionable manner. The apron represents the fulfillment of family life.

In addition, one can see that an apron helps its user convey a sense of friendliness; for example, it was suggested, “If more men in aprons take part in their children’s school events and neighborhood association functions, their activity range will expand in the local community.” This article also states that, “Local residents became Volunteer Apron Teachers to interact with the new First Graders, so that those students can easily get used to the new environment.” People find “gentle qualities” in the conventional image of housewives and mothers in aprons. In modern times, regardless of the gender of the user, the apron can raise the degree of affinity in communication.

6. Conclusion

We examined the apron in Japanese family life during the time period from the Second World War to the present. The apron is a daily piece of clothing in the family and used to be a symbol of household chores, housewives and women. The decline in the apron’s use toward the end of the twentieth century can be attributed to the following: reduced domestic work and changes in the value placed on everyday clothes. Since the apron was premised on women’s domestic work, its feminine aspects were emphasized; but when the gender-equal ideal arrived, it contributed to the disappearance of the apron. However, once that ideal became the norm, the apron has grown out of the old, exclusive image of femininity.

The conclusion is that as a clothing item that is not only used for domestic work but also can brighten the scene of family life and give people a sense of ease and friendliness, the apron possesses the power to help generate emotionally rich living and family relationships.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. This research concerned is unpublished.
10. Fujin no tomo, 10, (1913, Sep.7), Fujin no tomo sha.
11. It is the consumer organization established in 1948.
22. This program was broadcast by TV Asahi from 1999 to 2008.
26. The TV commercial for “Shan men” which was instant noodles became a televising stop in response to the protest in 1975.
27. The TV commercial for “Bold” which was detergent of P&G.co. was broadcast from 2002 to 2007.
Abstract

A new generation of young, creative entrepreneurs is opening up small-scale retail stores all over the world with fresh visions on retail and products. They are looking for new possibilities, bringing us new stories that are strongly connected with the local DNA of the neighbourhood. Based on ethnographic research – a pilgrimage through Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin – it has become clear that we are currently shifting away from a capitalist paradigm of shopping and towards a ‘we-economy’ that is people-driven, with a bottom-up structure, and in which people share their knowledge in their community. They are giving us new concepts of retail within a more social paradigm. There is an urge to feel connected to the product, to nature, to people and to place. In this manner products are embracing craft, heritage, quality and honesty, but they are doing so within the ‘local’ power domain of their own neighbourhood and city. In this sense future retail goes beyond classical retail space and is engaged in a playful, exploratory expedition which accords an active and participatory role for the consumer in the store. These stores are fulfilling new roles such as collaborator, connector, activist, idealist, connoisseur, contemplator, curator, and transformer. They are functioning as an empowerment to the community, as a place for idealism, and as a playful odyssey. Based on ethnographic research, this paper focuses on the different kind of retail concepts that are currently being developed in neighbourhoods of the cities of Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin, and tries to explain and understand them as future retail solutions.

Introduction

At this moment something extraordinary is taking place in retail and fashion. In spite of the fact that traditional forms of community are disappearing, new community values are being written for the 21st century. While we have to acknowledge that mass consumption is putting a considerable strain on our environment, shopping malls and multiple brand stores are still being developed in our cities. At the same time, as we become aware of global influences, an antidote to global brands is emerging. We are starting to appreciate locality in its extreme. New players are emerging in the city, and more and more change-makers are recreating their local economy and environment (00/, 2012:12). A strong desire for craftsmanship, local, and the real is being sensed among small-scale retailers and ‘co-producing’ consumers and citizens. Moreover, due to the rise of online shopping, traditional brick-and-mortar stores are having to reconsider their role as physical stores, and start offering not just retail services but environments in which experience and emotion are key (Dowdy, 2011). Retail is having to be redefined: the old, simply transactional definition is no longer enough. Retail needs to tell and sell stories again. As a result, many individuals are creating a new ‘mood’ which is starting to change places, communities and business models throughout the world (00/, 2012:12). What is actually happening in retail in the thriving neighbourhoods, and what does this mean for the future? In closely observing this development, this paper describes new developments in retail that are currently taking place in neighbourhoods of Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin. Firstly, a brief overview is given of developments in the field of retail and consumer behaviour in social and economic contexts. Secondly, based on ethnographic research, this paper focuses on different kinds of retail concepts that have recently been developed in neighbourhoods of the cities of Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin. Specifically, this paper discusses what the new values and initiatives are in these neighbourhoods and how these initiatives are attempting to counterbalance the ever-growing capitalist ruling system. Finally, it is explained how these new retail concepts and initiatives could stand as examples for a more sustainable future retail landscape.

Keywords
Retail
Neighbourhoods
Ethnographic Research
Local
We-Economy
Background - mainstream logic

To gain an understanding of the current retail landscape, a brief overview is given of the evolution of shopping culture over the last century. The emergence of ‘consumer societies’ dates back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009:266). Industrial mass production brought a new notion to consumerism, in creating a new package of secondary needs to fulfil alongside primary needs. Shops clustered in town centres and shopping arcades started appearing in European cities. It was the beginning of a shopping culture that was governed by capitalism and which depended on the large-scale production and consumption of a large amount of goods (Otten, 2012; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009:267-270). Since the 1960s and 1970s retail in cities has gone through significant developments. In line with the rising uptake of private car transport, local stores gradually lost ground to superstores, shopping centres and supermarkets with their own parking facilities. As a result, stores in town centres started to focus on goods that were more expensive and luxurious. City centre shopping became a place for window shopping and browsing. This was experienced as fun and social, whereas out-of-town shopping centres were seen as more ‘practical destinations’ (Molenaar, 2010:4).

Since the 1990s more and more multiple chain and luxury brand stores have opened in large cities (Lipovetsky & Manlow, 2009:155). Multiple chain stores have taken over local areas by establishing and reproducing themselves on every high street (Molenaar, 2010). In hindsight this could be called the “McDonaldization” of the high street. In consequence, marketing has become ever more important in the consumption of industrial mass products. According to Lipovetsky and Manlow (2009), “developing a style by means of novelty is no longer enough. Now vast advertising campaigns are required, and the retail space must be controlled from beginning to end in order to reinforce the ‘narrative’ and readability of the brand and to create a clear, distinct and expressive brand image” (p. 162). Branding a product gives it extra value, and this has been crucial in distinguishing a product from all the other mass-produced goods with which it is surrounded (Klein, 2000; Lipovetsky, 2007:30-31; Lipovetsky & Manlow, 2009:162-163). Naomi Klein, author of NO LOGO (2000), states: “what these companies produced primarily were not things, they said, but images of their brands. Their real work lay not in manufacturing but in marketing” (p. 4). Thus in the notion of consumer society, the meaning of a product shifted away from its production and towards a more abstract meaning that was about the desires, dreams and belongings promised by advertisements and brands (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009:275-281). The foundation of this thinking lies in Marxism, which in the 19th century had already predicted the rise of a capitalist mass production system in which exchange value replaces use value, and which also referred to ‘commodity fetishism’ (Marx, 2010 [1867]; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). In this sense, 20th-century consumers were not shopping for ‘products that satisfied a need based on use value’. They were starting to buy products based on new values and meanings advocated through advertising (their ‘exchange value’). Consequently, values such as ‘where the product was made’, ‘craftsmanship’ and ‘connoisseurship’ moved to the background (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009:279-281). Today, shopping can be done anywhere, and at any time, online. However, and at the same time, a large-scale revolution is taking place at the small-scale level.

The new mood

The capitalist system which played such an important role in the 20th century is making way for a more social system. A counter-movement to globalisation and mass production is rising. The economic downturn of recent years has resulted in a reaction against the functioning of governing institutions and systems. Whereas our cities have been centres of large-scale commerce since the 1970s, today many stories can be told about people, communities and neighbourhoods that are rebuilding and pioneering the foundations of tomorrow’s world by looking for alternative models by which to organise and sustain their local economies (00/, 2012).

Some call this the ‘we-economy’; others the ‘civic economy’, defined as “comprising people, ventures and behaviours that fuse innovative ways of doing from the traditionally distinct spheres of civil society, the market and the state. Founded upon social values and goals, and using deeply collaborative approaches to development, production, knowledge sharing and financing, the civic economy generates goods, services and common infrastructures in ways that neither the state nor the market economy alone have been able to accomplish” (00/, 2012:12).

In response, new types of retail initiatives and concepts are popping up in thriving neighbourhoods across the world. This is resulting in a revitalisation of ideas on models of consumerism, as Maria Popova, editor of Brainpickings.org explains: “We are exploring ways to have more – more resources, more choices, more experiences, even more stuff – by owning less” (Popova, 2012:110). Botsman and Rogers (2011) have labelled this development ‘collaborative consumption’, in which people share, lend, trade, rent, gift and swap goods together and “exchange less tangible assets such as time, space, skills and money” (Botsman & Rogers, 2011:73). We are “moving from a culture of ownership
towards a culture of sharing”, says Popova (2012:110). In contrast to the current landscape – one based on money and with many competitors – the ‘we-economy’ is grounded on a more social system that builds on collaboration. Richard Sennett (2012), sociologist and writer on cities, labour and social policy, explains how cooperation and competition can coexist and how both have always been part of our social being: “anyone who has played a team sport, cut a business deal or raised a brood of children knows that mutual cooperation and competition can combine. The undertow of competition is aggression and anger, sentiments which are hard-wired into human beings. Rehearsals, conversations, coalitions, communities or workshops can counteract against this destructive pull, because the impulse of goodwill is also imprinted in our genes. As social animals, we have to work out through experience how to strike a balance” (Sennett, 2012:65).

With regard to shopping behaviour, customers are revising their attitudes towards the speed of consumption. According to The Future Laboratory (2012) consumers are feeling disappointed by the crisis and digital ubiquity, and as a result they are seeking greater meaning from their lives, embracing values such as ‘consideration, quietness and intuition’ (The Future Laboratory, 2012:24). According to Kristine Harper (2012b), researcher on ‘aesthetic sustainability’, we are searching for something longer-lasting, for relationships with substance, and we want to slow down. Harper (2013) states that an actual ‘bond’ between product and consumer is created through an aesthetic experience, “rather than working against current trends and creating an anti-trend-expression”. She states: “Aesthetic sustainability is about rethinking sustainability. About moving away from decomposition and recreation and towards recycling and minimal consumption. Away from viewing products as having a life cycle (birth and death) and towards anti-consumption (or at least minimal consumption) and products that last a lifetime” (Harper, 2012a). Harper (2013) also believes that “working strategically with aesthetic sustainability means working towards minimal consumption and thereby ‘educating’ the consumers to invest in fewer, but good, durable objects”. Well ahead of his time, Erich Fromm, author of The art of loving (1956), predicted that the money-driven capitalist system would destroy love for inner-self, and thus love for the other, arguing that you first have to love yourself before you can love another person. Fromm states: “If man is to be able to love, he must be put in his supreme place. The economic machine must serve him, rather than he serve it. He must be enabled to share experience, to share work, rather than at best, share in profits. Society must be organised in such a way that man’s social, loving nature is not separated from his social existence, but becomes one with it” (Fromm, 1956:104).

In other words, our basic human needs, such as eating, sleeping, loving and touching are fundamental for the inception of this new ‘mood’.

**Research methodology**

Based on ethnographic research carried out in Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin, this paper aims to explain new retail concepts in the context of social and cultural changes, as indicated in the above-mentioned ‘new mood’, and introduce solutions for future retail. The research design draws on ethnographic research methods, such as participant observation, field notes, photography, interviews and conversations conducted during site visits to Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin at the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013. Using conversation as a research method has been employed by the researcher Walter Mignolo: it proposes that the purpose of conversation is not knowledge, but to introduce the prospective of change (Mignolo, 2000). Mignolo (2000) argues: “by conversations I do not mean statements that can be recorded, transcribed, and used as documents. Most of the time the most influential conversations were people’s comments, in passing, about an event, a book, an idea, a person. These are documents that cannot be transcribed, knowledge that comes and goes, but remains with you and introduces changes in a given argument” (Mignolo, 2000:xxvii).

It is important to note that this research is connected to a certain time and space. The ethnographic research literally took shape ‘along the way’, as new encounters with retailers, consumers and locals in Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin brought new insights. This snowball technique was crucial to discovering and experiencing what was happening in retail in the three cities and their various neighbourhoods, and to gaining access to local knowledge. Within each city the focus was on innovative retail concepts – specifically, on their contribution to the neighbourhood, how innovative and unique the retail concept was in comparison with mainstream retail, and the uniqueness of the sold product. Seven case studies were highlighted as best practices that demonstrated an innovative and distinct retail concept in comparison with traditional retail.

**Findings**

A compendium was made of stories and observations about entrepreneurs who are rebuilding their local economy and reviving their cities and neighbourhoods. Interestingly these stories come from different disciplines, such as food, fashion and art. The findings indicate that all these innovative retail concepts demonstrate a certain strength in going against the tide of conformity by moving beyond
existing concepts and proposing alternative retail models for tomorrow. They have become ‘trailblazers’ in transforming places, emancipating the local, being social-driven, evoking connectedness, and creating a true story of experience.

Transforming places
Within each city, entrepreneurs ascribe core and unique features of the city to themselves that can be recognised by both outsiders and citizens. Interestingly, this differed per city. The provincial city of Arnhem is innovative in creating safe, small neighbourhoods in which collaborating projects from the bottom-up are arising. Istanbul embodies small-scale trade, heritage and crafts, and a new generation that is looking to the past to rediscover and maintain these values. In Berlin a low-regulation spirit has led to a thriving experimental field with trans-disciplinary stores and initiatives that are being cherished and protected.

In all three cities, art and design is playing a major role in the evolution of neighbourhood communities. These retail pioneers bring a certain lifestyle that changes the place organically. Generally, once-blighted neighbourhoods with little economic activity turned into thriving areas once the creatives, with art and small-scale retail, came in. However, in some neighbourhoods it was seen that after the creatives implemented their bohemian mood and revived the economic climate, real estate developers and large brand enterprises pushed them out of the neighbourhood. The artistic pioneers then moved on, taking their lifestyle with them. This process, known as gentrification, was seen particularly clearly in Istanbul (from Nisantasi to Galata) and Berlin (Mitte to Kreuzberg and Potsdamer Strasse).

Although this is a well-known phenomenon, it is important to note that within each city a new generation of business minds who feel responsible for their city is realising that the logic of global capitalism, with its tendency towards large-scale multinational enterprises, might actually be working against them.

The emancipation of the local
Communities, bottom-up initiatives and collaborations between small-scale stores are sprouting up in all three cities. In Arnhem it is clear that these new entrepreneurs see the importance of linking local strengths, resources, experiences and knowledge in order to grow. For example, the Dynamic Food lunch room functions as a travelling platform that supports small farmers in the area surrounding the city. It enables collaboration between farmers to share experiences and know-how. With a mobile interior, Dynamic Food moves from place to place, the owner hosting network seminars and bringing together different suppliers, resulting in innovative products. In Berlin, the city’s low-regulation character is allowing local initiatives to experiment. Berlin’s creative group of entrepreneurs, artists and designers is always questioning the status quo by trying something different. In Istanbul, where many different cultures have learned to live alongside one another for centuries, small-scale retailers with similar product groups tend to cluster. This fuels competition, pushing up quality and driving down costs, but the retailers still rely on one another to protect their niche. Moreover, young business minds are looking back to their heritage and mingling with these older stores to maintain tradition but with an innovative twist. The design duo behind the Civan store studied in Western Europe, returning to Istanbul to open an atelier and store in Istanbul’s Çukurcuma district. By reviving Turkish craftsmanship and designing tailor-made clothes for young and sophisticated men, the designers aim to send a message to the fashion industry. To mingle with a neighbourhood characterised by small local antique stores was the first step. Surprisingly, in all three cities small-scale retailers see their neighbours not just as competitors but also as collaborators, in agreement with Sennett’s (2012) vision on how cooperation can coexist with competition: it makes it possible for small-scale retail to create an open entrepreneurial platform, emancipating the local.

Social-driven
Across all three cities, a new entrepreneurial spirit is finding new ways to make ends meet. Interestingly, the new business models of these entrepreneurs are based on beliefs that are much more ‘people-driven’ and more based on trust and sharing than on money. Thanks to the global financial crisis many entrepreneurs have had to be creative to make a living in other ways. The story behind Sing Blackbird proves that an unexpected marriage of products and a whole-hearted spirit can go further than a large corporate budget. Sing Blackbird, a vintage fashion shop and neighbourhood café, was as a pioneer in the ‘Kreuzkölln’ area of Berlin in 2010. By merging vintage fashion with good food, Sing Blackbird offers its customers a lifestyle. The store functions as a meeting place where people trade clothes, buy affordable vintage clothing, or just enjoy a good coffee. Their business model depends on the concept of buy/sell/trade: customers bring their clothing pieces to the store and receive 25% of the selling price directly in cash, or 35% as store credit as a little motivation to spend the earned money in the store. In fact this model confers a sense of shared ownership of the
store. Another example is the neighbourhood café Sugar Hill. Opened in Arnhem in 2011, Sugar Hill works with the neighbourhood’s local strengths. By working together with small-scale regional suppliers Sugar Hill has been able to create authentic products such as coffee, bread and organic food according to its own taste and recipes, thereby creating a winning formula in its niche. Both in Arnhem and in Berlin another new dimension is being given to coffee consumption, namely ‘suspended coffee’. In this rising initiative, customers pay for two coffees in order to give one away to a person who is in need but cannot afford it. Money is no longer the core value, as a number of entrepreneurs have proposed with regard to other business models based on beliefs or alternative currencies. This follows Botsman and Rogers’ (2011) concept of ‘collaborative consumption’: small-scale entrepreneurs are addressing sharing in order to achieve greater things, to forge connections with the local neighbourhood, and to create better quality.

**Connectedness**

In many conversations it was striking how many entrepreneurs talked about the urge to feel connected to the products, nature, people and local DNA of the neighbourhood. The rise of entrepreneurs selling honest, quality products also embodies this urge for connectedness. Food plays an important role in this movement, as it appears to be an important connecting factor in all the neighbourhoods and stores examined. Interestingly, stores are recognising that instead of just selling goods they can be a platform for raising the awareness of social issues. One such example of retail supporting the community is the organic supermarket Biosphäre in Neukölln, Berlin. This initiative fosters social justice by labelling products with two prices: one for lower-income customers and one for ordinary, higher-income customers. This ‘social supermarket’ aims to reduce food poverty and wealth inequality by providing affordable organic food for all, thereby strengthening a social sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. The philosophy of Biosphäre supports the writings of Fromm (1956) in that values such as sharing, caring and love are redefined. In this sense it could be said that status and money have become overrated, and buying with meaning is becoming more relevant.

The search for meaning and connectedness is also strongly represented in the revival of crafts seen in all three cities. While this is different in each city, each is linked to the act of making. In Arnhem many designers have an atelier and store space in one, showing by whom, with what and how the product is made, thereby creating transparency and trust. In Istanbul, pioneers and young entrepreneurs are reviving traditional techniques instead of following the rising ‘chic scene’ in which Western mass standards are duplicated. Located between two fast fashion stores is the shop of fashion designer Gönül Paksoy. With its minimalistic interior her shop embodies the aesthetic of an art gallery. Her designs tell the story of craft and heritage. At the same time she translates the present and future into wearable and timeless designs. All her garments are hand-made and combine ancient Ottoman fabrics found on antique markets with modern, natural-dyed textiles. Paksoy is an important player in a valuable retail landscape, due to a sustainable production process based on true and honest stories of craftsmanship and innovation.

**The true story of experience**

Aesthetics are influenced by cultural standards, and these differed between the three cities. However, one conviction stood out: in a world where everything is becoming digital, the smell, feeling and taste of a product cannot be transmitted through an information channel. A number of stores have created this product experience, embracing realness, tactility and quality, presenting themselves in an ambience of serenity, aesthetics and minimalism, with the store becoming a place for contemplation – a place to rethink, experience and feel at a slower pace. These stores generally focus on a single product, being the best in their niche, and creating a true and honest experience of the product. An example of such a store is the specialty tea company P&T in Berlin, that aims to “break with the conventional over-the-counter shop model” and to provide a “personal path of discovery” (paperandtea.com, 2013). With a presentation that has an educative twist and is designed for easy orientation, information is injected without consumers feeling put upon. Customers are invited to actively participate, through special taste labs and aesthetically-pleasing, minimalistic presentations, in order to understand and care for the true essence of the product.

Instead of simply repeating the product’s retail past P&T looks back to the history of tea to understand, tell and sell the quality and true soul of the product in a contemporary manner. P&T innovates by going beyond the product itself: the value of the product does not lie in its marketing, but in its craftsmanship, and in an experiential store environment that addresses all the human senses. Specifically, the essence of the store is that the first connection with the customer is intuition-based. This supports Harper’s (2013) view on aesthetic sustainability and thus represents a new concept of store sustainability in which the story is ingrained in the product itself. It could be said that to stay sustainable in the future, crafts, heritage and innovation should be blended. Customers are invited to participate.
actively within the aesthetic of the store and its products, creating a sustainable bond.

**Conclusion – manifesto**

In cities such as Arnhem, Istanbul and Berlin a large-scale revolution is taking place at the small-scale level. It is evident that we are currently undergoing a transformation from a capitalist paradigm of shopping to a ‘we-economy’ that is no longer based on money but on trust. The new we-economy is people-driven. It has a bottom-up structure and is composed of people who share their knowledge in their community. As a result of the money-driven economy and capitalist system of the last decades, the value of human touch and an honest relationship between products, people and surroundings could be said to be lost, whereas this relationship is in fact essential for our social existence, as proposed by Harper (2013) and Fromm (1956).

Rather than behaving as large-scale manufacturers, the best practices mentioned in this paper are looking for new possibilities at the small-scale level and are trying out ideas that are more sustainable for the future. They are demonstrating that retail does not have to follow the traditional over-the-counter-model and that money does not have to stand between the consumer and the store. These developments suggest that there will be a sizeable power shift from large-scale retail to small-scale entrepreneurs. The future will reveal whether this will replace traditional large-scale retail or coexist with it.

We are entering an era in which our relationship towards products is changing. Instead of owning them, sharing them rewards us with more experiences, choices and connections. Rather than being driven by idealistic motives, the emergence of these new retail forms is based on survival and is regarded as a reaction against the capitalist, money-driven system. Given this approach it can be said that the current economic crisis has brought not only negative effects but also positive solutions. It is therefore important to highlight the potential of the small-scale, independent retail efforts described in this paper.

Looking forward towards a more social paradigm, these ‘trailblazers’ are indicators for a new economy: they have proposed sustainable models that bring new ideas to retail. In this sense future retail will fulfil new roles as collaborator, connector, activist, idealist, connoisseur, contemplator, curator and/or transformer. There is a growing urge to feel connected to the product, to nature, to people and to place. For retailers, sharing the place and the customer is key. By seeing neighbours as collaborators rather than competitors, a community of trust can be built which is more people-driven.

Next, products that embrace craft, heritage, quality and honesty are the most valuable, and this can only be accomplished when acting as a true connoisseur. Stores are also functioning as platforms for the raising of social awareness. The store has become a place for contemplation; a place to think, to experience and to feel at a slower pace. A new sustainable aesthetic is being created in which the consumer is educated to feel, smell, taste and study the essence of the product. Future retail will reach beyond its retail space, cultivating a playful expedition and the active participation of the customer within the store, transforming it into a true experience. This can therefore be regarded as an empowerment of the customer as an active participant.

As fashion professionals we are trained to have a sharp eye for trends. Today it can be seen that fashion is becoming more and more about searching, seeing and identifying evolving developments within the deeper layers of society and economy. This gives us the possibility to empower ourselves, to build sustainable foundations for fashion and retail in tomorrow’s society—one in which we can say with all our dedication that fashion can truly be happy.

**References**


List of case studies

**Arnhem:**
Dynamic Food - dynamicfood.nl
Sugar Hill - sugarhill.nl

**Istanbul:**
Civan - civanblogging.com
Gönül Paksoy

**Berlin:**
Biospähe
Sing Blackbird - singblackbird.tumblr.com
P&T - paperandtea.com

**Note**
1. McDonaldization is defined as ‘the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world’ (p. 4). A term used by the sociologist George Ritzer, 2002. Ritzer, G. (2002). An Introduction to McDonaldization. In G. Ritzer (Ed.) McDonaldization, the Reader. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.
3. “Gentrification is a phenomenon with many reinforcing characteristics, incorporating three hallmarks of community change: rising property values and rental costs; renewal or creation of housing stock corresponding to the appreciation of housing values; and changes in demographic composition, especially economic status but perhaps affecting race, education, and household size as well. A fourth set of issues, differing more widely from case to case and writer to writer, is the formation of new amenities, including the aesthetic feel of a neighbourhood, its crime rate, and the quality of its schools” (Banzhof & McCormick, 2012:30) from The Political Economy of Environmental Justice, Stanford University Press: California.
The Visual Language of Louis Vuitton

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Abstract
According to Okonkwo (2009), the last two decades have seen the growth of the luxury sector brought about by globalization that has generated much interests and discussion in both academic and business sectors. A growing number of current studies have addressed the generic scope of luxury consumption, such as conspicuous consumption in a contemporary context (Shipman, 2004; Trigg, 2001), luxury brands’ construct and measurement issues (Vigernon and Johnson, 2004) etc., however, the area of luxury fashion is still relatively unexplored and the call for a richer understanding of consumers’ relationships with advertising and mass media in this sector is much needed (Hirschman and Thompson, 1997). Since 2001, the fashion luxury brand Louis Vuitton was reported to be the top-ranking fashion luxury brand within the Best Global Brands in 2012 (Doran, 2012). It is, therefore, important and relevant to examine how the top luxury fashion brand, Louis Vuitton, has succeeded in creating such a strong relationship with its target consumers as advertising is considered by many, as not only one of the first intended dialogues of engagement between a brand and its target consumers, but also a “privilege form of discourse” (Leiss et al., 1990, p. 1). Hence it is the objective of this empirical research to fill this gap in the study of luxury fashion communication to examine the social relationship between Louis Vuitton advertisements and their viewers between 1980 and 2013. This paper will attempt to examine the type of social relationship that is established between Louis Vuitton and its intended viewers, from the perspective of interactional meanings and engagement. By applying the Visual Semiotic Framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), the differences in the use of key syntactic patterns to form the social relationship with viewers during the studied period will be analysed and their significance in the application of imagery in advertising will be discussed.

1. Introduction
According to Okonkwo (2009), the last two decades have seen the growth of the luxury sector brought about by globalization that has generated much interests and discussion in both academic and business sectors. A growing number of current studies have addressed the generic scope of luxury consumption, such as conspicuous consumption in a contemporary context (Shipman, 2004; Trigg, 2001), luxury brands’ construct and measurement of luxury dimensions (Vigernon and Johnson, 2004). However, the area of luxury fashion is still relatively unexplored and the call for a richer understanding of consumers’ relationships with advertising and mass media in this sector is much needed (Hirschman and Thompson, 1997). Since 2001 (Appendix I), the fashion luxury brand Louis Vuitton (LV), was reported to be the top-ranking fashion luxury brand within the Best Global Brands in 2012 (Doran, 2012). It is, therefore, important and relevant to examine how the top luxury fashion brand, Louis Vuitton (LV), has succeeded in creating such a strong relationship with its target consumers as advertising is considered by many, as not only one of the first intended dialogues of engagement between a brand and its target consumers, but also a “privilege form of discourse” (Leiss et al., 1990, p.1). Hence it is the objective of this empirical research to fill this gap in the study of luxury fashion communication by combining the approaches of content analysis and the Visual Semiotic Framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) to examine the social relationship between Louis Vuitton advertisements and their viewers between 1980 and 2013. This paper will investigate how the syntactic patterns in the visual presentation of these advertisements have evolved over the three decades, from the perspective of their engagement with their intended viewers.

Keywords
Luxury
Advertising
Fashion
Communication
Engagement
Semiotics
2. Literature Review

2.1 Advertising studies

Leiss et al. (1990, p. 1) describes advertising as a “privilege form of discourse”. Advertisements are prominent, not only in society, but also in the most personal settings of our lives. They make up the most consistent body of material in the mass media, pervading on websites, newspapers, billboards and other types of communicative medium, such that their images are almost a fixture and an omnipresent discourse in everyday life. This overwhelming presence has sparked interesting debate within academic circles. The studies of influential critics have come from the writings of Neoliberals and Marxists, such as Galbraith (1967), Mandel (1978) and Ewen (1988), where their main contentions evolve around debates that advertising is a manipulative tool, projecting consumers as beings that are unable to decide rationally by creating false needs that lead to dissatisfactions, as goods are often unable to deliver the promised happiness. Defenders of advertising, however, take a different view to the harsh criticisms of this perceived manipulative role of advertising. In Neil Borden’s (1947) classic work in this field, he concludes that advertising itself cannot create consumption trends but it does accelerate trends in consumption patterns. Albion and Ferris (1981) went further to state that advertising is an important form of mass communication that accelerates the growth of new markets, and foregrounded that persuasion is the main driving force behind consumer decisions. Leiss et al. (1990) concludes that goods are no longer related by consumers for their plain utility, but “there is always a symbolic aspect” (ibid, 1990, p. 45) in their interactions with users and that the explicit image-based advertising is not so much to inform but to persuade, using intended symbols of culture.

2.2 The Study of Visual Text in Advertising

Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) described a language, in his theory of semiology, as a system of signs which have meaning by virtue of their relationship with each other. Roland Barthes (1973) was one of the first academics who took this approach by applying semiotic tools to a breadth of aspects in popular culture. It was noted by Daniel Pope (1982) that since the 1920’s, advertising has shifted its focus from highlighting the functional characteristics of the products to increasingly foregrounding the accrued benefits that may be experienced by the consumers, and with this development has brought an increase in the use of visual images in the composition of the advertisements. The diachronic study of advertisements from 1910 to 1980 by Leiss et al. (2001) strongly underpins this development where their study also highlighted the shift of the explicit use of textual communication as a complement to the images to a more cryptic form after the 1960’s. Dyer (1996) highlighted that semiology is an appropriate decoding tool in the study of the meaning of signs and how these meanings could be reconstituted by viewers to prompt their responses to the depicted messages. However, the use of semiology is not without its critics. Williamson (1978), one of the first theorists who expanded Barthes’ analysis into specific studies of advertisement, was known for her seminal work on Chanel perfume that outlines the signifier (perfume) and the signified (French chic, glamour and beauty represented by Catherine Deneuve). Her rather uni-dimensional view was not always shared by other academics, such as McCracken (1993), who claims that Williamson tended to offer meanings to her own preferences and that the analytical approach could offer various meanings according to their own circumstances and preferences, which in the case of the Chanel advertisement, there is a reliance on viewers’ experiences and knowledge of external references to a wider belief system; in this case the French culture and the popular culture of films. Leiss et al. (2001) later critically highlight the shortfalls of the nature of semiology: (1) its dependence on the skill of the individual analyst, hence affecting consistency and reliability; (2) the semiology approach stresses individual approach to insights; and (3) semiology cannot be applied with equal success to all types of advertisement. In order for semiotics to succeed, it has been recommended to be linked with other theoretical frameworks or analytical techniques, such as content analysis (McCracken, 1993). The later study by Leiss et al. (2001) corroborates these two approaches where the content analysis takes on a quantitative approach that permits a degree of rigorous precision in the measurement of patterns of similarities and differences while the semiotic perspective contributes towards the investigation of the meaning of an advertisement and the significance of the message to the viewer’s interpretation, thus resulting in a diachronic overview of the phases in the development of communicative formats of advertising.

namely ideational, interactive, and compositional (Figure 1). This means of visual analysis is essentially functional in nature and possesses a means to map out meaning potentials offered by visual semiotic codes, such as advertising images, from where coding of images “not only represents the world […] but also plays a part in some interaction, with or without accompanying text, that constitutes a recognizable kind of text” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001, p. 140). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) recognize that there is overwhelming evidence of the importance of the need to study visual communication, particularly in view of the ever-increasing complexity of advertising, where the meanings in the visual and written text may possess independent roles with different meaning-making intentions, reiterating Leiss et al. (1990) earlier concerns in the emergence of a more cryptic nature of the textual messages being communicated.

3. Theoretical Framework

Within Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) Visual Semiotic Framework of multimodality, the interactive features of visual text consider the relationship between the visual and the viewer (Figure 1), utilising the techniques involving analyzing the variables of the gaze, the distance or size of frame, perspective or point of view and modality which measures the reality value (Machin, 2007). When an explicit eye or gaze contact is established directly with the viewer, it constitutes a “demand that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 122-123) on the viewer, whilst if the interactive or animated participant (IP) is depicted as not looking at the viewer, it is referred to as an “offer” (ibid, 1996, p. 124). The second dimension regarding the size of frame or distance, derives from Hall’s (1966) of proxemics, or the psychology of the use of space around people, where it represents the social distance of participants as it establishes important points of demarcations from intimacy between the IP and the viewers, ranging from intimate, social to public (Bell, 2001). The values of these variables define how much of the IP’s body is represented in the frame of the respective image. In the third dimension, the perspective or point of view of the horizontal angle establishes the power relationships between the IP and the viewer; where a high angle forces the viewer to look down on the IPs denoting an indication of superiority to them, whilst a low angle that forces the viewer to look up is suggestive of an inferior position and that equality is only maintained when both parties are at an eye-level angle (Royce, 2007). The fourth dimension of modality defines the credibility of the images or socially conventionalised realism of an image, judged on dimensions such as colour, degree of contextualisation, comprehensiveness of representation, degree of illumination and nature of perspective (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001). It has been argued that the values of modality are context-based where highly saturated colours in paintings and advertising images convey high modality, while on the other hand, black and white images in scientific or technical texts are also considered as representations of high modality, hence definition of the values in modality must be clearly defined according to its context before analysis is conducted (Bell and Milic, 2002).
The interactive meanings are summarised in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Distance</th>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face and head only</td>
<td>Absence of gaze/ looking away</td>
<td>Intimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head and shoulders</td>
<td>IP looks at viewer, directly, smiling</td>
<td>Close personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From waist up</td>
<td>IP looks down at viewer, not smiling</td>
<td>Far personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole figure</td>
<td>IP looks up at viewer, head canted, smiling or pouting</td>
<td>Close social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole figure with space</td>
<td></td>
<td>Far social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torso of at least 4 or five people</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
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Table 1: Summary of Interactive Meanings (Source: Bell and Milic (2002))

4. Methodology
4.1 Data Collection
20 samples of advertising Images (Appendix II) of Louis Vuitton, between 1980 to early 2013, with 5 samples from each decade, were collected from The Vogue Archive (ProQuest). Priority was given to the September and March issues as they are the most important issues of the fashion calendar (Borelli, 1997). The starting decade of 1980's was selected based on the two major events that took place with the brand Louis Vuitton; namely that it went public in 1984 and following in 1987, it merged with Moët Hennessy to form the Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH) conglomerate as it is known today (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy SA History, 2013).

4.2 Analytical Framework
The Interactive dimension of the Visual Semiotic Theory (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996) and Content Analysis were used for this analysis, with three defined variables, namely Social Distance, Behaviour and Modality and their respective values are observed as below:

Variable 1: Social Distance
Kress and van Leeuwen’s representation of social distance is based on the discussions by Hall (1996) on proxemics where it has been shown that humans carry an invisible distance or boundaries around that define our relationship with those individuals. With this space, it corresponds to different fields of vision or, in the case of images or field of vision, it corresponds to the size of frame of the respective image (Bell, 2001). The values of the variables of social distance are divided into 6 values (Table 2).

<table>
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<td>From waist up</td>
<td>IP looks down at viewer, not smiling</td>
<td>Far personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole figure</td>
<td>IP looks up at viewer, head canted, smiling or pouting</td>
<td>Close social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole figure with space</td>
<td></td>
<td>Far social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torso of at least 4 or five people</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Values of Social Distance (Source: Bell, 2001)
Variable 2: Behaviour
Bell (2001) combined the Image Act analysis of Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996) semiotics and Goffman’s (1979) observation on how gendered bodies are represented in advertisements to form the variable of Behavior. When the IP looks at the viewer, a contact is established by vectors, either by the participant’s eye-line or together with a vector of a gesture in the same direction which creates a form of address to the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). However, this contact is often depicted as accompanied by other facial expressions and body gestures to form a pseudo-social bond and by combining with Goffman’s (1979) represented behavior in terms of power, this variable of Behavior and its values are summarized as below (Table 3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Realization</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP looks at viewer, directly, smiling</td>
<td>Absence of gaze/ looking away</td>
<td>Offer/ view as on looker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP looks down at viewer, not smiling</td>
<td>IP looks up at viewer, head canted, smiling or pouting</td>
<td>Demand-equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP looks at viewer, directly, smiling</td>
<td>IP looks up at viewer, head canted, smiling or pouting</td>
<td>Demand- submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP looks at viewer, directly, smiling</td>
<td>IP looks up at viewer, head canted, smiling or pouting</td>
<td>Demand- seduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Values of Behaviour (Source: Bell, 2001)

Variable 3: Modality
According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), modality results from the degree to which a depicted image is expressed through the use of elements such as colour, representation, details, depth and tonal shades. The ways of modulating reality in visual representation can be based on different truth criteria, for example, naturalistic (real) or sensory (fantastic) modality. For the purpose of this study, the values of modality or realism of the images are adapted from Bell and Milic (2002) and are distinguished as high, medium and low under the following definitions (Table 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly saturated colours, naturalistically, in participants and background</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less saturated colours, eg washed out, with presence of background</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monochrome (black and white), Drawings, with no background</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Values of Modality (Source: Bell and Milic, 2002)

5. Findings and Discussions
The last three decades have seen a marked evolution with the utilization of syntactic patterns in the depiction of the images in the advertisements of Louis Vuitton and the following insights and discussions attempt to provide an overview into the key changes, from the perspective of their interactive meanings.

5.1 Social Distance
The resulting data in Table 5 indicates that the social distance between the viewer and the advertisements was only apparent in 40% of the samples in the 1990’s, with an absence of any interactive participant during the 1980’s and the early part of the 1990’s. However, during the turn of the millennium, the majority of the samples is observed to maintain a social distance value of personal (80% in total) whilst the entry into the decade of 2010 saw a change into a more social (60%) and even public (40%) distance with the viewers (Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Distance</td>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close personal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Far personal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close social</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Far social</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NA (no IP)</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Summary of Social Distance Variable
According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001), in everyday interaction when an IP reveals most about her personality and individuality, the details of her face or expression are visually so to establish a more personal or intimate relationship with the viewer. From the results (Figure 2), during the late 1990’s and into the millennium, the dominant value of personal distance depicted allowed the viewers to perhaps see themselves to be addressed or invited to be a part of a group, in this case as a potential user of the LV brand. As with many companies during the 1997 global financial crisis, LVMH Group was hard hit by the Asian economy, a region that generated nearly 50% of its annual sales (LVMH Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, 2013) and this closeness (Figure 3) to the intended viewers could be an intended communicative strategy, not only for the purpose of advertising on a business level, but as part of relationship building from which the brand could be perceived as more approachable, particularly during this same period when the corporation is in its phase of aggressive acquisition of other well-known cosmetics and luxury watch brands.

After 2010, it is observed that the products are mostly shown in full view and often in front of the IPs (Figure 4), hence achieving a closer contact with the viewers compared to the IPs, while the IPs maintain a more secondary role in comparison. The longer distance from the viewer now indicates an imagery barrier, pushing the IPs more out of the viewers’ direct reach, thus creating a distance. From the images after 2010 that depict the values of public, it could also be observed that the IPs are depicted with a tendency of a group structure, where within the groups, some of the IPs carry similar poses or seen to be facing the same directions (Figures 4 & 5), indicating synchronised actions, hence reinforcing the “same effect” that constitutes generalization (van Leeuwen, 2001).
5.2 Behaviour

There was no demand on the viewers during the 1980’s and much of the 1990’s from a visual semiotics perspective due to the absence of an interactive participant (IP). However, between 2000 to 2009 (Table 6), the tendency of demand (60%) was observed, with a slightly stronger tendency toward the demand of seduction (40%). The demand of equality (20%) is seen to apply the use of frontal angle (Figure 3) possibly to signify an attitude and encouragement of enhanced closeness with the viewer (Almeida, 2009). The depiction from 2010 onwards projects a different picture with a stronger tendency to depict an offer (60%) that places the viewer as an on-looker instead of a participant with neither affinity nor demand on the viewer to be involved in any way beyond accepting or rejecting the offer in the information.

During the 2000’s there is an increase by LV in the bonding with viewers in the form of demand (60%) of which 40% is under submission, where the IP looks up at the viewer (Figure 8), signifying the superiority of the viewer. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), this form of direct address in the form of a demand together with the gestures forms an “image act” (ibid, 1996, p. 123) that is asking the viewer to enter into an affinity of desiring the IPs, the products depicted and
the brand. However on the other hand, the demand in equality depicted by Figure 9, signifies the sharing of similar feelings and interests between the IP and the viewers (Almeida, 2009). After 2010, there is a key trend of offer where the absence of eye contact between the IP and the viewer is salient, hence the viewer is not required to adopt any specific behavior nor take any action (Guijarro et al., 2008).

5.3 Modality of image

From Table 7, it can be observed that during the 1980’s, images were depicted using both drawings (Figure 10) and photographs, hence the low modality (40%) of the images was mainly contributed by former mode of presentation. High modality was depicted as the dominant tendency during the 1990’s (60%) followed by a slight decline (40%) during the 2000’s where the depicted images used high colour saturation and a diverse colour range of tones, resulting in high realism in the depiction of both IPs and the product. The application of medium modality was more evident after 2000 (Figure 11) with decreased vibrancy of colours in both the IP and the product depictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Summary of Modality
According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), modality is interpersonal and this dimension could be manipulated such that the viewers may be aligned with some truth whilst being distanced from others. The use of photography in depicting the products in the 1980’s exhibited strong evidence of vibrant colours (Figure 12) with sharp articulation to the details of the products against a background depicted in high modality (Figure 13). This contributed to the contextualization of the background, hence bringing the viewers’ focus to the products being captured in a moment in time (Machin, 2007). For example, in the case of Figure 13, the products are captured in an implied moment of travelling by sea.

At closer inspection, the alignment of depicted participants within the advertisements from 1998 to 2009 evidenced a higher articulation in details of the product, in comparison to the IPs and the setting of the background. The IPs and the products are set in a lighted background with no specific or clearly-indicated context setting (Figures 14 & 15) where the intentions of the advertisements are to document an idealized concept, rather than a moment in time (Machin, 2007). The modality of the IPs has been lowered slightly such that the face and detail of the skin are without natural flaws while the products, in contrast, are extremely high in their articulation in both colour and texture, as seen in the embossed effect of the leather bag in LV 2009 (Figure 15). According to Machin and Thornburrow (2003), this reduction of modality contributes to the change in the rules of reality where the decontextualisation of the background allows the advertisement to bring the perceived thoughts of the IP, through her expressed emotions and body language, away from the context to her association with the products.

The background of the advertisements after 2010 became highly contextualized, with an intention by the brand to capture IPs and their relation to the products in a certain moment in time, but the realism is seen to be somewhat manipulated by (1) the reduction of the modality of colour (Figure 16) to infer nostalgia (Grainger, 1999) or (2) an increased use of colour modality (Figure 16) to reference the colours often depicted in pop art culture (Figure 17). Anaya (2013) reported that recent research indicates consumers in emerging economies, such as China, are shifting away from preference for logos into more understated luxury, hence Louis Vuitton is being forced to rethink their communication strategies, and the observation from this study in the recent changes in the use of modality between the IPs, product and the background perhaps is a good indicator of the emergence of some of these future strategies to come.
6. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to examine the type of social relationship that is established between Louis Vuitton and its intended viewers, from the perspective of interactional meanings and engagement. By applying the Visual Semiotic Framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), the differences in the use of key syntactic patterns to form the social relationship with viewers were analysed and discussed. The 1980’s saw the Louis Vuitton products depicted in a strong context of travel, with the viewer only as an on-looker. The introduction of interactive participants (IP) in the advertisements soon after LV went public evidenced an intention to form a closer connection with its viewers. The social distance between the IP and the viewers became more personal in the 1990’s, a period when the company was not only suffering from the Asian Financial Crisis, but was also conducting acquisitions of other brands on the market. There was a marked change in the depiction of modality of the units within the images between the first and second decade after 2000. During the former, by decontextualizing the setting, the viewers’ attention was directed to the foregrounded IP and the product, while the latter decade was highly contextualised and the relationship between the IP, the product and the setting became more complex. Although the products are still foregrounded, the modality of product details is comparatively reduced. Lastly, it is also evident that there is a correlation between the brand’s articulation intentions with the key events that were occurring during the specific periods, hence it is evident that this “privileged form of discourse” (Leiss et al., 1990, p. 1) plays an important role in creating a desired perception with a brand’s intended or potential consumers.

References


References (Images)

Fig.1 Bell, P. & Milic, M. (2002). “Goffman’s gender advertisements revisited: combining content analysis with semiotics analysis”, *Visual Communication*, 1(2), pp. 203-222

Fig.2 Tendencies of Social Distance Variable. Author’s Own Source

Fig.3 LV 2007. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 197(4), pp. 10-11

Fig.4 LV 2010. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 200(10), pp. 8-9

Fig.5 LV 2012. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 202(9), pp. 18-19

Fig.6 LV 2013. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 203(3), pp. 82-83

Fig.7 Tendencies of Behaviour Variables. Author’s Own Source

Fig.8 LV 2005 Demand of Seduction. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 194(9), pp. 30-31

Fig.9 LV 2003 Demand of Equality. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 193(9), pp. 308-309

Fig.10 LV 1981 Participants depicted with Line Drawings. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 171(10), pp. 193

Fig.11 Tendencies of Modality Variable. Author’s Own Source

Fig.12 LV 1989 Depiction of High Colour Modality. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 179(6), pp. 9

Fig.13 LV 1983 High Contextualisation of Background. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 171(11), pp. 193

Fig.14 LV 2003 Blank Background. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 193(9), pp. 308-309

Fig.15 LV 2009 Ambiguous Background. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 199(9), pp. 114-115

Fig.16 LV 2012 Use of reduced colour modality. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 202(9), pp. 18-19

Fig.17 LV 2013 Use of increased colour modality. Advertisement: Louis Vuitton. *The Vogue Archive*, 203(3), pp. 82-83
Relationships and Power: Changing Routes to Market for SME Designers

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Abstract
This paper addresses the theme of fashion as an industrial sector, and specifically where power lies in the relationship between new and emerging designers and their markets in the fashion marketing system, and proposes how this will change in the future. Anecdotal evidence currently suggests that employment growth in the fashion industry is related to distribution roles and not creative ones, and has contributed to the overall growth in the sector. In this context the researchers examine the ways that power is determined by the marketing system and the flows of knowledge exchanged in distribution relationships through the lens of relationship marketing (see Grönroos, 1997). It commences by reviewing the literature of Relationship Marketing, online channels to market and the nature of power in buyer-supplier relationships. With the rapid development of online marketing and sales, new routes are established which enable designers to sell directly to end users. In particular, the marketing system is evolving new e-marketing capabilities. The gap in knowledge that emerges is how the relationships between designers and their customers are changed by these new e-commerce distribution opportunities, their implications for the marketing system, and for the balance of power. The research uses a case study approach to analyse the research question, with five SME fashion designers purposively selected to demonstrate different stages of development.

Introduction
A new focus for marketing emerged in the period 1980-2000, which moved attention from the producer to the consumer in the form of consumer goods marketing or “exchange” views of marketing (Coviella et al. 1997; Fitchett and McDonagh 2001). Relationship Marketing is a theoretical framework for customer-focused marketing, concerned with attracting but also retaining customers for multiple transactions rather than single transactional marketing, with more far reaching returns (Gummesson 1999). The main benefits have been identified as improved customer retention, increased loyalty and profitability, and reduced marketing costs. In addition to repeat purchase behaviour, Relationship Marketing leads to psychological attachment and development of a positive attitude towards the brand (Watkins and Lewis 2013). A number of drivers have been proposed for why companies should adopt Relationship Marketing and in the context of SME fashion design the most significant are increased use of information technologies - specifically online and mobile devices - interactive personalisation and individualism enabled by online communication and engagement and the creation of more demanding and sophisticated consumers, and finally for SMEs in particular, the unreliability of traditional marketing.

Literature Review
Relationship Marketing is distinguished by its organisation-wide approach, with a focus on collaborative relationships between the firm and its customers (Parvatiyar and Sheth 2000) and the co-creation of value between the firm, its customers, suppliers and other network partners. It accentuates the need for the support of the whole provider organisation in maintaining and developing the relationships, and the need to access a variety of internal knowledge resources in order to benefit the customer (Grönroos, 1994; p.356).
Most studies suggest the importance of value in the pursuit of customer satisfaction. A value-added service is considered an efficient means to satisfy a customer better (Grönroos, 1994). As summarized by Gruen (1997), the domain of Relationship Marketing seeks to provide the means and directions for organisations to create and manage an environment dedicated to mutual value creation and this has informed emerging theories and models of the interaction/network approach to industrial marketing and the marketing of services; for e-commerce strategies this can be measured as the returning or repeat customer. Competitive advantage can be achieved through very small interventions, the micro-efforts of the firm in the context of macro conditions - of the environment - and the nature of the firm-constituent interactions (Hunt and Lambe, 2000).

However, Relationship Marketing is ineffective unless the customer engages in a relationship and therefore the type of communication between the brand and consumer is an important aspect of the relationship building process (Watkins and Lewis 2013). Companies need to think as customers do: engagement is a set of related interactions that added together make up the customer experience through an overall system of touch points, and who then builds, operates, and renews each touch point consistent with that overall vision (McKinsey 2011).

Brand touchpoints, and the opportunities to build and change relationships have radically changed with the development of online and mobile technologies (Manuelli, 2006) in which social media promote high levels of interaction among users (Williams and Chinn 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Social media strategies provide users with content that is fresh, accessible and useful; relate to users in a personal, direct way and finally create an interactive relationship with users (Hart et al 2013). As the 18-34 age group is shown to be highly involved (Taylor, Lewin and Strutton 2011) and this age group is one of the highest spending on clothes it provides a further incentive for fashion designers to use social media to in the distribution of their brands. Relationships through networks and distribution channels inevitably concern power and its use. The concept of power requires some clarification; in a psychological context power is viewed as the ability to change the behaviour of others (McClelland, 1975). In political science power can be the “ability of those who possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire” (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977, p.3). One of the fundamental definitions of power as a social phenomenon is Weber’s (1947): “the probability, in a social relationship, to impose one’s own will even against resistance regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” and arguably most concepts of power are founded on this. Sociologists have long conceptualised power in terms of the concept of dependence and many studies in supplier networks have focused on this theme.

A firm’s total power can be a combination of several kinds of power. French and Raven (1959) identified five types, each based on its source or origin: coercive, reward, expert, legitimate, and referent power. These were subsequently extended and also refined through various dichotomies (Belaya Gagalyuk and Hanf, 2009). The exercise of both coercive power and that of non-coercive power represents the use of an authoritative control mechanism (Zhuang and Zhang 2011) often exercised by the designer whose “voice” or “signature” becomes stronger as they develop brand equity through marketing their key market values, for example the designers ‘Agi and Sam’ and their East London style, or the personification of the brand to create followers.

A final dimension to power is Cool and Henderson’s (1998) view of power being gained through a favourable position in the market. This is operationalized in a supplier/buyer relationship by differentiating between structural power (the number of potential suppliers/buyers and supplier/ buyer concentration), dependence power (impact on seller’s cost, impact on seller’s differentiation, and switching cost), attribution power (capacity of suppliers/buyers to bargain and the cost to switch suppliers/buyers), and integration power (incidence of forward integration from suppliers/ buyers) (Belaya Gagalyuk and Hanf, 2009).

Changes in distribution in the Fashion industry

In recent years Centre for Fashion Enterprise (CSF) in London has observed that the fashion industry has changed in terms of its high-end fashion sector distribution channels in particular. Due to the high cost of high street retail premises, the predominant established route to market for most Western-based fashion designers has been to wholesale their collection at London, Paris or New York-based trade fairs, and sometimes in some lesser known fashion cities, and sell to multibrand independent retailers. In this instance, the retailers are the powerful party and successful designers have developed effective strategies to attract them. These include selling the collection in a prestigious showroom in Paris during Paris Fashion Week; working with a stylist in order to secure magazine editorial or press coverage and attending the right social events with the right celebrity presence. This has resulted in strong designer-retailer relationships (Nesta 2008). The main challenge this wholesale model creates for new and emerging designers is that their businesses is now traditionally a two season model with only two payment periods.
Following the global economic crisis which began in 2008, distribution channels in fashion visibly changed, as manufacturers began to develop business to business (B2B) relationships directly with retailers, while designers developed business to consumer (B2C) relationships directly with private clients or by developing their bespoke web-enabled strategies. These denote a shift in power to the designers as they gained more control of the elements that underpin their businesses’ destiny and as they developed strategies to build stronger relationships directly with the consumer. The changes in distribution strategy have further eroded the “middle ground” or “wholesale arena” which is overpopulated with designers from all over the world selling to a reduced pool of multibrand retailers. These retailers often derive their power from their multi-store businesses operating in several geographic locations. Notably only a few small niche retailers remain, those who have a strong individual personality like Collette in Paris, Browns in London and Ikram in Chicago. Their power resides in their position as fashion opinion formers who own the “fashion design showcases to the world” and are widely seen as endorsing designers’ talent.

Anecdotal evidence currently suggests that employment growth in the fashion industry is related to distribution roles and not creative ones, and has contributed to the overall growth in the sector. Geographical location is a significant factor in determining distribution strategies as emerging designers in Indonesia and Turkey for example often start their business with a workshop and a list of private clients and soon progress to a retail outlet. They have little experience in wholesaling. In London designers generally start selling through a small wholesale business and would have some private clients from an early stage. A retail shop would be very unlikely route to market at this point.

The development of ecommerce as a distribution opportunity can give significant advantage to designers and is proving to be a powerful tool for growth. The strategies for online marketing work best where a seamless social media, web and ecommerce approach is evident. In particular, the marketing system is evolving more cost effective new e-marketing capabilities that support the new ways to market that SMEs can adopt, following exemplars pioneered by ASOS, Burberry and other market leaders. ASOS’s innovations include the ASOS Fashion Finder, an interactive forum that presents customers with the latest fashion trends, product recommendations and the ability to upload outfits and items they like. The company also launched Europe’s first transactional Facebook site. The store stocks ASOS’ entire range and allows customers to purchase, leave comments, ‘like’ products, and link their opinions on ASOS items to their Facebook profiles.

Methodology

The following research questions emerge from the literature: how is the relationship between designers and their customers changed by new e-commerce distribution opportunities, and what are their implications for the marketing system, and balance of power between designers and their customers? The research position is interpretivist which allows it to be more engaged with the nature of the ‘world in which we live’ (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986). It allows for reality or realities and these are to be constructed through the researcher’s description and/or interpretation and ability to communicate the respondent’s reality (Szmigin and Foxall 2000). Fundamentally it is concerned with understanding, as opposed to causation, and the use of qualitative methods to discover meaning (Repko 2008).

A case study approach was adopted with five SME fashion designers purposively selected to demonstrate different stages of development. Case studies involve empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. They have an application when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Case Study enquiry copes (Yin, 2010, p.20) with “the technically distinct situation in which there will be many multiple sources of evidence”. Documents, trade reports and surveys and online sources provided secondary materials for the cases, and were supplemented by interviews with the designers. Semi-structured interviews with open ended questions were used and the interview transcripts analysed and coded for in-case and cross-case themes using Nvivo 10.

Analysis

The first part of the analysis examines the development of each of the five designers and their businesses, and in the second part examines key themes in the development of new channels of distribution. In each case, it is evident that the designers have moved from single to multichannels to maintain or enhance the distinctive position of their brand.

Tracey Boyd set up her womens wear label BOYD in 1996 working closely with her partner Adrian Wright. Having travelled extensively, she combined her love of travel and design to bring together a unique collection of fashion, jewellery and homeware. She has been a...
significant presence at London Fashion Week, and her collections have won her Best New Generation Designer of the Year. Her distribution channels extended worldwide through retailers primarily in the USA and UK, including Barneys and Selfridges. She has had collaborations with Topshop, Debenhams, John Lewis, Monsoon, Nokia, Wedgewood, Proctor and Gamble, Gore-tex, and Benefit. After fifteen years showing at London Fashion Week, with her own boutique in Mayfair, London, she has closed these established distribution routes, to reinvent her business as an online store supplemented by wholesale collections sold through One and Only hotel group. She also launched ABoydBazaar in 2013.

The second case illustrates the distribution channels selected by two new London menswear designers, Agi and Sam, who have traded for three seasons. Agi Mdumulla and Sam Cotton worked at Alexander McQueen after training in Fashion Design and Illustration. In January 2010, they decided to establish a menswear brand with a focus on bespoke print, British humour combining tailored and accessible shapes. ‘Agi and Sam’ first appeared at London Fashion Week at Fashion East menswear Installations in February 2011. They were selected for the MAN catwalk show AW12 where they showed for three consecutive seasons. The designers started by distributing through high-end designer stores such as Harvey Nichols and Liberty. They are now developing a transactional website, at an early stage of their business, to connect directly with their niche consumers.

CottonInk demonstrate a different distribution strategy to the preceding cases having started their fashion design business online two years ago in Indonesia. Ria Sarwono and Carlione Darjanto created the company and have complementary skills. Carlione studied business in Malaysia and then studied fashion and Ria studied visual communication design in Jakarta supplemented by a fashion short course in London. They founded Cotton Ink in 2008 with a President Obama T-Shirt, and started a blog shop, used by bloggers, facebookers and forum members. They participated in Brightspot Market, a design-oriented curated market targeted towards the young and trendy customers. Their current best-seller product—the tubular shawl—started to sell very well and following the launch of their official website in 2010, Cotton Ink began to win awards. They were recognized as the ‘Most Favorite Brand’ at Brightspot Market, ‘Most Innovative Brand’ at Cleo Fashion Award and ‘Best Local Brand’ by Free Magazine. They developed their product range and opened their first physical store in January 2013, which has shown a promising start. Their next stage is to invest in a marketing campaign, to grow awareness of their online store.

Emma Shipley launched her business at London Fashion Week in February 2012 after she graduated from the Royal College of Art, and Browns boutique bought her graduate collection of luxury printed scarves. Emma subsequently won numerous awards for her work, and was shortlisted in the category of Emerging Fashion Brand at the WGSN Global Fashion Awards 2013. In May 2013 she was awarded the UK Fashion & Textiles RISE Newcomer Award. Her designs have been described as ‘meticulously precise’ and ‘astonishingly skilful and distinctive’ while the brand stands for unique, luxury and timeless design with a fine art edge. The aesthetic is rooted in Emma’s intricate and unique pencil drawings, bringing together diverse visual and cerebral references to create traditionally executed yet strikingly modern prints. These drawings are combined with a bold but refined use of colour to produce luxury scarves manufactured in the finest natural Italian fabrics.

The final case is Marques Almeida, who are award winning, emerging designers in London. Marta Marques and Paulo Almeida met at CITEM Fashion School in Portugal, from which they both graduated with distinction in 2007. They moved to London in 2009 where they gained industry experience at Vivienne Westwood/ Anglomania (Marques) and Preen (Almeida). In 2009 they began to work together and their graduate collection reworked street-wear references, creating a ‘relaxed, deconstructed, effortless aesthetic’ with collection featuring mainly denimwear. Their plan is to formalise their route to market through an online store, and they already have some success selling stock online.

In terms of business objectives, the designers were clear about their core business lying in the strength and uniqueness of their designs, highlighting their distinctive qualities as “intricate” and “hand-drawn”. Secondly they saw opportunities to develop their business online either supplementing or building on previous offline distribution channels. In developing new channels for designer products relationship building forms a significant element. Interactivity is one of the main benefits of an online strategy. Increasingly designers see online connectivity as a medium for both sales and communications, but online customers are frequently discussed in a different sense, as followers. These are like-minded people who want to be involved, immersed even, in the brand both on and also offline in the designer’s own store. One media commentator demonstrated the extent to which the brand can build an emotional attachment when they described a new store opening “now, they’re going to launch their new store at ex Plaza Indonesia, 1st floor!”
I’m so proud and happy.” The sense of engagement with the brand is clear in the expression of two emotions, pride and happiness and the precise details about the location of the new store. The findings demonstrate that designers can aspire to a global market with relatively few resources by using a multi-channel strategy. The number of channels in the case studies vary, but up to four typically were evident: online retailing, retail store, wholesale through a distributor or sales agent and at events. In addition consultancy, collaborations and licensing with a third party provide regular revenue streams into the business. Private sales provide an informal channel demonstrating the highest level of relationship: an individualised customer service.

There is a temporal dimension to these channels, with stores as pop-ups and events, including public shows, for example London Fashion Week creating time-bound opportunities to sell to customers. However these intensely time-compacted events attract the most interested and potentially committed customers, and consequently command considerable designer attention. One designer specifically focuses on the value of their Annual Bazaar concept to the brand, by consciously describing it as ‘curated’ to define the selection of specific items and their presentation. The design of the event itself is integral to the brand identity, to resemble an arab souk, but location too is important: this souk is in a prestigious area in the west end of London. The success of the format has led to plans to extend the event to an appropriately exotic location, the Maldives. A face-to-face sales and communication relationship can still be important, as pop up events create these opportunities as well as driving a brand narrative.

Intermediaries in the distribution channels, wholesalers and retailers change the direct relationship between designers and their customers. Although they are losing ground, wholesalers act at a local level, providing sales support at Fashion Weeks in London and Paris and more generally market knowledge and administrative support. However they can act as powerful gatekeepers to customers, and the relationship with wholesale customers has to be managed. For one designer, their wholesale distribution takes place through a luxury resort group of hotels and the “captive audiences” in these hotels provide a very clearly defined target market and one which by the nature of their holiday capture, controlled. With retail stores the designer has to work harder to create visibility for their brand, and this requires more styles in the collection and detailed attention to managing the merchandising of the range. To improve the operational manageability the sequencing of new designs can vary, sometimes to the store first, at other times online.

Strategies for distribution have to be carefully planned especially to maintain the brand identity by controlling the stock and managing prices and markdowns. Discounts provide an opportunity to target individual customers with specific products, and at specific times. Direct retail presents opportunities to offer a discount or incentive to buy at an event, for example on the day at London Fashion Weekend. By contrast the online range has to be controlled so that it does not appear discounted to a wider, potentially global market; here exclusive discount codes are sent to customers and followers, without marking things down on the e-shop.

At Cotton Ink the designers focus on their original concept, working with cotton and using ink as an element to express their enthusiasm for firstly as they describe it, a love of colour and secondly by playfully having fun with the basic concept, they will create their own target market. The aim with this strategy is to build relationships and loyalty with returning customers through their core brand values explicit in their designs; “casual clothing with a twist” is their standard reference. The designers can very precisely describe their target customers, in one case summarising them as a “confident girl, who doesn’t like to dress up that much, but still looks stylish in her minimal casual look”. This level of engagement with the customer demonstrates an ability to create a close relationship: understanding the clothes people want to wear while having a good eye for the promotional opportunities they present.

There is a mixed response to managing social media strategically, from finding a strategy difficult, to a more integrated approach across different media. The respondents recognised that the success of online social networks depended on their customer profile, and while older customers were less likely to engage with social media, the designers’ customers were generally interested in and would use these channels. They were particularly prized for their ability to provide live feeds with which to engage and develop relationships with the customers.

The designers actively use text and visual social media to update customers directly with news about the company. More specifically customers can engage with the company about a specific outfit or featured look, a relationship very much controlled by the designer through the choice of outfit. The most widely used media were the leaders in their fields, Facebook and Twitter, and for visual effects, Instagram; feedback was important and could also be achieved through other directly managed media back to the designer as texts and on BBM and Whatsapp. One designer consciously tailors the message for each type of medium; for example Twitter is used more
informally than Facebook. Cotton Ink’s development provides a different insight into relationship building with customers. It launched its business initially as a small blogshop and expanded from blog to online retailer. It was voted favourite online brand by an online community significant enough to reach and be promoted by other fashion commentators, and the blog clearly still performs an important role for brand. From its early position as a social media platform, Cotton Ink developed an initial signature piece, a convertible shawl, and moved on to an accessories range and collectibles for its fans. These small items provided a manageable starting point for online sales as well as opportunities for creativity that subsequently led into a ready to wear label.

A blog can be used to engage the customer with a narrative; for one designer this was about working with craftsmen, not just ‘finding’ them, but working with inspirational sources on a worldwide scale. They helped create a sense of the new and unknown that appeals to a knowledgeable customer and to exquisite things as part of a quest: the word suggests a heroic and potentially unending search for the exquisite. Online content introduces the brand as lifestyle directly to the customer but it also has a functional purpose, enabling customers to check delivery charges the company uses. Followers on social media will often come to advertised events and may end up purchasing. However, online distribution can bring new challenges and it can be very hard to communicate online and sometimes the messages are perceived as rude or insensitive or ignorant because of problems with language. One designer set up a standard procedure for communicating with customers such as how to greet and thank them.

Power in the distribution channels and their relationships concerns control and manageability. An online channel is more easily controlled by the designer, in terms of the product and “exactly how I want to be represented”. Moreover the designer can control and drive more complex experiences in their own online environment, rather than other retailers’ stores. An online business is also more manageable; one designer discussed how they had created a customer base and subsequently organised it. It’s manageability means an online channel can be relatively less time-consuming and an online store means without that designer can ‘automatically’ create loyal customers.

A second theme that emerged was one of empowerment, by escaping from both and the big retail stores who may or may not buy their range, and fashion councils. “It is more about getting my product out there”. By going online designers can directly communicate their brand values to the customer: communication function of online - directly to consumer - not mediated by retailer. One designer wanted to have a business “on my own terms” and not dictated by the “frenzy around fashion cycles”.

**Conclusion**

This research demonstrates the recent development and use of new channels of distribution by high-fashion designers. These create multichannel strategies, in which online distribution has rapidly gained ground and is favoured by designers because it enables them to interact directly with customers through communications and sales, and consequently enables them to build loyal followings. In this respect, social media and experiential marketing techniques are important elements of online relationship building, using market leading media but also self-developed blogs. These findings support the basic contentions of Relationship Marketing as customer-focused, with a re-orientation by the designers to build closer relationships with their customers through personal, one-to-one communications. The tendency to reduce or at least define the role of wholesalers demonstrate the designer’s interest in creating and managing an environment dedicated to mutual value creation.

The issue of control relates to a second aspect of online distribution, the power it gives to the designer, by removing intermediaries, particularly retailers but also restrictions imposed by the fashion system. Power therefore is both a process of control, a freedom to manage and communicate the brand, and empowerment as a freedom from constraints imposed by others. As Cool and Henderson (1998 p. 911) observe “….if parties can switch relatively easily to other parties, power will be low. Individuals who control the flow of information and resources in a network of people are in a position to exercise power”. The cases point to changes in dependence power, where the designer moves away from dependence on intermediaries, and is able to switch distribution at low cost, to online sales and communication channels. In this respect the cases demonstrate the early stages in the evolution of non-coercive power through increasing market awareness of their distinctive designs, to become more ‘expert’. However, in terms of buyer power and the industry structure it should be noted that these are small design businesses and that retail buyers still remain in a powerful position to select and change suppliers. It is over time that the success – or otherwise – of the designers’ increased visibility, communications and broader sales
base achieved through new and more controlled distribution channels will more significantly influence their position with the retailers.

Both online communication and sales will provide new employment opportunities in the future as designers take more control over the distribution of their collections. However, online remains just one of a number of distribution options. Designer controlled events such as “Pop-Up Bazaars” in luxurious locations add the opportunity to touch, feel and appreciate the beauty of the products. These too will continue to provide new opportunities for longer-term relationship building with customers, and thus require new and different types of employee skills and abilities.

References


Abstract
For centuries, South American countries have enjoyed a rich cultural heritage in the textile industry. Peru is no exception and has carved out a niche in the production of world-famous Pima cotton and alpaca fiber. With this great artistic background and creative potential, Peru is gaining ground in assimilating global fashion values and is progressively turning into a point of worldwide interest, despite barely two decades of contemporary fashion participation. As an emerging country, Peru is currently in the midst of a fashion movement that aims to promote domestic design talent, resulting in a fashion style that is a dramatic cultural mix of old tradition and new modern influence.
The primary goals of this research were to (a) identify social and cultural influences on Peruvian fashion, (b) identify concepts and values that impact Peruvian consumer fashion preferences and shopping habits, and (c) investigate Peru's contribution to the international fashion industry. In order to achieve these goals, the author developed a profile of fashion trends for both the men's and women's markets in Peru for the following product categories: casual separates, outerwear, active sportswear, intimates, accessories, formalwear, dresses, knitwear, business wear, fur, and leather.
First-hand observations were conducted in the political and fashion capital of Lima, Peru, over a period of time from September 2012 to November 2012. Locations for observations included shopping centers, department stores, fashion and cultural events, and the workplace. Specific populations were excluded, including indigent people, foreign businesspeople, and tourists. Observations were made on different days of the week (weekends and weekdays) and during different seasons (winter and spring). In addition to the first-hand observations of the domestic population and assessment of local apparel brands, Peruvian fashion magazines were examined to assist in classifying the observed trends. Advertisements were considered in addition to feature content.
From the observations it was concluded that Peruvian fashion trends are often inspired by international foreign fashion designers (such as Salvatore Ferragamo and Carolina Herrera) and metropolitan areas in the Northern Hemisphere (such as New York City and Paris). Further, Peruvians are exceptionally brand-conscious and tend to conspicuously display fashion items that hail from a distinct luxury or specialty brand (such as Burberry and Adidas). Many Peruvian clothing designers take cues from global fashion trends and adapt them to the local market, taking inspiration from the color and richness of Andean textiles and adding these local inflections to more contemporary designs. These findings highlight the maturing Peruvian fashion industry and the progression from traditional Andean textiles and dress into the global fashion-forward marketplace. Currently, much of the research related to South American fashion trends focuses on more developed countries such as Brazil and Argentina, and research related to Peru generally discusses its rich history, artisanal textiles, and the Andean culture. In contrast, this research contributes to the literature on fashion and culture by examining impacts on fashion in modern, metropolitan Peru, as well as the unique contribution to global fashion that is inspired by a rich heritage.

Introduction
With its heritage and creative potential, Peru is progressively gaining ground in the fashion world.
Peru’s fashion industry has a value chain comprised of the work of the country’s designers and high-quality national products like Pima and Tanguis cotton and alpaca and vicuna fiber. Local designers are earning positive reputations for Peru in this competitive field, turning the country into a point of interest regarding fashion-related activities and notably increasing its presence in prestigious global fashion publications. The color and richness of Andean textiles inspire designs presented in fashion shows worldwide (Diaz, 2011).

In under-developed markets, typically transitional countries, greater awareness of global trends persuades consumers to replace traditional style choices, ultimately resulting in their decline. Fashion adoption and diffusion theories can be used to understand these fashion changes. These theories take into consideration factors influencing fashion behavior including age, socioeconomic status, lifestyle, disposable income allocated for fashion, exposure to fashion marketing, characteristics and function of fashion objects, and availability. “Fashions evolve consistent with the theoretical product life cycle, having stages of introduction and adoption by fashion leaders, increasing public acceptance (growth), mass conformity (maturation), and the inevitable decline and obsolescence awaiting all fashions” (Forsythe, Butler, and Kim, 1991: 8-9). Sproles’ theory furthers this concept by applying product life cycles to fashion consumer behavior and considering an adopter’s identity, motivations, influences, and social communications. Transitional countries are particularly subject to these changes and influenced by established countries (Sproles, 1981). Currently, much research related to South American fashion focuses on more developed countries such as Brazil and Argentina, while research related to Peru generally discusses its rich history, artisanal textiles, and Andean culture. This exploratory research aims to contribute to literature on fashion and culture by examining impacts on fashion in modern, metropolitan Peru, as well as unique contributions to global fashion that Peruvian heritage inspires, using Sproles’ theory as a guide. The subjects of this study are fashion consumers in the political and fashion capital of Lima. As Peru’s most developed city, findings may be indicative of a Western-influenced, fashion-forward, middle and upper-class urban population.

Methodology
The primary goals of this research were to (a) identify social and cultural influences on Peruvian fashion, (b) identify concepts and values that impact Peruvian consumer fashion preferences and shopping habits, and (c) investigate Peru’s contribution to the international fashion industry. Lima was chosen as the focus for this study due to racial and ethnic diversity and reputation as a cultural melting pot. This status suggests a more mature fashion profile according to fashion adoption theories, and an intriguing contrast to Andes textile traditions (Aguirre, 2012). The first author conducted first-hand observations over a three-month period from September to November 2012, after a one-week cultural acclimation phase. A time allocation and spot sampling method was used, and subjects were studied at random locations within the city and at random times. For this reason, data is more likely to be accurate than reported fashion preferences from secondary data sources. Sites for observation included shopping centers, entertainment complexes, cultural events, and the workplace (see Appendix A). These sites were selected because of sizable numbers of subjects, popularity with locals, variety in location, accessibility, and convenience. Specific populations were excluded to increase cohesion of the population, including indigent people, foreign businesspeople, and tourists. Those observed are more representative of the average Liman, thus results could be generalized to the rest of the urban population. Participant observation fieldwork was conducted on weekends and weekdays and during different seasons (winter and spring) (see Appendix A). Data was collected in three-hour time periods at a minimum of four days per week; approximately thirty to seventy people were observed at random during each observation, depending on foot traffic. The problem of reactivity was eliminated, as subjects were unaware they were being studied, and the nature of nonparticipatory observations reduced language barriers. Further, there was greater likelihood for the first-author (an outsider) to pick up on cultural patterns that may go unnoticed by locals.

In addition to direct, unobtrusive observations of the domestic population and assessment of local apparel brands, Peruvian fashion magazines (including Jockey Plaza Vogue, Cosas, and Cosas Moda) were examined to assist in classifying observed trends. Advertisements were considered in addition to feature content, as the former tend to reflect local markets, and the latter tends to represent international markets. Data was recorded in the form of written descriptive field notes, sketches, photos, videos, interviews, and artifact collection (such as memorabilia from fashion events and magazines). Data was then coded based on product categories and themes of traditional or modern inflections. The interocular percussion test (Bernard, 2006) allowed patterns to emerge from the data. Thematic analysis and rapid assessment was then used to determine trends, using keyword frequency and visual similarities. Evaluation of local retailers and domestic
fashion magazines and catalogs was used to validate findings.

Results
A profile of fashion trends for men's and women's markets was established for eleven basic product categories (as appropriate) based on first-hand observations in Lima, Peru, assessment of local apparel brands, and examination of domestic fashion magazines. Nine of these product categories are detailed below. This trend profile assisted in identifying social and cultural influences on Peruvian fashion and values that impact Peruvian consumer fashion preferences and shopping habits.

Women's Fashion Trends

**Active sportswear**: Activewear, often Adidas brand, is primarily worn during fitness activities. Women wear spandex capris, performance tees (typically black or fluorescent red, orange, or yellow), and nylon sweat suits. Athletic wear (including tank tops, fitted and non-fitted shorts, and sports bras) is rarely worn in public outside of fitness activities.

**Casual separates**: The turtleneck is commonly worn layered under pieces like dresses, sweaters, and vests. Turtlenecks are typically solid-colored neutral or jewel-tones. Solid-colored polyester-cotton blend tops with side ruching and a high rounded neckline are popular with younger girls, most often in blue, pink, purple, or green. Long-sleeved, button-down chambray shirts in solid shades of blue or cool-colored plaids are also popular. Gauzy, diaphanous blouses with small patterns such as florals are a modern take on the culturally-traditional peasant blouse. Jeans are commonly skinny in silhouette, dark-washed, and whiskered. They often feature details like zippers, as well as embellishments, an element of Andean clothing traditionally embodied with embroidery and shiny pieces of metal but modernized with faux jewels (Avalos, 2012). They are rarely distressed, acid-washed, bleached, or any other style that could suggest they are old or used. Brown or black corduroy pants are also frequently worn.

**Outerwear**: A mild, wet climate makes outerwear a wardrobe essential, but Peruvians do not own single all-purpose coats. Jackets, ponchos, and vests are matched to each individual outfit. Vests are typically darker neutral colors and quilted, and jackets, worn alone as outerwear or layered under vests, are often fitted. A popular style is the bolero, a short jacket with embroidered details originating from the Spanish conquest. Ponchos are typically tightly knit in dark neutral colors and hit the body at the hips. This key cultural piece has historical significance, as ponchos have been worn in the Andes since pre-Incan times. Traditional Quechuan clothing is constructed from a single piece of cloth and formed via draping, wrapping, and gathering; pieces are then layered to form an outfit, a tendency still prevalent today.

**Intimates**: Intimates follow the premise of function over fashion, often in nudes, beiges, and tans. While magazines feature provocative lingerie, these products are uncommon and unavailable at big-box retailers and department stores (possibly because of inconsistencies with local values).

**Accessories**: Accessories add color and pattern to basic, neutral-colored outfits and uphold the integrity of an outfit so that it conforms to society's conservative standards. Scarves are typically polyester or polyester-cotton blends; colored in bold purples, blues, or reds (though not neon); and patterned with animal prints, florals, polka dots, or stripes. Scarves for warmth are knit and typically neutral in color. Bare legs are uncommon; black leggings and tights are worn under denim shorts and short skirts, though younger females occasionally wear bolder colors. Jewelry is subtle and understated. With metallurgy being a domestic handicraft dating back to Incan times, artisan sterling silver pieces are frequently worn (Silver Mining in Peru, 2010).

**Dresses**: Urban women rarely wear dresses and skirts during the day. Casual pieces are typically 100% polyester and feature elements such as asymmetrical heme lines. Dresses are commonly worn when experiencing nightlife. They are typically spandex-blend construction with elastic paneling, black, upper-thigh length, and ‘body conscious’ (a figure-hugging style that highlights the body). However, cleavage is rarely shown, and shoulders are always covered.

**Knitwear**: Cardigans and sweaters are typically solid-colored cable knit. Sweaters commonly feature elbow patches in contrasting colors. While domestic resources like alpaca fiber lend themselves to knitwear, Peruvian apparel products are often woven rather than knitted. However, the chullo, a hat knit from camelid wool with earflaps tying under the chin, is still worn in cooler weather, particularly in mountain regions (History of Peru Culture, 2010).

**Businesswear**: Businesswear typically consists of wool pantsuits with one color (often black, gray, maroon, or brown) worn in the jacket, pants, and top. Pants are fitted from waist to knee and then flared. Suit jackets hit at or above the hip and often have square, padded shoulders. Turtlenecks, sweaters, and button-downs, as well as menswear-inspired vests, are frequently paired with suiting. Business wear is not generally tailored to appropriately fit the body, and women often cuff dress pants.

**Leather**: Leather is used for boots, purses, belts, and accessories. It is usually brown or black, calfskin or lambskin. One-hundred-percent leather is out of many women's price range, so faux
leather is more common. Large clutches and small cross-shoulder bags are popular styles for leather purses.

Men’s Trends

Casual separates: While graphic T-shirts are often worn, solid-colored T-shirts and undershirts in public are uncommon. Button-up shirts have a European silhouette and are typically solid, striped, or plaid in reserved colors like blue, black, brown, and grey. They often feature unique, subtle details such as contrasting collar and cuffs or colored buttonholes. Jeans and khakis feature a slimmer cut that falls between an American and European cut (a shape more flattering on the Peruvian body). Jeans are typically dark-washed and feature embellishments intended to denote a costly pair of pants (e.g., extra stitching, zippers, and rivets).

Outerwear: Peruvian men match outerwear to each individual outfit, rather than owning a single all-purpose piece. Jackets, which can also be worn under vests, are typically fitted with a slim silhouette and boxy shoulders and are neutral in color. Coats and vests come in fleece, leather, tweed, and performance-fibers.

Accessories: Accessories add color and pattern to basic, neutral-colored outfits, as well as make men appear high-status. Men frequently wear elaborate, flashy jewelry such as watches, belt buckles, rings, and cufflinks, a marked contrast to women’s subdued jewelry. Polyester (or polycotton blend) scarves typically feature patterns such as stripes, plaids, or graphic prints in bold colors like red, purple, and blue. Knitted scarves for warmth are subtle in color and pattern. In terms of formalwear, skinny ties are currently in-trend, often in gray, red, black, or purple and typically 100% silk. Many men wear fanny packs to carry personal items, either around the waist or over the shoulder.

Businesswear: Men’s businesswear typically consists of slim-fit pleated suit pants, coat, tie, and shined shoes. Buttondowns usually have a double back-pleat and pointed collar, are solid blue or white in color (though small, subtle prints are acceptable), and have a 100% cotton fiber construction. Men often monogram dress shirts to indicate they are custom-made. Despite these attentions to detail, dress pants are often cuffed instead of tailored. According to a local source, suits are not worn solely for work but also for everyday wear to represent money and power.

Discussion

Social and Cultural Influences on Peruvian Fashion

Changes in fashion relate closely to sociological and cultural developments within a consumer market, and socio-economic status plays significant roles in determining domestic demand for particular trends (Diaz, 2011). Low standards of living for many Peruvians (16.6% urban and 53% rural poverty rates) means international travel, and thus cultural exchange of experiences and ideas, is not widespread, particularly outside Lima (Peru’s National Poverty Rate Falls, 2013). In contrast, developed countries undergo intense cultural exchange. The result is significant differences in consumer behaviors (Merino and Gonzalez, 2012).

More than two-thirds of Peruvians live in urban rather than rural areas, where media exposure in conjunction with globalization generates mature fashion choices. High-income youth drive Peru’s fashion trends. They are heavily influenced by the Northern Hemisphere’s pop culture; these ideologically-laden media representations influence demand for and production of clothing in Peru (Rouleau, 2008).

The connection between fashion in Peru and the rest of the world is more firmly established with department stores like Saga Falabella, which look to global trends when merchandising (international brands account for ~70% of their products) and have made the local population more fashion-aware by sourcing trendier apparel (Rouleau, 2008). Upper and middle-classes in Peru demand Western brands, but a 25% sales tax and ~30% import tax make products costly. Economic conditions are expanding in Peru’s urban centers, and a growing middle class is earning a disposable income that permits them to domestically purchase luxury items.

The results of this research show how Peruvians in Lima, a mature market, are extremely Western-brand conscious, as ownership of these goods signifies affluence. However, as globalization breaks down traditional fashion boundaries and fragments conventional identities, many Andean clothing designers are taking inspiration from Peru’s culture. The incorporation of traditional influences and local inflections signals to international audiences that Peruvians still identify with their heritage.

Concepts and Values That Impact Fashion Preferences and Shopping Habits

The worldwide production, export, and import of apparel have increased availability and accessibility of fashion items in Peru. These factors, in addition to increasing purchasing power, facilitate individualism in a country that values personal image (Consumer Lifestyles in Peru, 2012). However, global fashion
Middle and upper-class Peruvians are conscious of wearing name brands, to their capacity in fulfilling societal expectations (Fuller, 2012). Failure to embody machismo affects the self-esteem of Peruvian men and raises doubts as neutral colors and features such as broad shoulders. Masculine accessories include large, flashy narrow waist. The ideal body shape in Peru emulates a guitar’s base, where hips are wider than bust in a 0.7 hip / waist ratio, as well as a rounded backside. However, this curvy ideal is transitioning into a narrower waist. The ideal body shape in Peru emulates a guitar’s base, where hips are wider than bust in a 0.7 hip / waist ratio, as well as a rounded backside. However, this curvy ideal is transitioning into a slimmer body shape from American influences (8 Ideals of Beauty from Around the World, 2011). In comparison to the average American, Peruvian women have shorter legs and a more compact torso. The ideal body shape in America is hourglass, where hip and bust are approximately equal-sized with a narrower waist. The ideal body shape in Peru emulates a guitar’s base, where hips are wider than bust in a 0.7 hip / waist ratio, as well as a rounded backside. However, this curvy ideal is transitioning into a slimmer body shape from American influences (8 Ideals of Beauty from Around the World, 2011).

Machismo: Machismo arises from Peru’s patriarchal society that places men in provider roles. Traditional Peruvian masculinity dictates men distance themselves from anything considered feminine, resulting in clear gender boundaries in dress and distinctly masculine fashions. Clothing is often in dark neutral colors and features such as broad shoulders. Masculine accessories include large, flashy jewelry and leather briefcases. Society expects men to embody these masculine signifiers, starting at an early age. Failure to embody machismo affects the self-esteem of Peruvian men and raises doubts as to their capacity in fulfilling societal expectations (Fuller, 2012).

Body shape glorification: When it comes to fashion in Peru, “the body vanishes as a biological entity and becomes a socially constituted product” (Kopnina, 2007: 365), a representation of gender identity, beauty, and social acceptance. Peruvian men verbalize appreciation for female beauty, leading some women to believe their purpose is to be viewed and meet certain standards (Swaby, 2012). As a patriarchal society, these chauvinistic activities are accepted throughout Peru. In comparison to the average American, Peruvian women have shorter legs and a more compact torso. The ideal body shape in America is hourglass, where hip and bust are approximately equal-sized with a narrower waist. The ideal body shape in Peru emulates a guitar’s base, where hips are wider than bust in a 0.7 hip / waist ratio, as well as a rounded backside. However, this curvy ideal is transitioning into a slimmer body shape from American influences (8 Ideals of Beauty from Around the World, 2011).

Brand consciousness: Middle and upper-class Peruvians are conscious of wearing name brands, as they do not want to be mistaken for lower class. Western brands are key to social acceptance and represent modernity and status; they offer prestige and exclusivity, denote belonging to particular social classes, and communicate certain values. While consumerism began as a Western phenomenon, the proliferation of international mass media has led to its infiltration in developing markets such as Peru. In civilians’ efforts to display names, brands are frequently mismatched (like Coach with Adidas) and worn outside the intended market.

Social Identity: Peru is a class-centered society; dress in everyday life is a universal indicator of social rank and serves to maintain social distinctions. Ownership of expensive clothing and formal dress signifies elite status and wealth in contemporary Peru. Urban Peruvians of a particular socioeconomic status convey wealth via conspicuous consumption, waste, and leisure (Entwistle, 2000). According to local sources, Peruvians dress as smartly as they can afford, even if it means wearing the same thing every day and washing it every night. Lower class Peruvians attempt to appear wealthier by emulating fashions worn by the upper class. Surprisingly, wearing culturally significant apparel is synonymous with rural origins and poverty. Many Peruvians have switched to wearing ‘de vestido’ (Western clothing) because of racism and discrimination they are subjected to in urban areas, as indigenous dress is viewed as low-class and has become shameful and socially degrading to wear (Femenias, 2005). Other indicators of lower class status include wearing torn, distressed, or secondhand apparel (suggesting one cannot afford new apparel); wearing baggy clothing (suggesting one cannot afford properly fitting apparel); and wearing athletic-wear in public. These stipulations may exclude certain Western styles and brands, such as Nike’s run shorts and Abercrombie’s distressed jeans.

Conservatism: In Peruvian culture, “the public arena requires that a body be dressed appropriately, to the extent that flaunting flesh, or inadvertent exposure of it in public, is disturbing [and] disruptive.
Bodies which do not conform…and go without appropriate clothes are subversive of the most basic social codes” (Entwistle, 2000: 6-17). Ninety percent of Peru’s population is Catholic (Fuller, 2012). As such, clothing, particularly for women, reflects Catholic beliefs of modesty and purity. This value comes into play when interpreting fashion trends from the Northern Hemisphere and accounts for tendencies to cover bare skin and not reveal legs, shoulders, or cleavage, while maintaining the tenet of ‘trendy but tasteful’. At the same time, Peruvians do not view closely-fitting or extravagant clothing as vulgar or immoral. This distinction that permits lavishness but condemns seductiveness reflects regional interpretations of the Catholic religion that intertwines traditional and modern beliefs and leaves room for interpretation (Fuller, 2012).

“Indigenismo”: Indigenismo is a term used throughout Latin America to refer to the resurgence of indigenous Indian sentiments in traditional Indian communities in efforts to uphold this population’s heritage, integrate it into modern society, and reject exploitation and debasement by “mestizos” (people with American-Indian and European heritage) (History of Peru Culture, 2010). In other cultural aspects, indigenismo is viewed as a politically-charged creative movement, where political figures attempted to ‘modernize’ Indian populations but were met with opposition, resulting in resurgence of artisan sentiments (Langer, 2011). Though prevalent in the early 1900s, this movement is still evident in today’s culture and is responsible for incorporation of Peru’s rich artisan traditions into domestic stylings, such as with textiles, colors, and patterns (Thomson, 2012). Despite reluctance in being linked to their country-roots, Peruvians uphold a zealous sense of national identity and are proud to wear the red and white Marca Peru branded apparel that promotes Peru’s image (see Appendix C).

Domestic Shopping Habits
While Peru lags behind its South American counterparts when it comes to spending, rising consumer confidence causes annual increases in expenditures, as consumers have more opportunities to spend money than at any point in the country’s history. Fashion goods account for ~33% of domestic spending in Peru, reaching US$2.9 billion in 2010 (Consumer Lifestyles in Peru, 2012). Attracting significant numbers of consumers, the department store is one of the fastest-expanding retail formats in the Peruvian market and most convenient in terms of physical location and product availability. In 2010, sales from major domestic department store chains totaled US$1.3 billion; in combination with Peru’s budding economy and ensuing income rises, this more modern retail format has achieved popularity in the local market (Landing the Peruvian Market, 2011). However, the upper-class is beginning to favor smaller specialty stores, as they worry that looks purchased in department stores may be copied by others, deeming their fashions less original (Consumer Lifestyles in Peru, 2012). Along with Peru’s substantial domestic textile and apparel industry, consumers, including men, are becoming more sophisticated in fashion and demanding trendier apparel (Landing the Peruvian Market, 2011). Lower-income groups in Peru make fashion purchases every two to three months, often strategically planned to coincide with changing seasons. Higher-income groups make 60% of buying decisions in the store, with a direct correlation between increasing wealth and frequency of on-the-spot decisions. In terms of product characteristics, Peruvians look for quality, durability, and value (Consumer Lifestyles in Peru, 2012).

Contribution to the International Fashion Industry
Peru is a top ten performer in the Latin American fashion industry, despite barely two decades of history in the global fashion arena (Avalos, 2012). The indigenous dress and rich cloth traditions of the Andes are often associated with Latin American fashion (Hansen, 2004) (see Appendix B). While these artisanal textiles are representative of cultural heritage and still locally produced, it is primarily for the benefit of the international tourist industry. Latin American dress has advanced with selective incorporation of global influences that challenge domestic values (Hansen, 2004). Other fashion industry growth drivers include government support, increased awareness of emerging domestic brands, recognition of local designers, and higher demand for fashion products (The Global Fashion Industry—Growth in Emerging Markets, 2012). Peru desires recognition as a country that produces designers and generates fashion instead of merely manufacturing textiles. Lima is currently in the midst of a fashion movement aiming to promote Peruvian designs and talent, such as with Lima Fashion Week, fashion shows, and textile expositions (Aguirre, 2012). Easy access to Peru’s full-package production and the country’s reputation as a well-established textile industry provides local designers with competitive advantages that can transition the country from a ‘clothing industry’ to a ‘fashion industry’ (Brandini, 2009). The increasingly influential pool of fashion designers in Peru prefers to take advantage of local business development opportunities rather than compete in the saturated international market. However, many fashion-forward consumers choose international brands over Peruvian brands (Consumer Lifestyles in Peru, 2012). In order to compete domestically, Peruvian designers must monitor developments in global fashion hubs.
and gain the notoriety and recognition to participate in international shows (see Appendix D) (Diaz, 2011). Fashion events in Peru promote the textile industry in the international market and are ultimately intended to develop a fashion industry capable of maintaining the country's traditional values while simultaneously being inclusive of international modernity (Aguirre, 2012). As a result of their heritage and cultural influences, Peruvian fashion is not instituted in the couture tradition, but rather “derives its aesthetic from local culture and ethnicity” (see Appendix E) (Brandini, 2009: 164-176). However, Peru’s fashion industry as a whole experiences low at-home recognition when competing with traditional fashion market monoliths from the US and Europe. They also feel pressure from emerging Latin American fashion markets with more competitive resources and fashion-forward populations such as up-and-coming fashion giant Brazil (Anaya, 2010). The presence of international designers at domestic fashion events raises standards for local designers and challenges creativity and originality.

Conclusions

The primary goals of this research were to identify contemporary fashion trends, social and cultural influences on domestic fashion, and contribution to the global fashion industry in Peru.

**Identify Social and Cultural Influences on Peruvian Fashion:** The results show a “trickle-down” effect in Peru, as evidenced by the two- to three-month delay from the Northern Hemisphere (Sproles, 1981). Peruvian manufacturers produce their own version of the trend, which is infused with visual references to indigenous Peruvian cultures, such as color palettes, embellishments, and silhouettes, helping to maintain a local flavor in domestic design. Observations confirmed that Peruvians tone down international trends to adhere to the conservative standards and subtle style differences expected by the population. At the same time, Peruvians are also Western brand-conscious and flaunt fashion items from a distinct brand or that display a brand's logo to achieve self-actualization.

**Identify Concepts and Values that Impact Peruvian Consumer Fashion Preferences and Shopping Habits:** Peruvians dress as formally as affordable. Women value outfits composed of basics in classic silhouettes and solid neutral colors. Colorful and patterned accessories add personality. Classic prints, neutral colors, jewel tones, and color blocking are typical fashion aesthetics. It is essential for men to appear masculine and status-aware. They appreciate unique, subtle details in clothing and typically wear dark neutrals but are beginning to experiment with brighter colors.

**Investigate Peru’s Contribution to the International Fashion Industry:** It can be surmised that development of Peru’s fashion industry is a work in progress. However, the industry has multifarious opportunities to preserve and showcase the heritage and manifestations of Peruvian design while staying abreast of international fashion trends. Domestic trends take inspiration from cities in the Northern Hemisphere and established designers with distinctive styles. These findings highlight Peru’s maturing fashion industry and progression from traditional Andean textiles and dress into the fashion-forward international marketplace. The updated use of Andean patterns, bright colors, and styling in modern apparel, as well as the incorporation of Peruvian specialty fibers, signifies a cultural transition, where certain indigenous traditions endure in an increasingly global arena.
# Appendix

## Appendix A

### Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event / Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textil Confeccion 2012</strong></td>
<td>Annual textile entrepreneurs' convention for local brands</td>
<td>October 18 - 21</td>
<td>San Isidro, financial district</td>
<td>People representative of local retail brands, marketing and fashion design firms, local manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ExpoTextil 2012</strong></td>
<td>Annual international suppliers fair for textile and apparel industry</td>
<td>October 25 - 28</td>
<td>Jockey Exposition Center, Santiago de Surco district</td>
<td>People representative of local textile industry manufacturers and suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;We Love Shopping&quot; Cocktail Party</strong></td>
<td>Launch of &quot;We Love Shopping&quot; fashion week, the largest fashion and trends event in Peru</td>
<td>October 22 - 28</td>
<td>Jockey Plaza, Santiago de Surco district</td>
<td>People representative of local retailers, luxury brands, international and domestic magazines, fashion bloggers, higher income citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIF Week</strong></td>
<td>Special winter edition of Lima Fashion Week intended to attract international attention</td>
<td>November 6 - 8</td>
<td>Miraflores, upscale cultural district</td>
<td>People representative of local fashion designers and domestic brands, domestic magazines, middle and higher income citizens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>Recurring Events</strong>   |                                                                              |                |                               |                                                                                                                                          |
| Cicodía                | Weekly fitness-focused event intended to promote all levels of physical fitness and family fun | Weekly, weekends | Miraflores, upscale cultural district | People representative of all social classes in the domestic population                                                                   |
| Larcomar              | High-end entertainment, food, and shopping megacomplex                      | Weekly, weekdays and weekends | Miraflores, upscale cultural district | People representative of middle and higher income brackets                                                                               |
| Jockey Plaza Boulevard | Luxury shopping complex                                                     | Semi-monthly, weekdays | Santiago de Surco district | People representative of higher incomes who tend to be more fashion-forward                                                                |
| Plaza Norte           | Shopping mall                                                               | Monthly, weekdays | Independencia district | People representative of lower and middle income brackets                                                                                |
| Mall Aventura Plaza   | Shopping mall                                                               | Monthly, weekdays | Santa Anita district, industrial district | People representative of middle income brackets                                                                                         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Los Conquistadores Avenue</th>
<th>High-end shopping boutique shopping strip</th>
<th>Monthly, weekdays</th>
<th>San Isidro, financial district</th>
<th>People representative of middle and higher income brackets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sage Falabella</td>
<td>Department store</td>
<td>Weekly, weekdays and weekends</td>
<td>Miraflores, upscale cultural district</td>
<td>People representative of middle income brackets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rippleys</td>
<td>Department store</td>
<td>Weekly, weekdays and weekends</td>
<td>Miraflores, upscale cultural district</td>
<td>People representative of middle income brackets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditex</td>
<td>Workplace: domestic textile manufacturer with domestic brands at different price points</td>
<td>Daily, during the week</td>
<td>Ate-Vitarte district, industrial textile district</td>
<td>People representative of lower and middle income brackets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discoteca Gotica</td>
<td>Nightclub</td>
<td>Weekends</td>
<td>Miraflores, upscale cultural district</td>
<td>People representative of middle income brackets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Kennedy</td>
<td>City Park</td>
<td>Semi-weekly, weekdays and weekends</td>
<td>Miraflores, upscale cultural district</td>
<td>People representative of middle and higher income brackets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B**

**Traditional Andean textiles**

Figure 1: Quechuan clothing in Cusco
Source: personal photo

Figure 2: Andean textiles
Source: personal photo
Appendix C
Marca Peru branded apparel

Figure 3: Marca Peru

Appendix D
Peruvian designers in international fashion weeks

Figure 4: Sitka Semsch, Inca Princess Collection, Miami Beach

Figure 5: Sergio Davila, Fall 2013 Collection, NYC

Figure 6: Andrea Llosa, Tribal Collection, Barcelona
Appendix E
Modern apparel with Andean influences

Figure 7: Meche Correa lookbook
Figure 8: Meche Correa runway, 2013
Figure 9: Meche Correa runway, 2013
Figure 10: Meche Correa, Peru Moda, 2013


References


The Power of Fashion: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity in Contemporary Moroccan Society

M. Angela Jansen

Abstract
Social scientists have been contesting that globalization leads to cultural homogeneity based on the West, insisting that receivers of cultural flows are not passive agents but unravel, translate and customize foreign influences (Appadurai, 1996; Inda and Rosaldo, 2002; Lechner and Boli, 2008). As such, the introduction of western fashion brands on a large scale in Morocco did not threaten the continuity of Moroccan fashion, but on the contrary, accelerated its development by introducing new consumption and commercialization patterns. Firstly, western fashion brands have contributed to the democratization of fashion in Morocco. Secondly, they have contributed to the commodification of Moroccan fashion, resulting in a shift from a craft to an industry, from consumption based on demand to consumption based on offer, the commercialization of traditional occasions like Ramadan and the wedding season and the development of new markets for Moroccan fashion. Thirdly, through the introduction of brand and marketing strategies, a shift occurred from anonymous workshops of ‘traditional’ tailors to ‘modern’ designers’ boutiques that insinuate services Moroccan consumers have grown accustomed to through their shopping for western fashion. But most of all, under the influence of western fashion, traditional Moroccan fashion has become modern. This paper argues that notions of tradition and modernity are not static nor mutually exclusive and it uses the example of Moroccan fashion to illustrate this. The main research question is How the introduction of western fashion brands in Morocco at the turn of the 21st century affected Moroccan fashion? While Moroccan fashion is the materialization of social, cultural, political and religious changes in Moroccan society, it embodies a powerful tool to negotiate notions of tradition and modernity, continuity and change, local and global. People do not want either/or but rather and/both; while tradition provides people with cultural anchorage, modernity represents an alternative to some repressive mechanisms of these very same traditions. Furthermore, this case-study shows that the growing impact of foreign cultural influences as a result of globalization does not threaten local culture, but on the contrary, contributes to its re-evaluation and popularity as a means of differentiation.

Introduction
When my close friend Lina got married in 2006, she asked me to help her with her wedding outfits. The fact that I was writing a PhD on the Moroccan fashion industry automatically made me the authority on the latest fashion trends. Although this was far from the case, I gratefully accepted for it was a great opportunity to take a closer look at the consumption process of contemporary Moroccan fashion. Being from an upper middle-class family, it was out of the question that she would order her outfits from an anonymous so-called traditional tailor in the old Arab city centre. According to her, the tailor would not be up-to-date on the latest fashion trends, he would not respect the delays and there was no guarantee on the quality of the work. After extensive enquiries amongst her female family members and friends, studying Moroccan fashion magazines for months and visiting a large range of Moroccan stylists and designers’ in Rabat and Casablanca, her choice finally fell on a young designer who had just participated as a young talent to the latest edition of the renowned yearly fashion event Caftan. The showroom of this young designer was located in a stylish apartment building in Agdal (a fancy suburb of Rabat), where we were received in a smart salon with the international channel FashionTV on a flat screen on the wall. After the customary greetings and compliments, we were
shown his latest collection in the Moroccan fashion magazine Femmes du Maroc, which organizes Caftan. However, it soon became clear that this was not at all what my friend Lina had in mind and she had actually brought pictures of other designers’ work that she had cut out of fashion magazines to illustrate what she wanted. She had also brought her own fabrics with her, some of which had been bought by her mother’s friend during her pilgrimage to Mecca, and others which had been given to her by her future husband. Over the next three months we would come back four times for fittings and to supervise the production process. Every time Lina would bring another set of female family members, female friends and future female in-laws who would vividly contribute with their opinions and suggestions, which did not necessarily benefit the process. These women also seemed to play a crucial role in the negotiation of the price, which turned out to be an important part of the consumption practice. Lina ended up ordering three outfits: a beldi-classique three-pieced white tekšita to make her entrance on the maria, a beldi-modern three-pieced blue tekšita, and another beldi-classique three-pieced lavender tekšita. She would be wearing five outfits in total on her wedding, but the characteristic wedding outfit from Fes was rented from the neggafa and the final western-style wedding dress in the touche-marocaine style was rented from the young designer.

What struck me most about the experience with Lina was that she did not actually choose the young designer because of his work or talent, but rather because of his image and the fact that he had participated in the high profile fashion event Caftan. She did not select any of his designs or ideas for her outfits, but imposed her own ideas and even her own fabrics. Although she claimed to prefer a modern designer over a traditional tailor based on the conviction that he would be better informed on the latest fashion trends, two out of the three garments ended up being classic, and only one so-called modern. This seemingly contradictory behaviour, this negotiation between tradition and modernity, is the topic of this paper.

### From the Craftsman to the Designer

Prior to the 1990s, the majority of Moroccan garments was produced by anonymous tailors in anonymous workshops in the medina. Clients were loyal to a particular tailor, who would usually be a member of the family. New garments were ordered once every two-three years and consumed for a specific set of occasions such as weddings and socio-religious celebrations (except for the jellaba, a long outer coat with long sleeves and a hood, which could also be worn on a daily basis). Changes were slow and mainly dictated by what fabric merchants and tailors had on offer. Cuts, colours and decorations were easily determined based on age, marital status and the occasion for which the garments were worn. Western dress, although first adopted by the Moroccan elite in the 1920s, became only truly part of Moroccan identity in the years after Independence (1956). It was King Mohamed V who played a crucial role in turning it into a symbol of (European) modernity (Daoud, 1993: 245), while Moroccan dress gradually came to represent Moroccan nationalism, Islam and tradition and especially under influence of King Hassan II, who used it to unify the country and strengthen his power (Claire Nicholas, 2005: 111). While the new French city centres and public life became associated with western dress, the old Arab city centres and private life remained the domain of Moroccan dress.

In the 1960s, however, heavy brocades, endless layers, wide cuts, elaborate (metal-thread) decorations and wide heavy brocade belts were no longer considered suitable for the active and cosmopolite lifestyles Moroccan elite women had grown accustomed to. Therefore, the first generation of Moroccan fashion designers were women of the elite who had no or little formal training in fashion design, but who were trained in Moroccan handwork and familiar with European haute couture. These women basically did for Moroccan dress what Coco Chanel did for European dress: they ‘liberated’ women by making comfortable and elegant garments with a modern look, suitable for an active lifestyle. They so-called modernized Moroccan dress by introducing European haute couture fabrics and aesthetics, by reducing the amount of layers and decorations and by reducing the width of the garments. They were the first to transform the consumption of Moroccan dress by proposing their own creations to their clients, by branding their collections with their brand names and by presenting their designs in fashionable boutiques in luxurious hotels. They transformed Moroccan dress into fashion based on Yuniya Kawamura’s definition (2005: 2), who argues that while dress refers to tangible objects, fashion provides added value to dress that only exists in people’s imagination. Nevertheless, their collections were limited to the ‘happy few,’ since there was not yet an industry to trickle down their trends to a larger public.

It is only in the late 1990s that Moroccan fashion was democratized in Morocco, largely due to the success of a national lifestyle press that developed under the influence of foreign (mainly French) lifestyle magazines available on the market. This success was largely due to the fact that Moroccan readers had a hard time identifying with the topics treated in the foreign magazines and had no or limited access to the consumption goods featuring in them. Their main aim was to promote a modern...
Moroccan woman in a modern Moroccan society and they played an important role in giving Moroccan women a new sense of identity (Loubna Skalli, 2006: 61). According to Aicha Zaim Sakhr, the first editor-in-chief of one of the most influential Moroccan lifestyle magazines called Femmes du Maroc, ‘especially in the early years of the magazine, the idea persisted that everything that was modern, was coming from Europe. In order to stay true to one’s Moroccan identity, women thought they had to stay traditional. We wanted to break with this idea by showing our readers that modernity could come from within (…)’11. In order to illustrate their ideas of a ‘Moroccan type of modernity,’ the magazines especially used Moroccan fashion. ‘Moroccan dress was something that was considered truly Moroccan and purely traditional and it was playing an important role in society. But at the same time, it was also considered a heavy load on the shoulders of Moroccan women and therefore we believed it had to be modernized’12.

In order to stimulate Moroccan fashion designers, who were most of all designing western fashion at the time, to develop so-called modern Moroccan fashion collections, they launched a yearly fashion event called Caftan. The main problem was that Moroccan designers, trained at western fashion schools, did not master the production and decoration skills to produce Moroccan fashion and therefore were dependent on traditional tailors and craftsmen13. What they did master, however, were western designing skills, which they greatly applied to Moroccan fashion, introducing corsets, pants, skirts, etc. They uncontestably owe their success to the Moroccan press and their fashion events because the fact that they featured in glamorous fashion spreads and were broadcasted on national television not only allowed them to reach a much wider audience, but also gave them star status. The Moroccan magazines, in their turn, contributed to an important extent to the democratization of Moroccan fashion as well as a remarkable image change; by taking it out of its original contexts of social and religious gatherings and putting it on magazine covers and catwalks—the icons of a fashion industry–Moroccan fashion was no longer just traditional, it became modern simultaneously.

From Craft to an Industry

Due to the liberalization of the Moroccan textile market under especially European pressure and a steadily growing economy, Morocco was inundated by foreign fashion brands in the form of franchises at the turn of the 21st century14. Ranging from low and middle priced (French and Spanish) brands like Zara, Massimo Dutti, Mango, Stradivarius, Bershka, Promod and Etam to high-end brands including Louis Vuitton, Dior and Yves Saint Laurent, stores particularly opened in the economic capital Casablanca and the tourist capital Marrakech. The piece-de-resistance of foreign fashion brands is the MoroccoMall, which was inaugurated at the end of 2011, with a total surface of 250 000 m². It is the largest shopping mall in North Africa and offers over six hundred brands including the French Galleries Lafayette, Prada and Gucci, as well as the long expected Hennes & Mauritz and GAP15.

The introduction and success of these western fashion brands is uncontestably part of a larger globalization process, whereby the increasing encounter with western lifestyles through media, travelling and (temporary) migration has accustomed Moroccans to foreign commodities. Many of these brands were already familiar, particularly to the middle and upper social classes, due to their studies and travels abroad. Progressively these commodities have been adjusted and integrated into Moroccan urban life. Although official numbers are lacking, it is estimated that only ten percent of the Moroccan population can afford to buy products offered by these foreign fashion brands (Samuel Vallée, 2006: 33), but nevertheless their introduction on the Moroccan market has had a significant impact on consumerism in Morocco.

Under the influence of these western fashion boutiques, the anonymous workshops of traditional tailors and fabric merchants have become overshadowed by so-called modern boutiques and showrooms of Moroccan stylists and designers. Their settings correspond more to an image that has come to inspire clients’ confidence, suggesting a range of services and qualities Moroccan consumers have grown accustomed to through their shopping for western fashion. The irony of the story is, however, that both stylists and designers are still depending on the skills of Moroccan tailors and craftsmen to produce Moroccan fashion, resulting in large workshops where the ‘unstylish’ craftsmen are hidden from view. Furthermore, in the same way that Moroccan customers have grown accustomed to shopping around for western fashion, they are now shopping around for Moroccan fashion and no longer loyal to a specific tailor. Also, under the influence of western fashion brands, Moroccan fashion has become commoditized whereby a shift occurred from consumption based on demand to consumption based on offer (Thera Rasing, 1999: 239).

The offer of Moroccan fashion has increased significantly in the last decade as a result of the commercial exploitation of specific social and religious events like the fasting month of Ramadan and the wedding season in summer. Since these are traditionally two important occasions when Moroccan fashion is consumed, the industry has become particularly focused around these periods, whether it is through an array of fashion events promoting the latest fashion trends, fashion magazines featuring
special editions or boutiques offering special promotions. Furthermore, niche markets have been created and/or stimulated, like informal Moroccan fashion for a wider range of occasions and Moroccan fashion for men and children. For example, two new hybrid clothing categories that have developed in the last few years are beldi wear and touche marocaine, which are suitable for informal occasions or daily wear. Beldi wear is less luxurious and elaborate Moroccan fashion adapted for daily use, while touche marocaine is western fashion with characteristic Moroccan decorations. Additionally, the market is stimulating Moroccan men to consume by increasing the offer of Moroccan fashion for men, with a particular successful for characteristic Moroccan decorations. Additionally, the market is stimulating Moroccan men to elaborate Moroccan fashion adapted for daily use, while marocaine hybrid clothing categories that have developed in the last few years are customs for a wider range of occasions and Moroccan fashion for men and children. For example, two new hybrid clothing categories that have developed, whereby fashion today is rather categorized according to four categories, ranging from haute couture with brands like Alrazal to prêt-a-porter offered by Yousra. Furthermore, niche markets have been created and/or stimulated, like informal Moroccan fashion and the offer has impressively increased, ranging from haute couture with brands like Alrazal to prêt-a-porter offered by Yousra. Nevertheless, Moroccan consumers continue to insist on two traditions when it comes to the consumption of Moroccan fashion and that is handwork and exclusivity. So, under the influence of western fashion brands, western/modern values like image and service have come to play an important role in the consumption of Moroccan fashion, but without affecting values of craftsmanship, which represent an important difference with western fashion.

The Power of Fashion
Social scientists have been contesting that globalization leads to cultural homogeneity based on the West, insisting that receivers of cultural flows are not passive agents but unravel, translate and customize foreign influences (Appadurai, 1996; Ina and Rosaldo, 2002; Lechner and Boli, 2008). As was clearly illustrated above, instead of threatening the local market, foreign lifestyle magazines inspired a wide range of successful Moroccan lifestyle magazines, whose added values of proximity and identity rendered them more popular than foreign magazines (Loubna Skalli, 2006: 61). Additionally, the introduction of western fashion brands on a large scale did not menace the continuity of Moroccan fashion, but on the contrary, set the trend for new consumption and commercialization patterns applied to Moroccan fashion. An important reason why these two clothing styles do not threaten each other’s existence is because they have different values, fulfill different needs and therefore represent different markets. Where western fashion represents aspirations of change and progress as well as the global, Moroccan fashion fulfills needs of continuity, cultural anchorage and the local; people do not want either/or but and/both (Kaiser, 2012: 2). They do not feel the need to choose and both clothing styles are ineluctably connected (Joanne Eicher and Barbara Sumberg, 1995: 303) in the construction of multiple dynamic Moroccan identities. Simultaneously, it is not (any longer) a matter of Moroccan versus western fashion and new (hybrid) clothing categories have developed, whereby fashion today is rather categorized according to four categories, ranging from beldi-classique and beldi-moderne to beldi-wear/touche marocaine and mode Européenne. From ninety interviews with Moroccan consumers in three major cities, it became clear that the categorization of dress is based on the degree of traditionality/localness and/or modernity/foreignness based on the cut, fabrics, colours and decorations.

The power of fashion is that it enables people to constantly negotiate an ambiguous balance in general between continuity and change, between tradition and modernity and between the local and the global, which can lead to ambiguous and contradictory behaviour. For example, the majority of the respondents heavily criticized the work of contemporary Moroccan fashion designers, saying that they are altering the ‘essence’ of Moroccan fashion and accusing them of not being Moroccan/traditional and/or too European/modern. But yet the majority agreed that it is because of these same designers and their modernizing ideas, that Moroccan fashion has become so successful. Most of them acknowledged that they use the ideas of these designers as a source of inspiration for their own garments because it especially permits them to create an exclusive and individual style. It was also testified that fashion trends allow people to challenge customs related to colours, shapes, fabrics and decorations. For example, according to tradition married women are not supposed to draw attention to their person by wearing dark/sober colours, less ostentatious decorations and more modest cuts. But since especially women do not like to be considered old/on the periphery of society, they use fashion as an excuse to bend the rules.

Also, despite the unprecedented success of Moroccan fashion, a large majority of the respondents, both men and women, considered Moroccan fashion to be uncomfortable, expensive and time-consuming to purchase, testifying that it is only tradition that keeps them from adopting Western fashion during socio-religious celebrations. Coming back to the example of my friend Lina at the beginning of this paper, on the one hand, people are attracted by the modern designers as opposed to the traditional tailors, because of the image and professionalism they inspire, while on the other hand, Moroccan consumers are not willing to compromise on certain traditions particular to tailor-made,
such as bringing their own fabrics, imposing their own ideas and negotiating the price.

Conclusion: Modernity Fuels Tradition
This paper aimed to demonstrate that the growing impact of foreign cultural influences as a result of globalization, do not automatically threaten local culture, but on the contrary, rather leads to a re-evaluation of national identity based on local cultural heritage as a means of distinction. Moroccan fashion has never been this popular and it is exploited to a maximum, from advertisement, to entertainment on television. A wide variety of companies, from telephone providers to tile producers, are using modern Moroccan fashion in their advertisements to sell their products; it has become the symbol by excellence of this ‘Moroccan type of modernity,’ combining the best of (foreign) modernity and (local) tradition.

The term *beldi*, the Moroccan Arabic word for ‘traditional/local/authentic’ as opposed to *rumi* meaning ‘new/foreign/industrial,’ has come to represent everything that is ‘good’ about Morocco, from grandmother’s homemade bread to Moroccan handcrafts. *Beldi* allows people to dream of the unique skilful crafts from Fez, which is considered the capital of Moroccan civilization, where Moroccan handwork was invented and raised to perfection in the course of centuries. Where *beldi* only a few years ago was still associated with the countryside, backwardness and old-fashionedness, today, in a rapidly developing urban society, *beldi* allows people to escape for a moment and dream about Morocco’s glorious past. This search for authenticity, as Marilyn Halter (2000: 17) puts it, is very much related to nostalgia for an idealized and fixed point in time when folk culture was supposedly untouched by the corruption that is automatically associated with commercial development. Hence, she says, the more artificiality, anonymity and uncertainty apparent in a postmodern world, the more driven are the quests for authentic experiences and the more people long to feel connected to localized traditions seeking out the timeless and true. Moroccan fashion sells a fantasy materialized by Moroccan fashion designers through the skills of Moroccan artisans. Loubna Skalli (2006: 56), in her turn, argues that an ideological ‘retraditionalization’ refers to a politicization of tradition to combat, in a self-conscious defence, traditional norms that are threatened by others.

Furthermore, this paper aimed to argue that notions of tradition and modernity are not static nor mutually exclusive. When we take a closer look at what the modernization of Moroccan fashion has meant in the last fifty years, it most of all refers to the integration of western fashion components and aesthetics in Moroccan fashion, which clearly reflects western influences on Moroccan society in general. However, just as notions of tradition are constantly changing, notions of modernity are just as much continuously (re)invented, (re)defined and adjusted to new circumstances. For example, in the years after independence, modernity in Morocco was mainly associated with ideologies of progress and a European type of modernity, while notions of tradition were rather linked to values of conservatism and regression. However, by the turn of the 21st century, notions of modernity had rather become associated with (too much) foreign influences, industrialisation and a possible threat to local identity, while as a counter reaction, tradition became related to national pride and authenticity. The way Toby Slade (2009: 4-5) explains it, in modernity progress is constantly sought, yet constantly questioned, undermined and remodelled. Therefore the perceived unstoppable trajectory of modern progress, he says, results in nostalgia and, if not an overt longing for the past, then at least a formless melancholy and regret that some essence or intangible element have been lost. Modernity everywhere, he adds, repeatedly clothes itself in reconstructions of the past, recreating national fashions and inventing traditions to authenticate this past and to authenticate the very idea of a nation itself.

References


Notes
1. I have been conducting extensive archival, collection and field research on Moroccan fashion since 2000 whereby I exclusively focus on the urban context. Therefore this paper is not in any way representative for the rural areas. The respondents I refer to were interviewed in Fez, Casablanca and Marrakesh in 2005-2006 with a total of ninety.

2. The name of my friend is changed in this article for privacy reasons.

3. A major problem of the Moroccan fashion industry, is the lack of structure and with it a lack of clear differentiation between a tailor, a stylist and a designer. Normally, the first one is a craftsman who executes his client’s wishes, while the second does the same but can advise the client based on his or her training in fashion styling. A designer, on the other hand, is an artist who creates conceptual and innovative collections, which initiate new trends that are adopted by a large public.

4. This is a new interpretation of an old custom. It is not certain when this change occurred, but at least throughout the 20th century brides would receive fabrics from their husbands as part of their wedding gift on the day of their wedding. Now, since contemporary brides want to use these fabrics for their wedding outfits, they usually receive them before the actual wedding.

5. The tekštita is an outfit that consists of minimum two long T-shaped garments, usually with long sleeves, and held together with a belt. It is worn by women for formal socio-religious gatherings. The maría is a heavily decorated platform that is used to carry the bride. This is also a new interpretation of an old custom, whereby the bride used to be carried from her father’s house to her future husband’s house through the streets, hidden from view by curtains. Now it is just a way to offer the bride a grand entrance. The neggafa is the Moroccan version of the wedding planner. Beldi-classique, beldi-modern and touche-marocaine are new (hybrid) categories of Moroccan fashion (see further down the article).

6. Mostly for practical reasons since the contact between men and women who were not related was problematic.

7. King Mohamed V particularly used his children as role models to promote (a European type of) modernity by having them portrayed in western dress, living a modern European life.


9. Girls of the Moroccan elite learned to sew and embroider as part of their respectful upbringing and grew up surrounded by luxurious Moroccan ceremonial garments. Simultaneously, due to their social status, they were able to shop in Europe’s fashion capitals; According to Tamy Tazi, Moroccan fashion designer, interview with author, Casablanca, July 9, 2004, notes on file with author).


13. According to Albert Oiknine, Moroccan fashion designer, interview with the author, Casablanca, July 9, 2004, notes on file with author. The craft of Moroccan fashion was learned through apprenticeship from a young age with a master craftsmen or women.

14. The licenses are in their majority obtained by two large Moroccan investment companies, Aksal and Nesk.

15. www.moroccomall.net


17. This is a religious celebration that had almost disappeared for which children are offered sweets, toys and new clothes.
The Space Between Body and Dress

Sayaka Kamakura

Abstract
This study begins by defining the “space” between body and dress as space created by differences in the shape and properties of body and dress. It then seeks to analyze the structure of space in the below-described cases A, B, and C as well as the backgrounds behind the structure of such space, and observe transformations in fashion design by focusing on the space between body and dress.

Case A: In the 16th century to 19th century, European people wore such undergarment as panniers, crinolines, and bustles to create an intended form, and as a result space for supporting the desired structure between the body and dress was produced (formative space).

Case B: In Issey Miyake’s “A piece of cloth” concept of the 1970s, the body's place in fashion as well as the role of bodily movement were emphasized through fabric that drapes over the body. This concept returned fashion consciousness to its roots in a new sense and produced primitive space for the modern age (new-primitive space).

Case C: In Rei Kawakubo’s Comme des Garçons spring/summer collection for 1997, stretchable materials that fit to the body clearly defined the body's shape, and cushions that were packed in between the material and body changed body and dress shapes. The result was conceptual space that sought to inject doubt into the relationship between body and dress (conceptual space).

These spaces have physically formed the surface beauty of associated fashion designs in keeping with their times and cultural backgrounds. At the same time, they have influenced the body consciousness that is formed through the skin and sensation of people who wear dress. The space between dress and body does not simply exist there. In other words, the cultural aspect of the power of the fashion has formed the space with same as body consciousness. Indeed, that space and its structure must be fully considered as an element of fashion design.

Introduction
This study begins by defining the “space” between body and dress as a space created by differences in the shapes of the body and dress. When a piece of fabric is draped on a woman's body from the top down, this fabric will rest on the breasts before dropping to the floor without stopping at the waist. In the back, it will catch the shoulder blades and hips before dropping to the floor, again without stopping at the waist. This happens because of the figure of women's bodies, such as the swell of the breasts and hips and the narrowing at the waist. Where the fabric does not stop, there is a space between the body and dress. Clothes can also be made in fitted shapes and remove the space in the dress by using undergarments, darts, and stretch material, while at the same time the space could be allowed to remain as well. In this text, I describe this space as an available space of emptiness, not a void, and mention what people in different times and places put in the space, and how this formed the silhouette of the dress.

Section 1 explains Case A: From the 16th century to the 19th century, European people wore undergarments such as panniers, crinolines, and bustles to create an intended form, and space for supporting the desired structure between the body and dress was produced as a result (formative space).

Section 2 explains Case B: In Issey Miyake’s “A piece of cloth” concept of the 1970s, the body's place in fashion as well as the role of bodily movement were emphasized through fabric that is draped over the body. This concept returned fashion consciousness to its roots in a new sense and produced a primitive space for the modern age (new-primitive space).

Section 3 explains Case C: In Rei Kawakubo’s Comme des Garçons spring/summer collection for 1997, stretchable materials that fit to the body clearly defined the body's shape, and cushions that were packed in between the material and body changed the shapes of the body and dress. The result was
a conceptual space that sought to inject doubt into the relationship between body and dress (conceptual space).

Section 1
Case A: Formative space in European dresses from the 16th century to the 19th century

When we are designing a dress on the body, it is necessary to have a space between the body and the dress in order to enable basic movement such as breathing. I will describe this as the “enable” space. However, from the 16th century to the 19th century in Europe, people formed another space on the enable space to create a silhouette for a particular look. There were many popular looks in each period; for example, one of these was the robe à la française (Figure 1-1). A typical women’s dress from the 18th century, the robe à la française was made up of undergarments such as a robe, petticoat, and stomacher. It especially required wearing tight underwear such as a corset device, and was impossible to put on by oneself. This particular style was not only for self-expression of the feminine figure and decorative purposes, but was also intended to display the wealth and social status of the wearer’s husband.

The history of European dresses can be called a history of changes in the silhouette. The clothes are built up on the body rather than wrapping the body, and according to how the body’s original figure is transformed and exaggerated by the dress. Fukai has described the method of wearing clothes in this time as follows: “A dress was created with the women’s body as an inner structure, and it became possible by using the interposition of foundation garments, which determined the body proportion and supported the particular surface aesthetic from the inside such as the corset, crinoline, and bustle” (Fukai, 1999: 192). Thus, the silhouette of European dresses changed with the times and according to what kind of method people used to construct their form.

The constructed style that originated in Spain appeared in the 16th century in Europe. Examples include the pourpoint, which was a buttoned jacket that was worn by men, padded in the chest and abdomen with light, voluminous material such as small pieces of cloth, down, wool, and horsehair; the vasquine, which is the origin of the corset; and the vertugado, a corn-shaped petticoat called a “farthingale” in English, which is drum-shaped and worn to create the shape for a woman’s dress. Moreover a hausse cul was sometimes added on top of the petticoat to create a more rounded skirt shape.

A mode led by the Netherlands became the mainstream of fashion in the beginning of the 17th century. The form was looser than that of the previous period and there was no need to tighten undergarments; the waistline changed to a high position. In the late 17th century, the mainstream of fashion moved to France; the waistline reverted to a normal position and was thinly shaped again. The decorations of dresses in that period were influenced by the Baroque in the same way as other art objects and forms of architecture.

The 18th century developed against the background of aristocratic culture and was full of the splendor, magnificence, and negligence influenced by the Rococo. The dresses of women became more luxurious and artificial according to the importance of their social role, such as the robe à la française noted above. The corset of this period was a forming undergarment that lifted the breasts from the bottom up, rather than being used to hold them in, as in the previous period. The early pannier was like a petticoat having several steps or with added whalebone rings. It was divided into right and left sides, and, from about the 1750s, it was a required garment in the royal court until the French Revolution (Fukai, 2010: 97).

After the French Revolution of 1789, the chemise dress (chemise à la reine), again requiring neither a corset nor a pannier, became a popular style. The waistline moved to a high position, and tastes changed from the principles of Rococo to the recurrence of nature in Neoclassicism. This related to the background in which ancient Greek and Roman styles became popular alongside the excavation of antiquities at that time.

In the 19th century, women wore a high-waisted dress that was called an Empire-style dress. It featured a silhouette that was linear by nature without the wearing of undergarments. After the revolutionary period, when the times changed to the era of the bourgeoisie, the waist position returned to the former position and it was necessary to display a thin waist again; thus, the corset was revived as well as the petticoat. The form of the dress that appeared at this time, with its manche à gigot (the gigot sleeve) and great display of décolletage, shows the influence of Romanticism. The swelling of the skirt steadily increased to emphasize non-laboring characteristics, because women were considered to be weak and requiring the protection of men. Women wore many extra petticoats under the skirt to produce volume; however, after crinoline, made of stiff fabric with a weft of horsehair,
was invented at the beginning of the 1840s, women could easily inflate the skirt in one piece. In the late 1850s, a new type of crinoline garment appeared, which had loops made of wires. With the advent of a lightweight crinoline that was easy to take off, the shapes of skirts rapidly increased in size, reaching a maximum in the 1860s (Fukai, 1999: 23). The diameter of the hem circumference of the skirt amounted to about 3 to 6 meters. Skirts that spread to an overall large bulge were made using a crinoline until the middle of the 19th century; it then became an extension that could only be seen on the back of the hips. Large cuff-mouth crinolines shrunk rapidly and changed into the bustle, with the skirt silhouette protruding only behind the back and having a flat front. In the 1870s to 1880s many types of bustles were created, which provided support from the inside for this period's particular silhouette, with its emphasis on the back of the hips. Various bustles appeared such as cushions with horsehair or fabric hardened with glue, or others made from whalebone, bamboo or rattan (Fukai, 1999: 26).

As a result, dresses manipulated the space between the body and dress by using several foundations and undergarments, and succeeded in making a perfect look on the surface for each period. Even though the clothes that constituted these styles had many problems, such as health problems including sterility and early mortality and practical problems such as being refused the right to board a bus, they embodied a person's position in each culture, and the thought of the times. In other words, dresses converted a body into an ideal form and insisted on it as a self created through clothes.

Section 2

**Case B: New-primitive space from Issey Miyake in the 1970s and beyond**

The body was constantly required to change its shape through dress in the previous century, but the bodies of women were finally released from restrictions such as corsets and filling, and all artefacts including the forming undergarment. The idea of setting surface beauty above the movement of the human body disappeared during the beginning to the middle of the 20th century, because what the body at that time required was a more active, functional, and practical dress in the context of the dramatic changes in women's social circumstances after World War I. The demands of fashion design were mainly considered as being based on the body's functions; in other words, there was a deep consideration of body movement, which would include the space for such movement. Designers who deeply considered body movement, activity, and utility from the beginning to the middle part of the 20th century included Paul Poiret, Madeleine Vionnet, and Coco Chanel. Each of them left several representative works and had a great influence on later designers and fashion history. In this section, I will mention the work of Issey Miyake as a designer who has also followed a different path from the previous European constructive clothes.

Washida has argued that when Issey Miyake started making dresses in the middle of the 1960s, it was a time when people started to think that sense was more important than intellect, and wild thought more important than rational thought (Washida, 1998: 82). Wild thought that positions living physicality as the core of a human being led to the idea that the body as a living body was given precedence over the body as an object. At the same time as other art categories such as dance and performance appeared and focused on body art, Miyake took note of the potential of this body art and began his designs in the field of fashion. Miyake insisted that a body is a living body, and he showed resistance to the traditional European method of fashion design, in which a body was packaged as an object. His emphasis was not on the relationship of the dress to the body as packaging, but on that of the dress to the body as wrapping. His dresses could change shape according to body movement; this is the basic and variable relationship between body and dress. He was interested in investigating the various possibilities in the basic relationship between the body and dress. Miyake's dresses, which could be described as a “second skin,” (Washida, 1998: 83) included plenty of air between the body and dress rather than sealing off the body. This has also been described as “catching air.” (Washida, 1998: 83) letting the wearer's body moves around freely in the space between body and dress. A tight relationship between the body and dress in which the dress would need to adjust to the body, or vice versa, was no longer necessary.

Miyake's design policy is to return to the origin of wearing clothes, such as in his collection “A piece of cloth” from 1976 (Figure 2-1), which involved the most simple and primitive act and root of wearing clothes. Isozaki has described Miyake's work as follows:

> What he is working with is the essential space, the inconsistency between the body and the fabric. In western clothing, the fabric is cut precisely to the bodyline and sewn. The form of the attire is modeled after the body, with a shell similar to the shape
of the body thus being created. In so doing, the space between two is eliminated. In the case of Japanese attire, a technique that simplifies cutting to a minimum is predominant; the set width of material itself, like an invariable constant, is given importance (Koike (Ed.), 1978: 55).

In making Japanese kimono, a roll of fabric called tan-mono is used, which has a standardized size of about 36 centimeters in width and 12 meters in length. It is cut into a certain rectangular shape rather than cut into the shape of the body. Extra fabrics are draped to preserve space, gaps, layers, and looseness, and these symmetric elements ensure that its look can change according to the wearer. The space that Miyake created in between the body and dress affected not only the silhouette of the clothes but also body consciousness. From his experience Kobayashi noted that:

I put on “A piece of cloth” from Issey Miyake over the naked body. Then, strangely, the body will wake in a sense of physicality and movement that had not been realised before, because of the consciousness of the space that the cloth brought. The body is awakened to the possibility of totally new movements in various spaces that clothes and the body create…. We are invited to re-discover our own body in a sense of the most primitive freedom once again (Kobayashi, 1995: 208).

However, would this physical sensation that is created, or that we are reminded of, by having touched this space resemble the sensation when our ancestors wore cloth on their bodies for the first time? After the collection “A piece of cloth” in 1976, Miyake created many textiles with effects achieved by modern technology such as pleating, twisting, and creasing (Figures 2-2, 2-3, 2-4). The behavior of these materials on the body was quite different from materials in primitive times, and thus the space created between the body and dress is also different. His dresses in each kind of material could not only provide the space to let the body move, or evoke the wild sense of a human being, and bring physical sensation to a new stage. It would also be possible to feel how the body moves, how the space between the body and dress moves, and how the fabrics, materials and each pleating moves. These pleated dresses create unexpected movements when the body moves, which resemble jumping or leaping. This provided a new idea of the space in between, because when materials jump or leap, the space also performs the same action. This affects the wearer in terms of what they feel from their skin, which connects to their new body consciousness.

The primary assumption behind a Miyake dress is that a human being will wear it and move: it could not assume its form and would be flat without a human body wearing it. It also involves whether the person who wears it and that person’s body react, feel, and think about the consciousness of the body.

Section 3

Case 3: Conceptual space from Comme des Garçons 1997 spring/summer collection

In the late 20th century, designers could provide freedom to both body and dress through the designer’s original concept and design idea. The designer’s concept required making the space between the body and dress, or the space was made as a result of the designer’s concept and process of creation. Rei Kawakubo’s Comme des Garçons collections in the early 1980s created an impact on traditional European fashion, which up to that point could not be separated from the idea of visual expression (Fukai, 1999: 191). Her designs were called deconstructive or conceptual or avant-garde, because she had a markedly different aesthetic sense to the European norm. She presented a ripped and ragged look of deconstructed pauperism. These dresses keep changing their shapes; they have holes, ladders, and bags. Color is bleached or black and white. In other words, these were dresses possessed of no elegance and no sexuality, and they even made people horrified (Washida, 1998: 70). However this “anti-mode” movement brought about completely new ideas for the principle of dress construction and the relationship between body and dress.

Kawakubo has explained the background of her rebel spirit for creation as follows:

When I was young, it was unusual for a female university graduate to do the same job as a man. And of course women didn’t earn the same. I rebelled against that. And when my fashion business started running well, I was thought of as unprofessional because I was not a fashion school graduate. Then, when I went to Paris… I rebelled against that as well. I never lose my ability to rebel, I get angry and that anger becomes my energy for certain. I wouldn’t be able to create anything if I stopped rebelling (Kawamura, 2004: 129–130).

Rebelling against existing fashion design systems, rules, and notions supports Kawakubo’s strong work. In each season, each creation, she does not follow any existing rules of fashion design. She starts her designs from an abstract position: all elements, processes, and materials, colors and shapes are reconsidered from the point of view of the concept. This original process makes for collections that we have never seen before. These rebellious works of Kawakubo’s overturned not
only existing basic rules for fashion design, but also brought great changes to the space between the body and dress.

In the 1997 spring/summer collection for Comme des Garçons, Kawakubo presented the most radical collection in fashion history (Figure 3-1). The concept of this collection was “The dress meets the body. The body meets the dress. And they are one” (Blanchard, 1996: October 10). She produced clothes in strange forms with deformations, with humps on the back that were made of elastic material and down cushions, or outlandishly swollen hips and bellies. Though this collection, she wanted to ask the conceptual question: “Is the body tethered to clothes or are clothes tethered to the body?” (Fukai, 1999: 154)

This collection was made of stretch material and down cushions. When these dresses are worn, the stretch material fits to the body and emphasizes the bodyline. On the other hand, the down cushion parts, combined with the body, pushed and stretched the dress on the surface even harder. The stretch material that was used was gingham check, and so it was easy to see the down cushions that stretched the surface of the fabric. The body and dress became totally freed by her concept: they did not need to change their figures for each other; they were simply changed by Kawakubo’s concept. As a result, the space between the body and dress was also emancipated. Kawakubo freely manipulated the three elements (body, down cushions, and surfaces of the stretched material) and brought new possibilities to the space itself, while also bringing unlimited possibilities of creation to the space.

Hirayoshi has explained the connection between the meaning of these lumps and being against femininity as follows:

The dress seems to follow the silhouette of the body figure; in fact, the body is subordinate to the silhouette of the dress. The wearer experienced a chest, waist, and buttocks obstinately expanded by undergarments as parts of the body…. The general figure of the body is always defined by clothes that cover the body. In other words, effects that are different from the feminine body image can be created by incorporating a different device, an undergarment, between the body and dress. In other words, we may forget the physical unevenness – the swelling of the chest and the narrowing of the waist – by the encounter with this Comme des Garçons dress (Kobayashi, 2000: 208).

What Kawakubo was attempting to convey through these clothes was, first, that we should not be caught up in existing forms of clothes or physical forms. Second, she allows us to think about the consciousness of what clothes and the body are for a human being through an act of wearing clothes with a device incorporated between the clothes and the body. These were her aims and concepts. From this point of view, we can say that, as a result of having emphasized a concept beyond appearance and comfort, Kawakubo incorporated lumps as devices overturning the existing feminine body image in clothes and the space between.

Conclusion

Fashion is currently interpreted as a phenomenon that mainly involves enjoying the changing trends visible on the surface of dresses in different periods. However, this research has discovered that, until fashion reached this present viewpoint, it was not just a matter of having fun with the changes of the designs on the surface of dresses.

In Europe, cultural factors including manners and customs, and changes in thinking in each century affected art and also brought changes in lifestyle, including clothes. Whenever the times changed, in effect, people converted their clothes, spaces, and bodies and formed them into an ideal figure adapted to the environment they lived in.

On the other hand, Issey Miyake created clothes that attached great importance to the body while wild thought was attracting attention in the middle of the 1960s. This allowed the body to be freed to a more natural and primitive space by returning to the most basic relationship of one piece of cloth and the naked body, and was intended to bring back the primitive body sense that all people originally had. Miyake continued to establish this thought and adopted modern techniques in his work such as pleating or creasing effects using chemical fibers. Because these clothes can leap and fly when they are worn, it can be said that these flying and leaping clothes bring about a new space consciousness and a new body sense that would not be supported merely by wearing a piece of cloth.

At the end of 20th century, Kawakubo presented a collection that aimed to let us consider our consciousness of what the body is and what clothes are. Kawakubo does not particularly care about appearance, either in terms of comfortableness or physical liberation. As a result of having emphasized
her concept, she incorporated lumps as a device between the body and dress. This helps to overturn the existing feminine body image.

As a result of these cultural aspects, the dress changed the body, and vice versa; in either way, the space between the body and dress was thoroughly involved. This space has physically formed the surface beauty of the associated fashion designs in keeping with their times and cultural backgrounds. At the same time, the latter have influenced the body consciousness that is formed through the skin and sensation of the people who wear the dress. The space between the dress and body does not simply exist in that position: it could be said that the cultural aspect of the power of fashion has formed the space just as it has formed body consciousness.

References

Figures
The Powerlessness of Fashion

Sean Ryan

Abstract
This paper, part of a project to rescue fashion from the social sciences and restore it to philosophy, takes three steps back from the former in the company of three philosophers. In Kawamura’s Fashion-ology, a programmatic description of the systematic empowerment of the fashion participant and the historical disempowerment of one of its centres of power, the effects of power are presumed to be those of legitimation and enforcement – power is understood solely as legal or institutional power. The work’s strictly sociological approach, its explicit rejection of the importance of aesthetics, also means that, though the two are rightly distinguished, clothing continues to haunt the logic of fashion while remaining banished from its kingdom, and there is little reflection as to why the system of clothing and not some other commodity lends its name to cultural neomania in general. What is lacking here is an analysis of the specific nature of fashion’s empowerment and disempowerment of subjectivity, of the fashioning of the embodied subject, the locus of aesthetics. For this we need to enlist Foucault’s genealogy of power, which also has the advantage of explaining strategic resistance to institutional power. However, Foucault’s account is itself unsatisfying, because it avoids offering a theory of power while nevertheless assuming one, and because a disciplinary critique of power insufficiently explains why it is that a particular discipline, the production and consumption of clothing, defines the universal mode of being at the end of modernity. Foucault’s critique of power quietly assumes Nietzsche’s metaphysic of power, the incessant movement of self-empowering and self-overpowering, a movement both differential – determined by external and internal power relations – and embodied, whether as individual, work, or institution: as corpse, corpus, or corporation. The corporeal subject of this self-production is nothing but surface, one that extends to the surrounds of its world – clothing is all – and the ceaseless rhythm of its embodied self-presentation is . . . fashion. In “Fashion and the Social Sciences” Barthes insightfully observes that, were its rhythm to be disrupted by cultural developments, the intense jostling that resulted would be the beginning of a new history of fashion. Yet there is incoherence to this claim, for if the rhythm of fashion were to turn into the chaos of arrhythmia, then we might instead conclude that fashion was at an end. Alternatively, we might question the assumption that the historical origins of Western fashion are to be found in certain social transformations in the late Renaissance, which would require rethinking, for example, the notion that the study of pre-modern clothing was the province of anthropology. Barthes’ uncertain prospect of a new beginning points to what I call, following Heidegger, the powerlessness of fashion. This is not intended as criticism, since this powerlessness is nothing negative – impotence – but rather that which exceeds the limits of fashion while giving rise to it. But on questions concerning the historicality of its beginning and the finality of its self-understanding, the sociology of fashion can have nothing to say.

Let us first remind ourselves of the following, that the theory of fashion would never be written, were fashion ultimately that which remained after all theorizing was exhausted, were it something that escaped the theoretical survey of any discipline whatsoever, and not only of the ontology, history, and praxis of clothing—even if the latter were able to reserve for itself the name ‘fashion’

Keywords
Powerlessness of Fashion
Philosophy of Fashion
Foucault
Nietzsche
Heidegger
in some privileged sense. Is this so? One cannot deny that theories of fashion are produced, that, for example, there exists a particular journal whose appointed task it is to confer upon fashion the legitimacy and dignity that comes with its own field of research, or that books get published that bear upon something called, in a mixed and matched ensemble of Latin and Greek, ‘fashionology’. Yet do not such ventures expect of fashion theory both too much and too little? Too much in the sense in which the phrase ‘the power of fashion’, popularly understood, indicates an elusive excess that makes mockery of theoretical perspectives, for which the passage of time is either illusory or may at least be still in the temporary arrest of the passing moment; too little because it underestimates the wisdom in this theoretical disobedience, a wisdom that I would argue is less theoretical than it is philosophical—a way of thinking that acknowledges the limits of thought, even or precisely when it resorts to seemingly thoughtless tomfoolery?

Fashion theory of course has a history. Though it notoriously occupies a shifting location at the intersection of several disciplines, its beginnings lie in the attention turned upon clothing by sociology and to a lesser extent psychology towards the end of the nineteenth century. Prior to this, however, it was primarily the province of moral-philosophical criticism or literary invention, with Thomas Carlyle and Stéphane Mallarmé perhaps the most eminent of the last pre-theoretical thinkers of fashion.

This paper is part of a project aiming to rescue fashion from the social sciences and restore it to philosophy. Its design is to take three steps back from the former in the company of three philosophers, though each has reasons for refusing the title. If the theoretical turn in fashion writing is partly motivated by an anxious desire to rise to the status of the scientific, this project is driven by its own if rather different unease. The pretext will be a sociological account of the power of fashion offered by a recent and already influential text in the area. The postscript would like to indicate—for essential reasons it can do no more—what I shall call the powerlessness of fashion. If the power of fashion lies in its exuberant flight from the theoretical perspective, if fashion is indeed seductive exuberance itself—an exuberance that, prior to its submission to scientific inquiry, left fashion beneath the dignity of theory—then the powerlessness of fashion lies in the very event of its appearance. It concerns the limits of fashion insofar as fashion theory understands it, and thereby also the limits of fashion theory per se.

Although Yuniya Kawamura’s 2005 book Fashion-ology does not advance an explicit theory of the power of fashion, its reliance on a conception of power is everywhere evident. I shall limit myself to two quotations drawn from its conclusion.

First: ‘Fashion-ology deals not only with individuals but with the social institutions of the fashion world and their effects upon the social and economic status of many individuals when fashion is used as a symbolic strategy ’ (Kawamura, 2005: p. 105). Fashionology is in part a study of effects, namely the effects of certain social bodies, both individual and institutional (for example, those of the designer and of the chambre syndicale), in the formation of individuals en masse (including the body of consumers). Such effects are not physical but rather symbolic; they define the ways in which those individuals and institutions might interpret and present themselves, be recognized and so be constituted, as members of the so-called fashion world. Let us leave aside for the moment the question of that world’s extent, though we note that the social world of fashion, for Kawamura, is a nexus of institutionalized personae: it consists not just of the designer and the consumer but also the journalist, the merchandiser, the publicist, and so on.

It should be evident that the sense of effective power in play here is not a semiotic version of the metaphysic of excess touched on earlier. It is not, say, the wild and indiscriminate dissemination of signs of fashion to anyone and everyone, since the latter would overpower any symbolic strategy deployed to contain it. It is rather a legal or institutional power that legitimates its own institutional setup and enforces the status of the individual personalities that are subject to it. This empowerment is the systematic creation and regulation of roles, to be filled by individuals whose participation in fashion is understood purely on the terrain of the symbolic.

Second: ‘For consumers in postmodern societies, anything and everything can be fashion. Any item of clothing has the possibility of becoming fashion. The source of legitimation that came from hegemonic Paris and the French establishment, therefore, is losing its power ’ (Kawamura, 2005: p. 106, text corrected). Let us disregard for a moment the fallacious argument here, which collapses two different senses of the word ‘fashion’ (fashion as source of the symbolic power of clothing, and fashion as source of the power of the new in general) in order to make the legitimation of the former dependent on the emergence of the latter—this might be true historically, but it is not true necessarily; there is no inherent reason why the hegemony of haute couture Paris could not have extended to the fashionable in general. Let us also set aside the questionable contention...
that the potential fashionability of anything whatsoever is distinctive solely of postmodern societies and not coextensive historically with modernity as such. What is initially important here is the identification of a counter-effect, that of fashion’s disempowerment. Though disempowerment might also be the consequence of a given institutional strategy upon certain individuals—upon the suddenly unfashionable, for example—in this instance the disempowerment is not of its individual participants but of the institution itself, which takes effect when the dominance of a particular fashion world is subject to the incursive and disruptive power of another. The gradual loss of legitimacy and institutional dismantling of Parisian authority is here aligned with an historical event, postmodernity, but it is also intended to be understood both as a cultural phenomenon, since the author here and elsewhere makes reference to the effect wrought by the appearance of Japanese fashion upon the cultural milieu of France, and as a result of the confusion of personae, the swapping of roles between the consumer and the designer when fashion emerges from the street rather than from the maison.

That the power of fashion is understood on the legal or institutional model, and that its subjects are conceived as ciphers, as vacancies to be filled, is quite in accord, once fashion is conceived as the object field of a science of system and process. However, the semantic slip described above, the shift between sartorial fashion (‘any item of clothing’) and commodity fashion (‘anything and everything’) is both curious and revealing. It is curious because Kawamura herself repeatedly draws the distinction between clothing and fashion, insisting that they differ both in order ( phenomenal versus symbolic) and in scope ( clothing versus anything whatsoever). But the slip is also revealing, because, in spite of that insistence, the sights of the discipline of fashionology remain firmly set on the symbolic institution of clothing. As the author herself admits, fashionology is not about clothing. However, it is difficult to deny the connection between fashion, . . . an immaterial object, and clothing, . . . a material object ‘ (Kawamura, 2005: p. 1). Clothing might be fashion’s raw material, and fashion clothing’s symbolic form, yet there appears no way of explaining why this might be so within the sociological conception of fashion that she proposes. Nor is fashionology able to explain why is it that the symbolic order of clothing and not some other phenomenon lends its name to cultural neomania in general. Though clothing and fashion are rightly distinguished, clothing continues to haunt the logic of fashion while being banished from its kingdom.

What fashionology lacks is an analysis of the specific nature of the empowerment and disempowerment of fashion, beyond its effects on social or economic status, its demarcation and enforcement of personae, and the rise and fall of its hegemonic sway. For the power of fashion resides not simply at the level of the symbolic but also at that of the incarnate; fashion is necessarily the fashioning of an embodied subject, and fashionology accordingly ought not merely to be a sociology, it should also be an aesthetic—in the original sense of the word, that is, as the study of sensible appearance in general, and not simply of beauty or taste.

In order to pursue the question of the relationship between power and the embodied subject further, I shall begin by freely adapting a couple of themes drawn from Michel Foucault’s 1982 essay ‘The Subject and Power’ on the relationship between power and subjectivity.

First, an embodied subject is not simply an individual place-holder in the unfolding of a symbolic strategy but one who is able to discriminate between the sensible appearances provided to it—since every symbol necessarily shows itself in material form, whether as object or as image—and who is able to consent to or resist the institutional employment of such strategies. A subject is not simply the object and focus of institutional power; rather, it too is empowered, precisely as a free subject. Of course, the freedom to consent or resist is never absolute, and fashion’s institutional strategies constantly strive, to some degree successfully, to overpower its subjects and constrain their freedom. Consent is never far from being wrested from individuals through domination, exploitation, and subjection: through domination of the market, exploitation of the outworker, and subjection of the slave to fashion, for example. Nor is resistance ever absolute. Strategies of anti-fashion, from the rejection of institutional fashion, to the embrace of the unfashionable, to adherence to traditional modes of dress, to utter indifference to fashion (the pretense that clothing might be devoid of symbolic significance altogether), are still modes of embodied self-presentation, and so remain within the reach of fashion’s institutional strategies. Nevertheless, if fashionology were to become the study not of a system of institutions but of the power relations between institutions and subjects, then it might avert the danger of simply ratifying the legitimacy of existing institutions and assenting to the authority of its allotted leaders.

Second, the strategic interplay of institution and subject cannot be understood structurally, even when set against the background of historical transformations such as the event of the postmodern. Free subjectivity, the fact that strategy is required to act effectively on an individual in order to bring about its consent or resistance, implies that every response of the subject, whether transformative,
conservative, or reactive, is always an act of self-fashioning, of self-creation. Participation in the
social world of fashion is a matter of forming and maintaining oneself through one’s response to its
symbolic strategies. This is the case not only for the consumer but also for the designer, the
manufacturer, the journalist, since embodied self-formation and self-presentation is never simply a
matter of self-adornment in clothing but rather of displaying one’s place in the world of fashion using
the range of signs that are at one’s disposal—through one’s work, for example, or through recognized
modes of communication.

Were one to envisage a fashionology in the wake of Foucault, then it would be the concrete analysis
of the particular systems, methods, objectives, institutions and rationalizations that constitute the
contemporary world of fashion. Its investigation would be empirical rather than theoretical—empirical
because it would take its departure from a fundamental experience, that of clothing. In other words,
it would assume from the outset what it is that the purely sociological account acknowledges but
cannot explain, that fashion is not simply clothing yet it is inseparable from it, that every symbolic
strategy necessarily takes place on a particular phenomenal ground.

So what is fashion? It is just the totality of symbolic strategies that unfold on the basis of the
fundamental experience of clothing. There is no such thing as fashion itself. And what is power? It is
just the specific strategic relations at play within the social world of clothing. There is no such thing
as power itself.

Thus we have an alternative definition of the power of fashion to that implied by Kawamura, one that
can even account for the popular impression of its seductive and transformative exuberance. Yet a
question remains. For how then is it possible that ‘anything and everything can be fashion’?

Might an empirically specific analysis of power explain why it is that the particular phenomenon and
practice that it investigates—the production, consumption and communication of clothing—comes
to lend its name to neomania, to the universal cult of the new? The difficulty arises because the claim
that fashion concerns the totality of things is not empirical but metaphysical. Foucault wants to avoid
offering a theory of power—his critique would like to have an effectively political rather than simply
theoretical purchase—yet an analysis of the power relations that hold for the totality of things cannot
be empirical, even if the potential fashionability of anything whatsoever is a matter of common
experience. So it seems that we do require a theory of fashion after all.

Though Foucault wants to avoid offering a theory of power, his critique quietly accepts Nietzsche’s
metaphysic of the relations of empowerment and disempowerment. The latter is less a theory than it
is an interpretation, hermeneutical rather than scientific, for reasons that will become apparent. I
would now like to examine briefly some theses of Nietzsche’s on the nature of what he names the will
to power, theses that I hope may also grant some insight into why it is that the experience of clothing
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experience. So it seems that we do require a theory of fashion after all.

First thesis: ‘This world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are
also this will to power—and nothing besides!’ (Nietzsche, 1968: § 1067). This first thesis
concisely presents us with a metaphysic of the will to power; strategies of power, both actual and
possible, constitute the essential characteristic of the world as a whole, without exception. A
particular milieu of actors and effects, such as that centered on the ontology, history and praxis of
clothing, is merely a conventionally delineated fragment of the whole. And since we too stand
within the world of power, are immersed in the field of its strategies, our perspective on the world
can only be immanent and interpretive; it cannot be external and theoretical. This holds for
Nietzsche’s own thesis, but it also holds for more restricted perspectives such as that of fashion
theorists. The challenge thus becomes: how may one to speak with authority of the whole and yet
recognize the limits of one’s competence?

Second thesis: ‘The world as a work of art that gives birth to itself’ (Nietzsche, 1968: § 796). The
world is not in structural stasis; rather it is essentially and constantly creating itself, refashioning
itself. The world as a whole, but therefore also everything it comprises, is an aesthetic phenomenon
in the metaphysical sense of the world—not necessarily as a thing of beauty but as the sensible
presentation and re-presentation of itself.

Together these first two theses allow us to understand better the play of empowerment and
disempowerment. That the world as will to power is in constant self-renewal means that the world
follows the incessant rhythm of empowering and overpowering, both of itself and of its constituents,
whether as a whole or in terms of the strategic and differential power relations at work within it.

superficial, surface is all. Ideas, beliefs, emotions, desires, scruples, principles—everything is on
display, everything falls within the domain of the aesthetic. Though the realization of the superficiality of the whole has its own profundity, its own wisdom, it too must be played out in the world of appearances.

Fourth thesis: ‘Belief in the body is more fundamental than belief in the soul’ (Nietzsche, 1968: § 491). The soul is itself an appearance, and a belated one at that. It is the body that is the fundamental location of the subject. But which body? Certainly the experience of the fleshly body is the original locus of belief. Yet everything is embodied, since everything is born, whether in the form of an individual, a work, or an institution—whether as corpse, corpus, or corporation.

Fifth thesis: ‘Art is . . . an excess and overflow of blooming bodily presence into the world of images and desires’ (Nietzsche, 1968: § 802, translation modified). We now get a sense in which the transition from the fashioning of the most intimate of surfaces, the carnal body, to the fashionability of everything in which the world consists, becomes possible. The body as a work of art, as a surface clothed in significance, as a screen onto which image and desire are projected and fought over, spills over into the surrounds of its world—this is the very logic of aesthetic self-renewal.

The world is a work of art, a Gesamtkunstwerk of display and seduction, with the dressed body holding forth at its centre. Finally, a sixth thesis, one that returns us to the popular conception of the power of fashion, a remark that may serve as our motto: ‘Against the value of that which remains eternally the same . . ., the value of the briefest and most transient, the seductive flash of gold on the belly of the serpent vita [life]’ (Nietzsche, 1968: § 507).

In these six theses Nietzsche is able to sketch for us the outlines of a metaphysical aesthetic of fashion. They constitute not a theory of fashion but rather an interpretation, a way of thinking about fashion that acknowledges its own limits. What of those limits? Let us turn to perhaps the most thoughtful and certainly the most writerly of fashion’s sociologists, Roland Barthes. In the 1966 essay ‘Fashion and the Social Sciences’ Barthes insightfully observes that, if fashion’s rhythm were disrupted, it might be due to the growth and globalization of culture, of clothing, of food and by a kind of equalization of cultural objects, of a jostling together that is so intense that the fashion rhythm would be changed. A new history of fashion will begin’ (Barthes, 2006: p. 95). Here we have, some decades before the institution of fashionology, already an extension of the term ‘fashion’ to embrace the allures of the world of culture as a whole, and a rather Nietzschean allusion to the rhythm of its constant self-renewal. Barthes is of course alluding to Alfred Kroeber’s study of the historical rhythms in the forms of clothing, the regular oscillations of volume and length and of the placement of features such as the neck, waist and hem (cited in Barthes, 2006: passim).

What is noteworthy, Barthes continues, is that these rhythms are not historically determined by external forces and events. Until recently—to read between the lines of the passage just cited—the rhythms to which the world of fashion is subjected have remained relatively unaffected by the worlds of politics, economics, religion, ideology, and so on. At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, the world of fashion, or at least the world of signification grounded upon the phenomenon of Western clothing, is commonly claimed to be distinct from those worlds defined by traditional modes of dress—I say paradoxically, because such worlds are habitually described as persisting outside the world of fashion, yet they too invest clothing with symbolic significance, even if such symbolism is ‘strictly coded’ and the worlds that authorize it are ‘totally stagnant’ (Barthes, 2006: p. 91).

So it seems that rhythm is everything. But if that is the case, then we should be alert to the incoherence of Barthes’ last sentence. For if it is true that fashion is nothing but this rhythm, and if the contemporary jostling that Barthes appears to sense happening were to end in either the chaos or the stillness of arrhythmia, then with what assurance should we propose that fashion is at a new beginning? Should we not equally wonder whether fashion is at an end? In any case the question is both undecided and undecidable, since it asks about the event of fashion’s beginning and end, an event that cannot be determined from within the theoretical framework of fashion itself.

That consequence, however, is rarely grasped. For we have just noted that the rhythms of fashion are relatively unaffected by historical events. Yet it is commonplace to claim that the historical origins of Western fashion are to be found in certain social, political and economic developments of the late Renaissance. But to do so is just to cede the theoretical ground to these other disciplines while insisting on their very powerlessness.

And it is equally routine to exile the study of pre-modern or traditional clothing to the province of cultural anthropology, or, at best and yet ironically, to the museum of the fashion antiquarian. Yet the absence of rhythm is still a rhythmic phenomenon, a single note sustained for an entire piece of work. Finally there is the confident attribution of the word ‘fashion’ to name the totality of clothing practices that emerge elsewhere than from the West. Yet the arrival of the Japanese in Paris—was it an eruption from within the world of fashion or an interruption from outside? Was it an empowering
moment of a world’s self-renewal or the disempowerment of a cultural hegemony?
Barthes’ uncertain prospect of a new beginning, the inexplicable advent of the first beginning, and
the ambiguous historical and cultural horizons of its world, point to what I will call, following
Heidegger, and as the final step back, the powerlessness of fashion (adapted from Heidegger, 2006:
pp. 165–72). The word is not intended in criticism; the powerlessness of fashion is nothing
negative—it is not impotence—but rather that which exceeds the limits of fashion while at the
same time giving rise to it. For fashion, indeed anything whatsoever, can only come to pass if it can
be defined by what it is not. But then what is that? The difficulty is that what we might mean by
pre-fashion, post-fashion, and extra-fashion are questions impervious to fashion theory and
beside the point from any other theoretical perspective. On matters concerning the historicality of
its beginning and end, the reach of its boundaries, and the finality of its self-understanding,
thories of fashion can have nothing to say.
So how are we to think the outside of fashion? Let us formulate for a moment a Nietzschean
fashionology, with the thesis that: Everything is fashion, and nothing besides! The thesis is not
theoretical, because it does not stand outside fashion in order to treat it as an object of science;
it is instead an interpretation of fashion from within, and must be so, if everything, and we
ourselves, is inescapably part of it. Yet the thesis is strikingly odd, since it seems to draw the
boundary of fashion—in referring to everything and nothing—from both within and without. It
appears to do what it says it cannot.
But does not fashion itself do the same? Is not the briefness and transiency of fashion, the seductive
flash of gold on the belly of life, in each case the sudden and temporary exit from a world of system
and process?
If that is so, then we need a way of thinking fashion that is other than fashion theory.

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York.
New York.
The Power of Fiction in the Fashioning of Walter Van Beirendonck

Winnie Ha

Abstract
This paper explores the power of fiction in evoking fashion as speculative experience and its application to creative production. The concept of fiction is framed as imaginative construct – capable of being formed solely in the mind. Fashion and fiction share the principles of forming, devising, imagining and speculating, to generate and communicate narratives beyond the limits of the physical realm. The paper includes a case study of Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonck; to enter his world (or in his words, to ‘take the W-ride’), one should be receptive to the fictional paradigm where the anticipation lies in the possibility of anything becoming actualised – at some indefinite point in the future.

This paper emphasises the power of fiction in Van Beirendonck’s world, specifically the way he curates his body of work, including his own persona, in a fictional world from where narratives could freely emerge. He composes this world with diverse cultural, historical, mythological and imaginary references, and playfully interweaves disparate images and text. Through narrative devices such as association, disjunction and metaphor, he sets the stage for complex combinations of fictional characters and scenarios. The mythical qualities of his archetypal figures drive the trajectory of his narratives; for example, the transgression of the BDSM players, Dare Devil Daddy and Bad Baby Boys, as well as the mysterious ‘otherness’ of shamans, spirits and aliens, coaxes the viewer to imagine his/her own version of the story. His garments, objects and manipulated bodies often allude to strange desires and rituals. Within the darkness of the fairy tale mode, innocence is conflated with transgression, comfort with threat, fantasy with fetish, childhood with repression. This paper argues that all of these are stage preparations for the audience to fashion their own perversions and fantasies.

To access this world is to re-enact it for ourselves, to implicate ourselves in our own personal narratives.

The paper draws on the premise that fiction offers the conceptual framework and tools to understand fashion as a perpetual departure from the actual world – and that therein lays the power of fashion. Fictional thinking, through its speculative capacity, could potentially expand the formal spectrum of fashion knowledge and discourse. Just as the world of Walter Van Beirendonck lets us leap into dream, fiction offers points of departure into myriad possible worlds of fashion.

Introduction
At a fundamental level, fashion ignites our individual desires, dreams and idealisations, and expresses our collective imagination. This paper focuses on how fashion challenges the distinction between the actual and possible, continually speculates what else may be, and gives form to the amorphous flow of imagination. It asks: What is it about fashion that coaxes us into perpetual pursuit for the extraordinary, and how do we talk about it? The paper extends the assertion that fashion is a species of fiction (McNeil et al. 2009, p. xv), sharing common grounds with what Rozik (2011, p.1) calls the fictional arts which include theatre, figurative painting, literature, still photography and cinema. The proposition is that fashion has the capacity to represent fictional worlds that say something about ourselves, and do something to us.

This paper draws from a variety of theories of fiction and the narrative imagination, as well as analyses of contemporary fashion practice and research. It is premised by: (1) the notion of fiction as ‘imaginary construct,’ (2) the significance of narrative in fashion as communication and experience; and (3) the constant negotiation between actual and possible worlds in fashion and fiction. The paper first
establishes links between fashion and fiction, by virtue of both being driven by the formation and invention of possible worlds. Otto von Busch, quoting Sartre’s psychology of the imagination, states: ‘Imagination is an activity in which human individuals create and recreate the essence of their being, making themselves what they were, are and will become’ (as cited in Von Busch 2011). Fashion and fiction attests to our human desire to not only express conditions about ourselves and the world around us, but more importantly – in looking towards the future – to speculate the myriad possibilities of what else may be. *If fashion is made up of fictional worlds, then how do we actively participate in them, and how do they transform us?*

The paper is methodologically grounded in the theory and application of the narrative imagination, specifically in relation to creative production in design. A more specific analysis into the connection between experiential fashion, fictional thinking and the imagination led to the proposition that fashion could perform as a concept of experience and fiction the form of that experience. The hypothetical ideas that emerged are: (i) fashion can be produced and experienced through narrative structure; (ii) fashion offers ingress into many possible worlds and speculative futures; and (iii) the power of fashion lays in the way it bridges the imaginary and actual. These ideas were tested by employing, as a case study, Walter Van Beirendonck’s project, whose creative intent is aptly captured in its title, ‘Dream the World Awake.’ The case study involves a critical response to the exhibition and catalogue essays, proposing how to read the work, and what it does to the reader/viewer.

This paper is organised into three sections corresponding to three fundamental operations of fiction and fashion. **Forming** is the process of giving shape to a concept or idea, where the resulting form could be actualised, or remain as a possibility. This section sets the foundation of the paper by introducing the links between fashion and fiction that are pertinent to this discussion. **Telling** describes the process of reckoning, recounting or narrating; it is about representing, through language (of the visual, verbal, sonic, cinematic, etc.), that which is being formed. The work of Walter Van Beirendonck attests to the power of fiction, evidenced in the way he fashions his world through the use of words and implied narratives, as well as imaginary characters inhabiting fictional worlds. While ‘telling’ suggests the process of actualisation, the last section, ‘speculating’ focuses on the notion of possibility. **Speculating** is about imagining what lies beyond the present and the actual. Challenging the presumption that fashion and fiction are merely symptoms of the first world’s preoccupation with superficial values, it proposes a paradigmatic shift in how fashion is to be perceived and applied. The idea being put forward is this: fashion, as a species of fiction, is a powerful device for imagining futures and creating the unexpected, and that the design process should be, poetically speaking, the fashioning of dreams, rather than a frivolous endeavour succumbing to change merely for its own sake.

1. **Forming**

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (first published 1897), the etymology of ‘form,’ as a noun, is *forme* (Old French) and *forma* (Latin), meaning ‘shape or configuration.’ ‘To form’ means ‘to give shape to; to mould or fashion;’ it not only means to construct, make, bring into existence, or produce a physical thing, but also to conceive or frame in the mind an idea, judgement or opinion. This paper premises that the act of ‘forming,’ which refers to our faculty of ideation, is the fundamental operation of fiction and fashion. If ‘to form’ means ‘to conceive, suppose and imagine,’ or ‘to form to oneself’ (= French *se figurer*) (OED 1897) an abstract concept, then ‘to fashion’ (OED, first published in 1899) is to make visible its characteristics and apparent features. This is to say, the activities of ‘forming’ and ‘fashioning’ lead to knowing, knowledge and meaning-making. In cases where the act of ‘fashioning’ draws on the principles of fictional thinking, I propose that the form should be read and received as fiction. Rozik (2011, pp. 3-4) outlines the basic principles that structure fictional thinking, the first and foremost being ‘… the creation of worlds of characters and their interactions based on pure invention or fictionalisation of real people and events …’ I propose that the world of fashion operates in the manner of fiction – where people, events and experiences are continually imagined and formed, following the current of subjective and collective desires, dreams and idealisations. These imaginative states are then manifested – or fashioned – as external states of being, such as physical appearance and social interactions.

The noun ‘fiction’ (OED, first published in 1899) refers to ‘that which has been invented, devised, or fashioned;’ it stems from its Latin root *fingere*, meaning ‘to make or form.’ Fiction commonly denotes something that is a feint or an imitation, therefore its value is evaluated in terms of truth and artifice. Cohn (1999, pp. 2-3) posits that this is why fiction (and I propose, as with fashion) is often regarded with a degree of covert negativity and frivolity. However, a discussion around the ontological status of fiction is beyond the scope of this paper. My focus is on the function of ‘fiction’ as an imaginative construct. As a representation of human imagination, I am interested how the fictional framework illuminates the underlying poetic structure that enables the formation and experience of imaginary
Architecture, asked these questions: to the production and expression of knowledge. I propose that fashion could benefit, similarly, from the broader context of speculative discourse and practice in architecture, fiction is considered integral to all the extraordinary, to all the possible worlds beyond the actual. The fashion photograph is an example of a micro-cosmos of fiction, with models, clothing, background, lighting, situations, image and viewer all participating in a fictive, narrative fantasy (Kismaric and Respini 2004, p.15). As with the craft of theatre, film and literature, fashion constructs entire worlds to draw one into one’s own imagination: this is the means by which dreams, idealisations and desires are given form and reckoned with.

The increasingly dominant medium of digital film and interactive projects in contemporary fashion communication plays a vital role in enhancing the notion of ‘fashion as experience,’ via the construction and representation of narratives at much more complex and diverse levels. Nick Knight’s agenda behind his digital platform SHOWstudio is to push the future of fashion communication to evoke the power of fashion as immaterial experience, therefore gradually transforming and evolving the meaning of fashion. Like cinema, the strength of SHOWstudio’s digital experiences is their capacity to engage us in spatio-temporal narratives and immerse us in the immediacy of fashion as it relates to the subjective self. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), in the contemporary realm of ‘experience economy,’ ‘an experience is not an amorphous construct; it is as real as offering as any service, good, or commodity.’ I propose that the fashion experience extends beyond the garment and the brand; it is the communication itself, and what underlies it is a narrative that provokes our psychical self. What provokes our participation in the world of fashion (fiction) is our own kernel of desire, dream and idealisation. Fashion must remain as fiction – imaginable but ultimately unattainable – to sustain our pursuit.

Landy (2012, p.10) leads us to the notion of ‘formative fiction,’ and he states:

… fiction does more than transmitting propositional content, such as messages about the world and its experience: fiction has the capacity to fine-tune our mental capacities … spaces for prolonged and active encounters that serve, over time, to hone our abilities and thus, in the end, to help us become who we are.

Rather than focusing on its informative content (what the text says), Landy (2012, p.9) suggests that we should be exploring its formative content (what the text does) and how it presents us with a new way of looking at the (actual) world. Similarly, Rozik (2011, p.3 and pp.256-266) provides a comprehensive account of how human psyches spontaneously create fictional worlds that reflect their innermost thoughts and feelings, and that this kind of fictional creativity reflects a long-standing form of thinking by people about themselves and their worlds. Following this thread of thinking, the notion of fashion that I discuss here is not about its material representation, but rather fashion as a concept of experience related to self-cultivation and subjective imagination, thereby emphasising fashion as a means of formative expression.

What do fashion and fiction do to us? They give us the capacity to participate in fictional worlds and imagine alternative ways of being. Through fashion and fiction we are able to continually curate our identities and cultivate ourselves, and to subsequently manipulate and challenge the confines of the actual world and how we operate within it. The self-imposed expectations of dress, behaviour, lifestyle and appearance all constitute the fashioning of one’s existence within the chosen world/s. These enactments may take place in the actual, or exist purely as (imagined) possibilities. Fashion gives us the avenue to create fictions of ourselves.

In fashion studies, the link between fashion and fiction is often analysed as the way fashion and dress are portrayed in literature and film, rationalised through the lens of history, sociology, cultural studies and gender politics (McNeil et al 2009; Ribeiro 2005; Hughes 2005). While I acknowledge the significance of these analyses, my emphasis leans more towards the formative potential of the fictional imagination – as concept and practice – to expand the way by which fashion is received and understood. In other words, I am interested in how fashion could be conceptually and poetically understood through the structure of fiction, and the intangible drive that propels them both.

The significance of fiction as an alternative paradigm for design speculation and practice has been prevalent in the field of architecture, while still remaining a marginal if non-existent area of study in fashion. For example, the Architecture and Fiction conference (2010), held at the Lisbon Triennial of Architecture, asked these questions: Can form follow fiction? Can fiction foresee the future? In the broader context of speculative discourse and practice in architecture, fiction is considered integral to the production and expression of knowledge. I propose that fashion could benefit, similarly, from
the fictional framework – that fiction could expand the way we experience, design, read, write and speculate about fashion. As a form of fiction, fashion is an interplay between the actual and the possible; its power is its capacity to express the contours of our reality through an amplification of, on the one hand – the limits contained within, and on the other hand – the possibilities beyond.

To illustrate these ideas further, I propose that we experience the world of Walter Van Beirendonck – a fictional world populated by characters, fragments of stories, dreams and fantasies. To enter it is to participate in story-telling, or in his words, to ‘dream the world awake.’ Before we do so, however, a few words on the significance of the act of ‘telling’ as a mode of experience and knowledge.

2. Telling

To study fashion as a species of fiction is to contemplate its imaginative potential to reconfigure the perception of the limits of our actual world, to explore how it operates as a tool to imagine and pursue other possibilities. How, then, do we account for them? How may we read, interpret and share these imaginative possibilities?

To ‘tell’ (OED, first published in 1911) is to ‘mention in order, give an account, relate by way of narrative and to make known by speech or writing.’ It concerns the way one relates to an abstract experience (whether actual or possible), by ‘forming’ it through language (verbal, visual, gestural, etc.) so it can be communicated and shared. As a spoken or written account of connected events and experiences, Carr (1986) expresses narrative as a mode of knowledge and understanding, specifically the way human lives and transactions are properly understood. Therefore, the act of ‘telling’ is vital not only to how something is expressed but also experienced. To ‘tell’ also means to ‘divulge or reveal a secret or to foretell something in the future.’ The subject who tells and receives (a story, a memory, an actual account, etc.) is invested in processes of imaginative transference and interpretation, unique to his/her own experience, knowledge and speculation. The way one tells of something indicates the fashioning of his/her own experience; as such it points to one’s capacity for curating ourselves through narrative.

To explore the significance of ‘telling’ as inherent to fiction and fashion, and the specificity of fashioning in the representation of one’s imagination, I propose to use, as a case study, the Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonck (henceforth abbreviated as ‘WVB’), focusing on his unique way of using fashion to tell stories, and using stories to challenge what fashion is. The world of WVB represents a model where the parameters of fashion and fiction reinforce each other. One of the original members of the Antwerp Six, WVB presented his debut collection in 1987. Since then his work is known for its unapologetic excess and an over-abundance of references from pop culture, fairy tales, science fiction and tribal ethnography, to political and socially critical themes such as environmentalism and gender transgressions. The physical body is often a site of narrative; for instance the references to ritualistic performances (especially the attire and objects of tribal cultures and sado-masochism) and bodily manipulation as expressions of alternate beauty. These references are often combined with experimental, high-tech materials and multimedia presentations, to create what Balice (2005) calls ‘… something between a techno parade and an art performance.’ WVB’s world is made up of narratives concerning the mystical Other via such references as David Bowie and Ziggy Stardust, extra-terrestrials, and fantastical cartoon toys and dolls. The latter also alludes to the cult of ‘the ideal family’ and childhood (with nods to artists Mike Kelley and Paul McCarthy). Like dark fairy tales, his works often result in surprising narratives and allusions not only to other worlds, but also the disturbing underbellies of our hopes, dreams and idealisations. His stories have a suggestive effect, to provoke the viewer to imagine what those other possibilities may be.

Come along and take a ride into the crazy helter-skelter, inside-out, upside-down World of Walter Van Beirendonck. Colours and shapes reach psychedelic dimensions to charm and astound you. Walter is the ringmaster at the centre of his world introducing each of his Acts; extreme proportions, polychrome patterns, unnerving textures and overt sexuality… My imagination soared and I was thrilled to be one of the new Acts in the crazy World of Walter.  

Stephen Jones (as cited in Blanks 2013, p.97)

WVB has often been quoted that he always tries to tell a story through his designs, and that the narrative dimension is key within fashion (Lysens 2011 and Debo 2013, pp. 15-27). My proposition is that his stories are vital to how his oeuvre is to be read and experienced; they not only emerge from the details in his designs, but also from the way he has composed and curated his world as a whole. His stories are the foundation of his fashion collections, shows and exhibitions, including the portrayal of the brand and his own persona. WVB employs various strategies to set the foundation for the invention of his fictional worlds, which subsequently provide fertile grounds for the continual emergence of narratives, reinforcing the fashioning of his fictions. His stories feature fictional
characters referencing transgressive social stereotypes, refashioned imaginatively into characters such as Bad Baby Boys and Dare Devil Daddies. Debo (2013, p.18) states that his trademark narrative strategy is the use of text, including phrases, slogans, word collages in titles of collections, snippets of song lyrics, play on words, linguistic innuendoes and alliterations, as well as graphic text in print, embroidery and knit, for example King Kong Kooks, Fuel for the Fire, Beautify Big, Cosmic Culture Clash, Paradise Pleasure Productions and Respect Rethink React. What are compelling about these scenarios are the presence of Walter’s voice and the transmission of his ideas as narrator, especially through the recurrence of the letter ‘W’ as a motif and his self-representation in the form of a naked, pink doll, complete with beard and penis.

Apart from representing himself in various personas as well the overarching narrator, WVB often puts himself in the position of ‘the other,’ just as the alien who wonders about things that are mundane and perfectly normal to us, he uses ‘… ethnographic objects and rituals in the same unbiased and intentionally ‘unknowing’ way’ (Debo 2013, pp. 18-19). WVB inserts himself into the fictions of his own creation, taking on the role of the experiencing subject who ponders without judgment, filled with childlike fascination at the world. The figures in his world are transformed into avatars – fictional characters that enact his stories. I propose that, through the avatars, WVB is able to reimagine the world – to contemplate other kinds of beauty and sexualities, the Other from the future or past as well as the other dimensions of societal and political ideals. WVB himself is represented by a mascot called Puk Puk, who bears a big letter ‘W’ on his chest. Puk Puk is his ‘voice,’ bearing his declaration, ‘Kiss the Future.’

WVB inserts a rich spectrum of cultural, gender, sexual and mythological references into the narratives underlying the design of his individual garments and the curation of his fashion collections, shows and exhibitions. He imports real-world references into his imaginary worlds, isolating certain cultural motifs and symbols and adding them to his mix of make-believe, before introducing them into his shows and exhibitions. He imports real-world references into his imaginary worlds, isolating certain cultural motifs and symbols and adding them to his mix of make-believe, before introducing them into his shows and exhibitions.

WVB and the viewer, the garments transform into vessels for alternate narratives, experiences and interpretations. While WVB is not concerned with factually representing the actual world, his fictions often tell the darker side of the story of how the world is or could be. Although his fashion world appears to be a constant techno party, there is a sense of gravity and urgency once we unfold the narratives. His transgressive imagery exudes dark undertones of the carnivalesque, which Granata (as cited in Teunissen 2008, p.162; see also Granata 2010) posits as a set of practices based on inversions and travesties alongside carnival iconography in the spirit of play, humour, parody and laughter. I propose that these subversive undertones produce atmospheric tension to his narratives, and re-contextualise his transgressive images within real-world concerns. For example, inspired by the adventures of Captain Cook, WVB juxtaposes 18th-century silhouettes with the ornamental dress codes of the Rapa Nui tribes of Easter Island. Balice (as cited in Debo 2013, p. 19) explains that he further ‘contaminated’ the clothes with “relics from the future” in the form of SMS messages, computer graphics, thereby reconfiguring the original context of the Rapa Nui dress, severing it from its historical, ethnographic origin. While the connection between the fictional representation and the actual world to which it refers still remains, by introducing the Rapa Nui dress into his fictional world, it becomes something other. For WVB and the viewer, the garments transform into vessels for alternate narratives, experiences and interpretations.

I propose that this is the fundamental basis of WVB’s creative expression. His worlds are not bound to truth and accuracy; rather, their purpose is to evoke fantasy, dream, desire, and even protest in the viewer – and this is the power of his fashion (fiction). Just as his fictional worlds are the avenue for him to contemplate alternative versions of the actual, our participation in the fictional world of fashion
is a way to speculate our own worlds and to ultimately cultivate ourselves.

3. Speculating

As an imaginary and philosophical construct that enables us to grapple with abstract conception and experience, the agency of fiction is to imagine and speculate what else may be. Science fiction, for example, is a tool whereby one is able to not only imagine, but to tell stories of the future. As a species of fiction, fashion – as exemplified through WVBe – speaks to our human impulse to journey towards imaginary worlds, beyond the limits of the actual – to project into the myriad possibilities of the future. To imagine is to expand our experiences, to choose, to anticipate and to speculate. Our inventive energy is evident in the stories we choose to tell, the way we choose to behave and dress ourselves, the way we fashion our identities and form our relations to others and the world around us. Our perpetual self-fashioning is symptomatic of the many possibilities surrounding our desires and speculations, which are fluid and unfixed. Therefore our engagement with fiction and fashion entails a continual questioning and anticipation of who we are and how else the world could be. Fashion gives us scope to continually push the limits of the actual by engaging with extraordinary possibilities. Fashion has to do with becoming, rather than being – it does not exist as a fixed point, but rather as a constantly shifting phenomenon. It is sustained by our drive – our persistence for transformation and difference, without which it would cease to exist. As quotidian experience, the act of self-fashioning functions as narration and expression of self (McNeil et al. 2009, p. xv); beyond that, fashion sustains within us the extraordinary coordinates of human desire for something else, something better, something that differentiates us from what was before – it evokes in us the need to recreate and reinvent. The power of fashion is its capacity to give form to our continual imaginations, dreams and idealisations – represented and communicated as narratives. In other words, by ‘fashioning’ ourselves and our own worlds, we create narratives. This understanding imparts a kind of gravity to our participation in fashion, as fashion then becomes a mode of not only self-expression but, more significantly, self-cultivation. In terms of contemporary fashion practice, I propose that practicing within the fictional realm affords us expansive narratives of speculative futures that respond to our existing circumstances. Scripted by the language of our unique experiences, memories and expectations, these narratives are our personal fictions that take place in the actual world. The promise of fiction is that anything (though not everything) could be rendered as actual, and – with it – new structures of meaning. Fiction is a way to challenge the existing state of affairs; it is a space for anticipation and the release of imagination. Perceived through the lens of fiction, fashion provides ingress into other possibilities of what we are and how the world could be; it also coaxes us to reconfigure the past, protest the present and project the future. Fashion (as fiction) stokes the fires of human fascination and speculation, challenging the distinction between the actual and the possible. Our participation in it implicates our perception of the present and the actual. Like an amateur stargazer looking through the telescope, fashion then becomes a tool for us to speculate extraordinary narratives, full of uncertainties and therefore rich possibilities for envisioning something new.

References

Cohn, D. The Distinction of Fiction. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999, pp. 2-3. Cohn also presents an expansive definition of ‘fiction’ used in philosophical discourse, which – far from anything related to literature of narrative – refers to a concept or an idea borne out of our intellectual intuition.


Abstract
The power of fashion is evident in the composition of social, cultural and personal entities. Changes in the technology of communication, in the cultural dimensions of societies we live in, have consequently brought changes in the fashion subject. Today fashion identities are seeking something multidimensional, hybrid, cross-cultural and perpetually changing. There are visual references to ethnographic clothing when we explore hybrid fashion looks. The process of decentering ethnographic clothing has been re-activated as designers and researchers are reconsidering its place and significance in fashion. The fashion equation has several variables which shape the definition of fashion. Fashion today springs from pluralities characterizing the postmodern society. Fred Davis (1992) in *Fashion Culture and Identity* identifies the emerging clothing codes such as fabrics, texture, color, pattern, volume, silhouettes and occasions, which are combined in different arrangements and are always shifting or “in process” to suit the zeitgeist of a postmodern society.

For me as a researcher it is stimulating to unravel these codes that are embedded in multicultural environments. While fashion designers are interested in the value added through the exploration of visual and tactile ethnographic clothing elements, there is very limited published research to document its contribution to the fashion design field. As a practitioner my design process taps into the cultural value offered through hybrid cultures. My research is based on reflective studio practice which involves examination of traditional garments originating from different regions such as India, Japan and their relationship to more conventional clothing from the Western world and how these references are picked up by current fashion designers. My fashion praxis is empowered by the connections happening across the national boundaries varying from the beginnings of basic clothing with minimal shaping to the complexities that have led to standardizations of processes and methodologies of garment engineering.

My research pronounces the exploration of design complexity within basic clothing shapes of traditional origins. Ethnographic clothing finds visibility not just through references in fashion clothing created by designers but also via the distribution of knowledge through various forums in the academic field. The aim of this paper is to support these knowledge exchanges and give credit to the cross-cultural influences in creation of fashion through my practice as a fashion designer and educator.

Introduction
Today's model of fashion is bridging the gap between 'high' global fashion and the local everyday fashion that is customised culturally in specific situations. The equation of fashion with variables such as success, importance, aesthetics, plus identities is developing with the shifting local and global situation. According to Jennifer Craik (1994, p.ix – xii) the loci of power associated with fashion are shifting and cannot be confined to a particular economic or cultural set of arrangements. She aptly states that fashion today leads in the 'ethnographic' way, where the fashion designers and the consumers want to draw from many different cultures. In this sense postmodern cultures want to experience mergers and contrasts between popular culture and ethnic culture, the dominant culture and subordinate culture.

Fred Davis (1992) has attempted to understand the sociological aspect of fashion through the semiotics of fashion language, by understanding the codes of fashion (such as fabric, texture, colour, pattern,
acquired knowledge and clothing articles from Kutch villages. These articles such as met NGO organizations who are working with these craftsmen and women. In the process I have visited craftsmen/artisan from Kutch to first hand talk to them about their practices. I have studied the historical development of clothing from India, where I come from. My design practice contextualises decentred, multiple identities. My practice is informed by childhood memories of my mother working with creative media such as painting, sculpture, dressmaking and embroideries. I am engaged with clothing in an emotional sense that it brings the past and present, known and unknown, and memories from past into context. The applied design aspect of my work is evident in challenging the conventional methods and using the unconventional to create designs for fashion. The historical accounts of traditional costumes and textiles of Royal India given by Ritu Kumar (1999) have been studied in depth. Also the social, cultural, historical and political impacts on the Indian dressed identity given by Emma Tarlo (1996) in her book Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India has been studied. The first 30 years of living in India has a huge significance on my design practice and its impact became evident when I came in contact with other cultures in my adopted country. The ethnographic clothing which I was surrounded with did not appear significant and wearing them was in the routine. However when I moved from India, these garments were removed from my environment and I came in contact with them in specific social settings. Their presence became pronounced with their absence in my lived experience. The comfort of wearing them was confined to the compound of my home. The changed life-world brought new realities for me. “The life-world includes individual, social, perceptual, and practical experiences. In analysing and describing the life-world, Phenomenology attempts to show how the world of theory and science originates from the life-world, strives to discover the mundane phenomena of the life-world itself, and attempts to show how the experience of the life-world is possible by analysing time, space, body and the very givenness or presentation of experience” (Slade, 2009, p.1).

Methodology

Dress as an object of enquiry and creation has been of interest, and I have explored its ethnographic, contemporary and cultural features. Clothing experience in my personal life has been significant and multi-faceted. These have included the subtle encounters with the European and Japanese fashion besides my own traditional garments. As a practitioner within my design praxis European contemporary styles, Japanese sensibilities and Indian roots are all embodied. I have engaged in several methods to research into clothing which is implicated by hybrid cultures. I have visited craftsmen/artisan from Kutch to first hand talk to them about their practices. I have met NGO organizations who are working with these craftsmen and women. In the process I have acquired knowledge and clothing articles from Kutch villages. These articles such as kediyun, choli, and other ethnographic clothing such as kurtas, angarkha, salwar kameez, pajama from personal collection have been studied for their structural arrangements. At another level where the actual clothing object is not easily accessible, I have studied visual material to understand and constitute clothing article such as Kimono from Japan. Studying Japanese designers and understanding their methods has been important to establish the link with Kimono. These
encounters with the ethnographic clothing as objects and as articles worn in my life time are more than mere objects as they embody a historical, social and personal connection. Hence the method of object research has been employed but has been considered in relation to its material and social culture. The research methodology used is inductive, qualitative and reflective within the studio practice. The empirical materials used for the study include personal experiences, historical and visual texts and the clothing phenomena is studied in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Kawamura, 2011, p.103). “Instead of setting out theory and finding data that suits the theory, we can observe fashion/dress as a phenomenon/practice or study clothes as objects and find a theory that emerges out of it” (Kawamura, 2011, p.26).

Ethnographic Clothing
In certain cultures the traditional garments have continued to be used in the contemporary context. Their simple shapes have changed slowly over a long period of time. However complexity has been introduced in these simple shaped garments through the use of crafted elements such as printing, dyeing, decoration and embellishment. The cut and form has not changed drastically. “Basic shaping achieved by using mainly fabric lengths with little cutting need not mean that the resulting garment is not complex or attractive. Most early clothes and those outside Western Europe were more simply made than the styles which later evolved in the West. The desire for change was also less pronounced outside Europe, where the construction of recent garments which survive enables us to see how the garments of earlier times were made” (Tarrant, 1994, p.33). Line drawings of kurta by Kumar in Figure 1 show that the changes in kurta have been subtle in terms of the cut. However the fabrications, decorations and placement of panels are the aspects considered in depth within these designs.

These ethnographic garments have many distinctive features that could be similar in most cultures. Use of gusset is prominent to give more ease around body sections such as under arm, or side seam slits. Handling of details such as closures, openings, trims, pockets are also very similar in application techniques. They are made of varying sizes of panels that are rectangular in shape. In some cases
these shapes could be cut out as trapeziums showing the gradual increase in width of panels. These rectangular panels are either joined to matching straight seams or they are ruched into seams with smaller measurement to create tunics or bifurcated garments. Dorothy K. Burnham (1973) explains that the shapes and forms of ethnographic clothing were dictated by the size of the animal skin and the rectilinear form of loom-woven cloth. The silhouettes of these garments are mostly boxy or loose fitted. Patricia Rieff Anawalt (2007) states that in Central Asia the construction of traditional clothing is non-Western. This could be easily extended to other regions such as East Asia and South Asia. “There is no attempt to follow the lines of the body. In Mongolian garments only two dimensions are important: height and breadth. All clothing is made—with as little waste as possible—according to a conventional measure. As a result, nomadic garments can easily be folded up and stored in a box or saddlebag, with no need for Western-style hangers” (Anawalt, 2007, p.130).

Another interesting aspect that needs mentioning is that these silhouettes allowed for the garments to be gender non-specific. “Up to the mid-20th century, Central and Eastern Asian men and women were dressed practically alike, their clothing differed only in details” (Anawalt, 2007, p.130). When assessing clothing from South Asia, even the contemporary clothing in India reflects similar aspects where garments such as kurta, pajama, salwar are unisex garments.

**Origins of Clothing: How They Conceptualise into Designs**

This section aims to highlight how simple origins of clothing have informed the complex clothing techniques that have been slowly developed with attention to the form, fabrications, proportions, and functions. **Wrapping** of fabric around the body is the most basic form of garment which could range from a simple sarong to a complicated sari. Sari is more than five meters of designed fabric that is wrapped around the body to cover both the legs and bodice. “Shawls and stoles are still important dress accessories today, showing that once a form has been found useful and attractive for clothing it will remain in the repertoire even if it has been superseded technically by another type of garment” (Tarrant, 1994, p.28). Many other forms of garments that fall in the wrapping category can be traced down history from different parts of the world.

**Wrapping** as a design concept has become the dominant technique of design for designers and one to mention here would be Japanese designer Issey Miyake. “The notion of wrapping the body is linked with the Japanese genius for enclosing space. Japanese clothing is seen as a form of packaging the body” (English, 2011, p.21). Bonnie English elaborates on Miyake’s work where his realm of aesthetics in clothing is conceived through the handling of fabrics and wrapping it around the body. The space between the fabric and body is considered carefully by the designer. ‘Clothes’, Miyake (Cocks, 1986, p.44) explains, ‘have to be seen on the outside as well as felt on the inside’ (cited in English, 2011, p.21). Similar wrapping concept is used by Rei Kawakubo in her fall 2009 RTW collection where the body form is cocooned in layers of garments created with carefully considered fabrications (Figures 2a, 2b).

Tarrant (1994) comments that lengths of fabric woven on warp-weighted looms with three selvedge edges were worn like a blanket, folded over lengthwise and draped to pin on the right shoulder as indicated by the Iron Age finds in Denmark. A simple silhouette of a blanket can inspire fashionable clothing styles. This has been done by Rei Kawakubo for her label Comme Des Garçons, in fall 2009 RTW collection. In Figures 2a and 2b we can see how she has used the blanket print and blanket as a draped garment concealing the body form. Sarah Mower, contributing editor to Style.com explains how Rei Kawakubo has created “pyramidal layerings constructed from pieces of jackets, sweaters and parts of blankets”.

In the design shown in Figure 3 the author explores the space between the garment and the body and the comfort the wearer senses within this space. The displaced tube gently twists around the body where the walls of the tube are partially closed. Here the simple tube structure is abstracted into a body wrap as a cocoon.

**A Tunic** is another basic shape of garment that has been adapted by different cultures around the world and continues to inform today’s contemporary clothing. A tunic seems a logical progression from draped lengths of weighted fabric to two shorter lengths of fabric sewn on the sides to form a tube through which the body passes. Naomi Tarrant (1994) has characterised garments that can be formed into a tube by sewing the selvage edges as tunics. These would include a basic shaped garment such as a poncho which is formed from a square piece of fabric with the neck opening at the centre of the diagonal fold (p.28-31). Several variations can be introduced to the basic tube shape such as varying lengths, adding sleeves and gussets, changing the directions of grain-lines, removing shoulder seams, and changing neckline shapes. Tunics made with an assortment of specifications would have different names in different countries. One such variation in the Indian version of tunic is created by adding extra width to the sides using triangular or trapezium shaped gores. This garment called the kurta is still worn as a contemporary piece of clothing in India. Ashima describes “kurta as
a unisex garment introduced in the Mughal court around the 18th century AD and seemed to have developed from a similar under-skirt into an outer wear garment. It was a tunic like garment, made of straight or gored panels with wide sleeves attached at right angles” (Gupta, 2011, p.152). Kumar (1999) has a collection of line drawings of the varied kurta styles in her book Costumes and Textiles of Royal India which shows that these ethnographic clothing are not static in style and are always evolving (p.292 – 311). Fashioned kurtas are evolving with new styles being explored and marketed by this generation of Indian fashion designers. They are actively designing the new silhouettes, surface textures, and alternative styles. This is evident from the styles shown in Figures 4a, 4b, 5a, and 5b where designer Pia Pauro is blurring the boundaries between different tunic shapes and Nupur Kanoi is reinterpreting the traditional khadi kurta paijama adopted by Indian politician as there sartorial preference.

The design in Figure 6 by Yohji Yamamoto references the traditional kurta shirt worn by village men from Kutch – India. Yohji Yamamoto’s elongated men’s shirt worn as a dress is stripped of any frivolity and appears very vernacular. Work wear references are strong in this design.

Author’s Own Design Practice and Methods
KURTA:
There are many ethnographic garments that originate from different regions on the globe. Born and raised in India I have been exposed to the traditional Indian clothing. I have worn them growing up and seen people wearing them around me. When I moved from India to live in New Zealand in 1996 I left behind these lived experiences of 30 years. Within my experience of wearing European clothing in these 30 years I already had pants, denim jeans, T-shirts, other stretch tops, skirts and variety of jackets in my wardrobe. The traditional garments started entering the wardrobe space after 13 years of age. Eventually sari became the corporate work wear and salwar kameez was designated for informal and formal social occasions. The European clothing was part of my lived experience however this was not extensive. When I migrated to my adopted country the exposure of people wearing the ethnographic clothing was completed erased from my daily visual context. The shrinking visual presence of the Indian ethnographic clothing made them the ‘other’ which would be encountered only in selected places such as within the boundaries of my home and while socialising with my Indian friends. I would qualify ‘other’ as not just the strange ‘other’ but also that intimate/special ‘other’. The involvement with the traditional clothing is deeper than the surface, it is in the composition of my Self, within me. I would not have experienced them in this light had I continued living in India. Liza Dalby (1993) in her study of kimono explores the concept of ‘other’ in clothing. She proposes that “In clothing as in life, self-definition requires an ‘other’ to provide a vantage point of understanding…..Only when Western clothing, or yōfuku, first became widely available to Japanese in the 1880s did native dress become objectified through a parallel term wafuku ( wa, Japanese; fuku, clothing)” (Dalby, 1993, p.10).

It could be said that at birth one doesn’t choose one culture; it is bestowed upon us. Further down life time we create opportunities to experience different cultures and our responses help shape a personal narrative of culture. I could classify cultures as primary experienced cultures which we live in and secondary experienced cultures which we read and listen about. I would come back to the later one as I discuss how kimono from Japanese culture has got me excited within my design practice. It is essential to place my design practice within this personal narrative of culture, or a framework of hybrid cultures. The exuberant decorative embellishments from India, the minimal, intellectually charged designs from contemporary Japan are all part of this framework where the European design sensibilities are also brewing. This is the melting pot of hybrid cultures. My design sensibilities have been changing continuously taking a fluid form and there is always something new that adds to this form. In this paper I want to explore the specific ethnographic clothing which I have responded to within my design practice. These ethnographic clothing are set up in the historical, social and functional parameters. While I would like to not go into huge detail on these, I would set a broad framework for my design practice to be understood in these contexts.

“To look seriously at art objects of the everyday, such as clothes – their discourse and practices, their meaning-bearing forms and their codes of internal and external interpretation – is an essential, and often neglected, component of any study of modern aesthetic” (Slade, 2009, p.1). Kurta is one of the several Indian garments that became significant within my practice and I wanted to establish new meanings that were placed within an expressive context. In the contemporary fashion context kurta is used as a generic term for various tunic silhouettes however historically these were distinguished according to differing features. Kumar (1999) distinguishes an angarkha from a kurta, however when I wore these garments we broadly categorised them as kurtas. The line drawing of angarkha in Figure 7 by Kumar fascinated me and I wanted to interact with this two dimensional drawing. This image was drawn on a woollen crepe fabric and detailed lines and

Figures 4a,4b (Pia Pauro, Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week 2013, http://sureshnewpicas.blogspot.co.nz/2013/03/wds-day-6-pia-pauro.html, retrieved on 12 oct 2013)
patterns were marked by burning holes with a soldering iron (Figure 8). The burnt kurta image was lit up and projected on the wall with light passing through it. The scale of the burnt image was transposed to a huge shadow, questioning the presence of a kurta within my personal context (Figure 9). Their traditional forms are buried in my experiences, but their shadow is vivid in my memories. This emotional tension has found expression in these projections and drawings. While kurta is a clothing item it has been expressed as an abstraction for this body of work. “If we perceive the clothing as simply a means to an end, then it is the message rather than the final outcome, (in this case, the garments) that is of greatest significance. This type of thinking heralds the emergence of conceptualism in fashion” (English, 2011, p.71).

Kurta in Figure 10 is made in unconventional material - leather, cut to the waist level with oversized gussets inserted at the underarm section, transforming it into a jacket. Its fabrication is used to cast it as a relief sculpture making it a monumental piece in the exhibition space.

The shirt design in Figure 11 is a layered arrangement of a kurta and a shirt with cuffed sleeves. It is a hybrid East and West encounter that is conceptualised into multiple identities which the author externalises in her design process. The garment is suspended in space with spot lighting. It embodies reflective, luminous, light and fragile characteristics.

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The shirt design in Figure 11 is a layered arrangement of a kurta and a shirt with cuffed sleeves. It is a hybrid East and West encounter that is conceptualised into multiple identities which the author externalises in her design process. The garment is suspended in space with spot lighting. It embodies reflective, luminous, light and fragile characteristics.
In Figure 12a and 12b the kurta inspired floor length dress is created in unconventional fabrics - fake fur, and combined with traditional fabric such as organza. The sheer organza gored panels show hints of body like a shadow, sensualising the space between the garment and body.

The structural panels of a kurta, (Figure 13) the fitted geometric bodice pieces of the choli (fitted blouse) and the rectangular shaped floating kimono sleeves, all together orchestrate this design. The structure of this garment has been hidden under the textured woollen knitted bubbles. Kurta, an ethnographic garment has been reinterpreted into high end European styles of shirt, jacket, floor length and knee length dresses. The transformation from East to West is carefully considered with appropriate choices of fabrication and finishing details. These concepts also echo in my life-world where the fashion identity of the wearer is carefully placed in the hybrid context in anticipation of being challenged by the untrained.

Tarlo (1996) elucidates on a scenario “of people making decisions, choosing to some extent their own self-image, playing with identities and recognising the role of clothes in image construction and interpretation” (p.8). When I follow the trajectory of fashion in my personal life, I realise that much was initially formed by the cultural parameters of national boundaries. However now with the process of acculturation plurality of identities have been explored and established.

KIMONO:
Lengths of cloth which drape over the shoulders without a seam using the standardised widths of fabric for minimum wastage have formed the structure of many ethnographic garments from Central, East and South Asia. Kimono’s simplistic construction using eight rectangular pieces of fabric using straight seams and standardized measurements in specialised fabrications has intrigued many, outside and within Japan. Even today kimono is worn in Japan for formal occasions. Many fashion designers from Japan and outside have been inspired by kimono and used it to inform their design practice. The balance of this garment with the long floating sleeves and slim lengthy body tucked in with the Obi belt helps to understand the relationship between the garment and the body. “The very subtle degree of skin revealed at the nape of the neck, the set of the obi, the depth and placement of hem designs and the shape of the sleeves are all matters which identify the taste of the wearer” (English, 2011 p.4). Miyake uses the traditional aspects of drape, pleating, overlay and wrapping technique of a kimono within his designs. “Like Miyake, both Yamamoto and Kawakubo insist that the underlying influence of the kimono in their work is profound” where the space between the fabric and the body is important as against the “blatant sexuality of fitted Western clothes” (English, 2011, p.72).

Within my design practice I have carefully studied the Kimono images and actual kimonos in museum exhibitions. Figure 14 shows my initial experiments of sewing a kimono to understand its structure. This fully lined kimono was very helpful in understanding the construction of panels and how to control the silhouette. The panel stitch lines, their direction, the neck opening both at front and back (for women wear this should be lowered to show the neck), width of the sleeves, slope of the shoulders, number of pattern pieces, and control in the width of the panels, are some of the many detailed considerations that are assessed in the making of kimono and I understood these in the process of making.
With the background knowledge gained through making, I proceeded to play with the aspects mentioned above. Some aspects considered were slope of the shoulder, width of panels, sleeves and placement of panel seams (from vertical to horizontal). Figures 15a, 15b, 16a, and 16b show the process undertaken to design the kimono inspired garment. Careful deliberations were made in the process. The drape over the slope of shoulder was handled by removing a dart from the shoulder area which placed the centre front on bias grain. The horizontal seams at empire line helped to resolve this process. Length of the garment, width and the number of panels, sleeve depth were the features altered for designing this garment. The conceptualisation of hybrid identities was reflected through the overlay of shirt pattern. There is an added abstraction that can be realised through the design process which I always stop and register within my design practice. The power of process is huge and only slow deliberations and attention to details can help tap into it. The paper drape in Figures 15a and 15b shows the potential in the relationship between body and the wrap. The clean white paper also conjures further consideration to details such as pockets, belts etc. One of the designs actuated from this process is shown in Figure 17.

Conclusion

Japanese designers have intrigued me as they operate beyond the stereotypical boundaries surrounding fashion design. “Over the past thirty years, clothing has surpassed the primary function of status and sexuality and some designers, like the Japanese, have embraced the idea that fashion can assimilate meaning and conjure up memories of place, time, people and feelings, as well as provide a psychological portrait of one’s sense of being within today’s society” (English, 2011, p73,74). I have been in sync with the design work of master designers such as Yohji Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo. Their careful handling of clothing design and materials, the emotional connection to their work and the textiles/crafts community in Japan, their passion for new methodologies in design, all these aspects hugely inspire me and my design practice. Japanese clothing aesthetics and sartorial developments have been shaped by traditions as well as by the legacy of modernity. “The way in which Japanese society and identity had been formed by the past, and so acquired a sense of continuity and belonging, was challenged by the sudden arrival of modernity from alien sources” (Slade, 2009, p.12). The Japanese designers have
developed a unique fashion system which is admired by the world today. The East and West encounter drives my design practice. This encounter has helped me understand ethnographic clothing placed in these different models of fashion systems that operate within their distinctive parameters. These distinctive fashion systems co-exist in a world that has been virtually shrunk with shrinking distances that our experiences project and create. Our world experiences are getting homogenised with the new technologies and there is a need to understand design in this changing paradigm. Placing my practice in this paradigm is important as an educator and as a design practitioner.

References

Notes
1. **Kediyun**: menswear short jacket from Gujarat which looks like a smock.
2. **Choli**: a woman’s tight fitted blouse.
3. **Angarkha**: a menswear long sleeved, full-skirted tunic, open at the chest and closed at front with ties.
4. **Salwar**: unisex trouser gathered at waist with narrow hem opening. It is made from rectangular and trapezium shaped panels.
5. **Kameez**: a shift or tunic dress, worn in varying lengths over a salwar or with skirts.
6. **Pajjama**: a drawstring trouser worn by men and women which has variations in style.
7. **Mughal Empire**: was an imperial power in South Asia that ruled a large portion of the Indian subcontinent from late 17th century to mid-19th century.
8. **Khadi**: hand woven cloth, termed by Mahatma Gandhi for fabric which was hand woven from hand-spun yarn.
Analyzing the History of the Narratives of Fashion Design in India: The Perspectives on Power of Representation and Paradigm Shifts in Pre-modern Kerala State of India

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Abstract
The geographical features of the land of Kerala, a Southern state of India allowed various religions and cultures to interact with the people who had survived with the different social inequalities. Therefore, according to the context of fashion of clothing in Kerala may be perceived largely in terms of the social and the cultural history of Kerala.

A micro study of Kerala tries to address the issues that are related to clothing and the attending sense of power during the colonial period. The paper tries to address a parochial perspective of clothing and power, and generate a view that the history of designing can be affordable with a different methodology which will serve as a new knowledge of assertion of power through representations of the marginalized people.

Different from the perspective of modernity of the English educated middle class Indian during the colonial and post colonial period, the concept of modernity in India holds a view that emerges out of materialistic and religious context in an economic, cultural and social perspective. The social perspective of modernity in terms of religion played a key role in developing a sense of dignity and a sense of assertion of power in terms of dressing for the marginalized social groups. Thus, the modern history of fashion is different from the historiography of semiotics of the socialist paradigms that relate with the political context but provides a limited view to look at the larger issues that are related to designing of the people of India.

In India, the history of designing that has been established as part of the dominant culture and formulated with a methodology that operated well within the nation building concepts of socialist paradigm. The concept of “Thinking Design” written by S.Balaram and published by National Institute of Design (NID) has been concerned with the issues of designing of clothes and dressing in modern India in terms of the semiotics extended through Mahatma Gandhi with his talisman concept of dressing up. Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India invited ‘Le Corbusier’, the modern European designer to India in order to address the architectural needs of Punjab. Lutyen's architectural efforts in terms of Indo-European aesthetic paradigm also operated in the model of inclusive but in a religious frame of forms of Meta narratives. However, the modern history of designing emerged with the needs of the post-colonial India and the theoretical paradigm of it has been concerned with the political frame.

The projects of development in terms of industrialization during the post-colonial period played a major role in the history of designing in India. The policies, academic institutions and the industries all generated a new sense of design in life among the people. The market, culture that has seen the new emerging needs of the modern period out of the main stream of designing history based on a socialist perspective. Hence, this paper is mainly concerned with the historiography of designing in accordance with the marginalized people and the power of fashion in India with special reference to pre-modern Kerala state.

Keywords
Modernity
Representation
Marginalized
Region
Historiography
Clothing as Symbolic
Emancipation
Semiotic Counter
Power
Empathizing Nature
The change in pattern of clothing in pre-modern Kerala reveals a sense of fashion that was in fact largely dictated by the social order based on the Hindu caste system present in the traditional society affecting the cultural and politico-economic patterns. Studies on contemporary India are also taken into account as the variables of castes that are still prevalent in different forms.

The Indians encountered modernity with the beginning of a European and particularly British Colonialism as their paramount power when they established their trade centres and the parallel government with those of existing provincial kingdoms and was thus termed as ‘colonial modernity’. However, with regard to clothing, modernity did not make a sharp and discernible break from the traditional society. Although, the political modernity is established and the negotiation with modernity in different spheres is still going on and is an unfinished task in India, the present paper conceives post independence period as modern when people experience a political freedom of what to wear and pre-independence as the pre-modern in terms of clothing are concerned. What to wear, the question which is always raised is within the question of identity among the Indian people in terms of their clothing culture during pre-modern India, which is the main concern of Emma Tarlo in her book titled ‘Clothing Matters.’ But, this perspective has to be considered beyond the context of nationalistic concerns of clothing. Emma Tarlo (1996) conceptualizes the problem of clothing as a unique issue in opposite to the historical formation of colonialism and describes the choice and constrains that prevailed in clothing in India. The question of what to wear which is connected to the identity of a people has conceptually addressed with what Bourdieu calls as “strategic distinction” and was again invoked as part of the historical process of Indian society as it encountered the colonial oppression through its National Movement. The Swadeshi Movement and the appreciation, the use of the Khadi was probably a regular beginning point for the narratives of fashion in India. The framework of the question of identity, however, overlooks and reduces the issue of the internal colonialism from the privileged to the socially under privileged people in India. This is to say that the question of identity attached with what to wear is not the issue of the Indian common people in a larger context. A large section of society was not allowed to wear proper cloth or to keep their dignity through clothing during the pre-modern period. To encapsulate the large body of debates, we may say that while British ruled, there was a primary contradiction in terms of politics and therefore all sections of Indian society were mobilized, in terms of dress, the local realities and dominant castes were responsible for forming the contradictions in the society. Thus, the present study tries to look into the nuances of the issue of what to wear with different perspectives. It tries to map the changes of different perspectives as the paradigm shift by taking up case studies of three castes of Kerala who are significantly mentioned in literature. The underprivileged sections those who were resisted and registered their struggle through their clothing was against the local societal contradictions that may be labelled as internal colonialism following a historiography elaborated below.

Having been confronted with the hegemony of the traditional feudal Upper Caste Hindu society through the institution of castesim, social and cultural oppression is conceptualized as internal colonialism following the conceptual frame proposed by Swami Dharma Theertha (1992) in his book ‘History of Hindu Imperialism.’ This was taken further and extended in the text Desha Rashtravum Hindu Colonialisavum written by J.Raghu (2008). The term conceptualizes that Hinduism is a system of social, economic, political, religious, moral and intellectual imperialism produced by a class of crafty Brahmin-priests and “…the socio-religious order which has brought the whole Hindu race to their knees is more satanic than the worst foreign imperialism…” (Dharma Theertha, 1992, p.11), by invoking Nicolas Dirks theorizing on colonialism, we can say that internal colonialism has also been employed as a kind of cultural project of dominance with colonial forms of knowledge. Dirks says in his preface to the book, “Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge”, “…colonialism was itself a cultural project of control” (Cohn, 1996, p.x). As per Dirks‘ perspective it has been read that the concept of internal colonialism of Swami Dharma Theertha evolves through critically analysing the priest craft of Brahmanical knowledge. That is to say that like how the colonial project in order to control the people of the land with their knowledge is similar as the traditional and modern Brahmanical priest craft used the concept of pollution of caste on the right for clothing. Therefore, the Brahmanical oppression that involved with the concept of internal colonialism which acted through clothing is the main concern of this paper.

For analyzing this argument, the present paper has also taken the clothing culture of three lower castes in Kerala, the southernmost tip state of India in specific. The feudal traditional society operated with the interconnection between the land lords and the tenants since 18th century. The decisive lower castes like the Paraya, Pulaya and Izhova’ were
the tenants and were not allowed to live in good conditions or wear proper clothing. They were supposed to carry their social identity as markers with their clothing. Women of lower castes including Ezhava were not allowed to cover their upper body. Even the Sudra women who were relatively dominant to other lower castes women such as Paraya, Ezhava and Pulaya were not allowed to wear cloth on their upper body in front of the upper castes. A bride had to put her new bridal cloth Mundu in to mud or ash before she wore it as an act of ritual pollution for her marriage ceremony as she belonged to Paraya or Pulaya castes.

**Semiotic Counter Power: The Ritual Clothing Forms of Paraya**

Study on the lower caste clothing particularly according to their ritual or ceremonial context is important in order to understand the power of representation in clothing. It is due to a reason that their daily wear dresses are not sufficient to understand their sensibilities and resistance since they were not allowed to have the freedom of choice of what to wear in their daily life. As they were the agricultural slaves, their daily or working clothes carried only the context of oppression and submission whereas with the ceremonial or ritual context of clothing, they expressed their sensibilities and resistance. However, the present context is trying to study their clothing culture in general. Ceremonial dresses have to satisfy a decorative interest since they are intended to represent their deities as devilish characters. As per the form of imaginary characters, the accessories have been made. The headgear are large and approximately four or five times larger than the length of the face of the performer and circular in shape. From the frontal view, it has a convex character in terms of form and is designed with crescent moon like shapes and other geometrical elements. In order to give a demonic nature to the evil characters, they make the protruding teeth and enlarged ears and chest shield and to show it as female character, the female chest is made on the shield. The long hair is made out of the tender coconut leaves and they put or hold a bunch of these leaves to change the character of the wrist or palm and on their ankles, they wear bells which make the rhythmic sounds based on their footsteps. They don’t wear any foot wear. The ceremonial characters have three layers of clothing on their lower part. They wear a lower cloth at the internal part which is mostly in white, top of it; there is a cloth mostly red in colour which is up to the level of knee and at top of these two cloths the character wears a white cotton cloth. This manner of wearing the cloth creates conceptual clarity which is to do with a sense of spacing to their characters and a distinct visual feel as they mark the special context than the ordinary dressing. This understanding of characterization is very interesting when they are not allowed to wear like any other socially privileged caste people. Even, the ceremonial figures don’t wear any upper garment not as the part of the social discrimination but being a part of the ritual.

It is a fact that the ceremonial dress of Velichappad, on whom the deity Bhagavathy’s incarnation descends by the spirit possession during the festival, a piece of cloth is given few days before the festival. The performer dresses himself in the ceremonial dress, wearing a piece of red cloth round his neck, and a peculiar dress around his loin. He wears Chelamba (small bells) on ankles of his legs as an accessory. The ceremonial dress of Paraya takes a different form according to the occasion. The note on Paraiyans of Malabar by Mr. T.K. Gopal Panikkar says that, “In certain periods of the year, the Parayas enact as their deity with a makeover of large head dress, paintings on the body and face, tender coconut leaves by hanging loose around their waist (Thurston and Rangachary, 2009, Vol-VI p. 128). The terror striking figures such as these dancing with tom-tom sounds and blowing of horns represents the various temple deities that move around the village and visit houses in order to drive off any evil deities that are haunting the village (2009).

With the occult practices and the magic, Parayas have asserted themselves in the society. This was a part of their resistance in the society that never allowed them to be part of central discourse of the time. However, their rituals, magic, and godly activities are having a space in the society. It is to say that clothes or threads have an important part in their occult magic or ritual practices. On the occasion of the marriage-rituals, a cloth must be given to the bride by the bridegroom (2009, p.135). In the magical practices, Parayas use their articles like Cadian/ palm leaf or copper, silver sheet in order to draw the cabalistic figure while uttering the mantra (prayer) and rolls it up and ties it to a thread and gives it to the person who approaches him for it in order to get off from his/her evil influences. He or she is supposed to wear it on his waist or her neck. Sometimes, the magician recite the mantra and make several knots on the thread and gives it to the person to wear on their body especially neck or waist (2009, p.123). As part of the ritual that is performed in order to remove the sickness caused by the evil spirit or demon, Parayas catch the spirit in an old piece of cloth filled with flowers and parched rice and carry it away to jungle and submit it there with the sacrifice of a fowl (2009, p.136).

Clothing of the Parayas has been considered with their ritual, ceremonial and daily living context. The photographs of the ethnographic documentation show these interests of this community. In their daily life, it is evident that they wear only the lower garment made of cotton but at certain times, the elder persons keep a cloth on their shoulder. In their daily life, males do not keep a hair style but the
people associated with ceremonial assistance keep their hair tied on the side or on top of the head in a knot. However, the ceremonial performers have a different hair style since they keep a head gear or artificial hair made out of tender coconut leaves in order to attain the feel of that gigantic figure of their deity, their style would be different.

Women do not have a hair style except tying it together on top but slightly back of their head. They wear necklace and bangles. However, no other ornaments are visible. Women wear a single cloth tying in an ordinary manner in the front side of the body without any decorative folding. Similarly, like that of men, women are not supposed to wear any upper garment in order to cover their chest.

Having examined the ceremonial, ritual and daily life, the context of dressings of Paraya has been understood that the forms of their deities were not having any restriction from the upper caste people in terms of its form. This observation has two valid points:

- One is that the upper castes were concerned with them only in terms of production of wealth and the sense of obedience, and
- Two, the upper castes were fearful of Paraya cult of worship which is to do with their ancestors and the deities who are mainly out of the social context.

Conversations with the people through their deities are becoming a semiotic counter power and it is believed to protect them from social conflicts through dressing the deities invoking and enhancing counter power of knowledge. Thus, the context of the dress is relevant in terms of resistance. The shared traditions of the upper castes and the Parayas are seen in the interface of the deities; where at this juncture both of them share a moral universe. Therefore, the fear of occurring of transgressions of deities is ingrained in the minds of the upper castes for which ceremonial dresses are elaborated as they have a situational context. In terms of the pattern of daily dressing, they were devoid of ceremonies and were related on the basis of production and were enforced by social domination.

Symbolic Emancipation: The Erstwhile Tradition of Clothing of Ezhuva

The erstwhile tradition of clothing of Ezhuva, in Northern Kerala appearing like warriors in their marriage ceremony till the beginning of 20th century is probably an effective way of considering their concern for clothing and social life that always confronted the Hindu casteism. A pointed helmet on the head, the kacha cloth worn round the waist, the knife stuck in the girdle, drawn swords and shields in the hands of the bridegroom and his two friends shows the past of the community in terms of power and their social role (Anantha Krishna Iyer, 1981 Vol-I, p.278). On the occasion of the marriage ceremony, the bridegroom must wear a new and unwashed white cloth round the loins. Around the top of the loin cloth, he wears a narrow waist-band (kach) of silk, from fourteen to twenty one cubits in length, with the ends hanging in front and behind. A silk handkerchief (hanky) is thrown over the shoulders. He puts gold ear-rings in his ears, round the neck, a necklace called chakramala (wheel), a gold bracelet on the right wrist, gold rings on the fingers, a gold or silver-handled knife with a sheath of the same metal. The two companions are dressed almost similar to the bridegroom, but they wear neither necklace nor bracelet. The women wear as many ornaments as they please. Sisters of the bridegroom must wear bracelets on wrists, a necklace, and a virali (silk cloth) on the shoulders. The bracelet worn by men is called vala, and must be made of one piece of metal. Those worn by women are called kadakam, and must be made in two pieces (Thurston and Rangachary, 2009, Vol- VII, pp.56-57).

Though, Ezhuva were an agricultural community they were a part of traditional warrior hence their social position was better than the Parayas or Pulayas. It is reflected in their day to day clothing. In the matter of daily dress code, males wear round their loins a mundu of four cubits in length and two cubits and half to three cubits in breadth. When they go out, they wear a second mundu. In north Malabar, they wear a turban usually a coloured handkerchief. The males wear ear-ring and rings made of gold or set with rubies. The turban is a sign of assertion and a symbol of entitlement that announces a sense of power and their social role.

Conversations with the people through their deities are becoming a semiotic counter power and it is believed to protect them from social conflicts through dressing the deities invoking and enhancing counter power of knowledge. Thus, the context of the dress is relevant in terms of resistance. The shared traditions of the upper castes and the Parayas are seen in the interface of the deities; where at this juncture both of them share a moral universe. Therefore, the fear of occurring of transgressions of deities is ingrained in the minds of the upper castes for which ceremonial dresses are elaborated as they have a situational context. In terms of the pattern of daily dressing, they were devoid of ceremonies and were related on the basis of production and were enforced by social domination.
women can wear an ornament appropriate for a Nayar on a special occasion, but only by obtaining the permission from the Nayar landlord obtained through the ‘Thandan’ on a payment of fee (Thurston and Rangachary, 2009, Vol - VII, pp.98-99). This was to regulate the entire community from upward mobility and creating a new class that could be co-opted among the Thiyas. Although Ezhuva in northern Kerala has distinctive clothing for daily life, with context to ritual, the dress of marriage ceremony is relevant in the representation of power. While invoking their erstwhile interests of traditional dressing, their marriage could be seen in opposite to the social discrimination. The venation of subordinates along with the bride groom dressed up as a warrior for marriage ceremony indicates their valour of resistance. This public display is very important as they have to pay tax to their land lord for desiring to wear certain type of jewellery or dresses. In short, invoking the erstwhile clothing of Ezhuva, they achieve symbolic emancipation against the social restriction made by the upper caste Hindus. This was a moment when the traditional roles were reversed and on this day the memories were hitherto in the realm of the stories that were put on display.

**Empathising with Nature: Clothing Culture of Pulaya**

Pulayas expressed their presence in terms of clothing through occupation, social, custom and ceremonies. Pulaya, an agricultural labour community shaped up a distinctive clothing culture while understanding their environment. In this context, it is relevant to know the clothing of the Thanda Pulaya of Malabar and Cochin. The women’s garments name becomes the name of the sub-tribe, the Thanda Pulaya of the pulaya community. Only the women of the Thunda Pulaya wear this garment. The leaves of Thanda which are cut in to lengths of two feet woven at one end and tied round the their waist in such a manner that the strings unwoven hang loosely round the loins up to the knees. It is important to know that the cloth had significance in terms of power that is to say; there is curious custom among the Thanda Pulayan. If a Thanda Pulayan is thrashed with a Thanda garment then, he is disgraced in the eyes of his fellow men and he is not admitted in to their society (Anantha Krishna Iyer, 1981, Vol - I, p.110). The leaf garment disappears as the Mappilas and others who own, allow them to wear cotton cloths (Thurston and Rangachary, 2009, Vol - IV, p.20).

The distinctive dress of Pulaya in terms of occupation is concerned during the rainy season, in the field, they wear a few green leaves (plantain tree), tied around their waist and small cone shaped cap made of plantain leaf is worn on head. When at work in the open field, Pulaya women wear a big oval-shaped handless umbrella covered with palm leaves which they place on their back. It covers them as they bend forward and work. A Pulaya woman is provided with one long piece of thick cloth, to which she wraps around her waist. It does not reach at her knees and she does not cover her chest (Thurston and Rangachary, 2009, Vol - VII, pp.62-63). This dress is akin to the early tribal dresses when there was paucity of clothes, but in this context the availability of cloth and the need to restrict its wear show a new sense of hierarchy where the person is identified as scantily clad.

The custom of marriage has a key role in their clothing. In this context, clothing has certain common things even then, it changes from place to place and sub-tribe to sub-tribe (Anantha Krishna Iyer, 1981, Vol - I, p.100). A male slave receives seven cubits of cloth sufficient for two mundus and woman fourteen cubits for two muris (piece of cloth) (1981,p.91). The marriage ceremony consists in putting a brass ring on the bride’s finger (1981, p.100). In certain places, as part of the consent from the girls part; clothes are exchanged by her brother on the occasion of the meeting of both the parties but on an appointed day bridegroom along with other relative present clothes to the bride (1981, p.101). In northern part of Kerala, a muri, a thoda (ear disc) and two small mundus (piece of cloth) is given to the bride (1981, p.102). In southern part, the bridegroom is dressed in a white cloth with a hand kerchief tied over it and the solemnising of marriage takes place with tying of wedding necklace, a gold bead on a string (1981, p.103). After seven days, the gold thali is formally removed and it is replaced with a brass bead and brass ring in her ears and armlet (1981, p.105). This signifies a period of ritual engagement and disengagement with a liminal sense of prestige when the gold is adorned for a week on the body.

A leafy garment made of thanda plant is used for the auspicious hour of the day of the thanda kalyanam, marriage ceremony that takes place at the age of seven or eight of a thanda girl, but after this ceremony the thanda garment can be worn (1981, p.106). Prior to this ceremony the girl is left alone with a strip of areca bark (Thurston and Rangachary, 2009, Vol- VII, p.22). Among the Thanda Pulaya, the wedding presents to the girl consist of a piece of cloth and a Tali (marriage badge) made on conch shell (Anantha Krishna Iyer, 1981, Vol-I, p.106).

The daily dress of Pulaya is concerned with men wearing round the loin mundus which seldom extend below the knees. They wear a similar cloth on their shoulders. Some shave their head but some keep tuft of hair on the top of their head. Men don’t have ornaments. Women wear a kacha,
a piece of cloth seven cubits in length, round the loins, and seldom cover their breasts. They wear a black thread round the loin to which is attached a strip of cloth. The hair on the head is neither well parted nor coiled, but is merely tied into a knot pointing upward and slightly inclined to the back of the head. The ear holes are sufficiently dilated to contain wooden plugs, by the side of which there is another small hole containing ten to fifteen small iron rings. A necklace of glass beads of European manufacture, long enough to go several times, is worn round the neck. Brass armlets, sometime more than a dozen in numbers, are worn around each arm, sometime they are numerous as to extend as far as to the elbow (1981, p.123). Garments and accessories with limited use create minimum look to the Pulayas. The ethnographic documentation and photographs narrate this nature of them. Women tie their hair on top of the head and the men keep cloth round on his head. As they carry their working tools, it is evident that the men and women shown in these photographs are in their daily working clothes. They wear only on lower part of the body. Usually, they wear a cotton cloth that covers up to their knees. In certain situations, women wear a cloth on top of the cloth underneath. They tie a single plain cloth in front of their body. The young women shown in the picture wear bangles on both the wrist and necklace made of cheap material. The minimalism in the dress and the social proscription also shows that the agricultural work they do is devalued and this is socially legitimized by the theory of karma.

Since Pulayas are an agricultural community, their association and understanding with nature is subjective in its form. They empathize with nature and it is evident in their clothing. The second skin has converted as their first since it is concerned with nature is the paradigm where their perspectives on living go hand in hand with the environment. The packaging system present in nature would be the discourse level of Pulayas intervention with clothing. It has been looked in to a conceptual frame especially when it is considered that the upper caste Hindus were there in defence with regard to their dignity and self-respect through clothing.

Fashion can be considered as a signifier of power in terms of different forms of power in a Foucauldian sense (Foucault, 1982). Here, caste as a form of power exhorts through different mediums and cloth can be considered as one among them. The interesting thing here is that though these lower castes are being subjected to power objectification via a kind of prescribed resisting of clothing is arising through various forms of representations of clothing. The clothing concerned with Paraya in terms of ritual, Izhuva in terms of ceremony and Pulaya in terms of environment are to be considered as the silent dialogue against caste oppression. With the display of the social restriction onto these three lower caste communities, the main concerns of the upper castes were the execution of power and the protection of production. Since we have seen that dress was a marker of identity, avoidance and maintenance of distance and exclusion could be easily made by looking at the dress. The dominant codes of society were encoded in everyday life and it was unpacked and decoded on seeing a person as the dress was revealed. However, these things did not go unchallenged as resistance was seen in the ritual sphere and the ceremonial sphere. The long journey of social change viewed through dress and illustrated in this paper through photographs is a silent paradigm shift in terms of power relation through dress in pre-modern Kerala state.

Photos

Photo 1. THE PARAYANS DEVIL DANCE.
Source: Tribe and castes of Cochin vol.I

Photo 2. THE PARAYA WOMEN.
Source: Tribe and castes of Cochin vol.I
References


Notes

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2. Eight kash is equal to two paisa in Travancore, Kerala during 19th century.

3. In certain text the word Izhua has been spelled as Ezhava. Izhua and Ezhava are same community in Kerala

4. Sudra is the last or the lowest caste community according to Hindu Varna system

5. The ethnographic documentation uses this word devil dance with the title “The Parayans Devil Dance” of the photograph published in “the tribes and castes of cochin” volume 1 LK Anantha Krishna Iyer. It is a fact that these deities of Parayans were the forms through which they survived from the evil characters such as caste of the society.


7. The Izhua/Ezhua of Travancore are known as Thiya in Northern Kerala

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8. Here the *Thandan* in this specific context refers to the chief of the izhuva clan settlement.
9. Thanda is a water plant (*Isolepis articulate* Nees)
10. An ornament put on brides neck by the bride groom at the time of marriage symbolizing the solemnization of their marriage.
11. As part of the social slavery and degradation they are supposed to wear a necklace called “kallu maala”, a necklace made out of ordinary pebbles.
12. All photographs are extracted from books which have been acknowledged respectively. The books are all reprints hence do not fall within the purview of copy right.
Three Social Powers of Japanese Traditional Fashion

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Abstract
My paper discusses the following three powerful aspects of Japanese traditional fashion:

1. The power to subvert the social system - dressing above ones class in the Edo period, and subverting the sumptuary laws by creating new dyeing techniques or dressing up linings and underwear.

2. The power for social comment - the omoshiroi gara, war-time textiles or those that celebrate modernism in the Taisho and early Showa periods.

3. The power to remain socially relevant - evidenced in the present kimono renaissance, reviving and rewriting the kimono and its rule-governed system, turning it back from tradition to fashion.

While it may sound like a contradiction to discuss traditional fashion, I believe that Japan’s traditional dress, the kimono, has always exhibited the features associated with a fashionable system of dress. I hope to show, by giving some historical examples and comparing them with modern Western examples, how similar powerful features are present in both Western dress systems and also in the kimono system.

It is commonly thought in Western fashion theory, that fashion was born in the West, with Paris at the heart of fashion creation. Theorists have repeatedly said that this was because only the West had the economic and particularly the social conditions for a fashion system to emerge, see Simmel (1905), Veblen (1899) and others. Eastern countries: China, India and Japan are considered to have static social systems with unchanging clothing, which reifies the past, see Barthes (1966/2004), Lipovetsky (1994). However, I was unable to find any actual studies by a Western fashion theorist which support their assumption that the East is static and unchanging.

The first power that is evidenced in Japanese traditional fashion is the power to subvert. When Edo (present day Tokyo) grew into the most populated city on Earth in the 17th century, a vibrant textile industry grew up in the city, the dyeing largely centered in the Shinjuku area. At this period in time, there was no social flexibility in the class system. Four distinct groups made up the majority of society, the samurai, farmers, craftsmen and traders. Movement between them was virtually impossible. However, an inverse relationship grew up between the samurai and farmers, (kept poor through taxes), and the traders, who spent their newly found wealth on clothing. In the Japanese case, lack of social flexibility in the class system did not stop people from dressing up. The townspeople loved to parade around in their expensively decorated kimono. This was frowned upon by the ruling government which led to new dyeing techniques, new use of simple materials and even new concepts in beauty and fashion. The first trickle-up of Japanese fashion movements can be found in the Edo period.

The second power of Japanese traditional fashion is the power for social comment. I have found no other kind of clothing that approaches Japanese clothing in its ability to make social comment. Since the arrival of Westerners in the Meiji period, the Japanese man has been largely restricted to the plain and black or dark brown kimono, in the public sphere. He is most tightly bound in his social role and his kimono is the least expressive. However, what is suppressed in the public realm will emerge in the private one, and men’s jacket linings and underwear of the 20th century offer a fascinating record of the life and fantasies of Japanese people. These designs, called “omoshiroi gara” fall into several distinct categories: sports, entertainment, war, modernism and sex.

Keywords
Subversion
Social Commentary
Social Relevance
Tradition
Technology
The third power of Japanese traditional fashion is the power to remain socially relevant. While Western theorists have seen only an unchanging canvas because the structure of kimono has not changed significantly, they have failed to realize that whereas Western fashion is about change in shape, the choice of changing shape is arbitrary. Japanese fashion is not about changing shape, it is about changes in the surface pattern and the way in which the garment is worn. The present day revival in the kimono world is a democratic revival. Using the internet and alternative sources for the purchase and education of kimono, new makers and new kimono designs are appearing, and old kimono are being dug out and worn in new ways. Furthermore, the kimono fits in perfectly with the global movement towards quality and long-lasting fashion, and answers those consumer producers who want to craft their own looks and images. It is slow fashion which declares its roots and is thus at the heart of what contemporary fashion discourse is all about.

Introduction
Non-Western countries have their own fashion systems, which is not acknowledged in a large body of Western fashion theory. This study demonstrates how the Japanese kimono embodies similar powers to those of Western fashion. To show that kimono has power to subvert the social system, as Western fashionable clothing can, I have conducted a historical analysis. I highlight here historical work about clothing in the Edo period (1603-1868). To show that kimono is able to expose the social preoccupations of the day, I have examined historical records and extant textile samples from the early 20th century that enlighten us about the thinking of Japanese people and their preoccupations and interests at that time. To show how kimono has the power to remain relevant, I have employed market research data, studied how kimono wearers use the internet, been a participant observer in several kimono wearing groups, and conducted extensive interviews with kimono wearers.

Literature Review
Of necessity a multi-faceted approach was taken, examining both history, through garments and documentation, and contemporary data from the industry and wearers. Therefore, this work has been influenced by a wide range of literature. Theoretically, the kimono is examined in the light of western fashion research. Almost all fashion theory: Bell (1976), Evans (2003), Baudot (1999), Entwistle (2000), Barnard (2007), Lipovetsky (1994), Barthes (1966/2006), Hollander (1993) and Kawamura (2006), Welters and Lillethun (2007), locate fashion in the West, and a Western location is implied in Laver (1937, 1969/1986), Veblen (1894/2003) and Baudrillard (1976/2011). This is beginning to be questioned, but there is still a long way to go before Eurocentric bias is overcome in discourses of fashion. Welters and Lillethun (2007) and Riello and McNeil (2010) argue, there has been little research on fashion systems beyond Europe yet. There is a large body of research on the kimono, of which the most important works are those that set the kimono in a sociological context. Of these the works of Nagasaki (2006, 2009), Maruyama (2007, 2008), Kondo (1980, 1985, 2002), Dalby (1992) Minnich (1963) Yamauchi (2009) and Endo and Yamauchi (2010) have been the most useful. The anthropological work of Kon (1973, 2007) was the most important among a body of anthropology and material culture studied to understand the relationships between people and their things. Market research data was also used to established the state of the kimono market today.

Data and Method
A hybrid methodology is necessary, in order to analyze on the levels of the symbolic and the concrete, the lived and the global perspectives (Saukko 1998). The fashion industry itself uses multiple sources of data and methods for market research and trend prediction. Using triangulation a comprehensive overview can be obtained, revealing the kimono as a powerful garment: both deeply signifying and in constant metamorphosis, in order to meet the needs of its wearers. Japanese fashion as subversion has been put together from the writers on kimono cited above. I have then performed a comparison with a body of Western fashion theory, in order to demonstrate that although the clothing was different, the ways that the clothing is used as a social tool, (for example to index wealth), is similar in both kimono and Western clothing.

In Japanese fashion as social comment, the historical documents and extant textile images have been compared with world wide art movements, and also with the social and political situation in Japan and how it is revealed through clothing. Japanese fashion as continually relevant examines the contemporary kimono. Yano Research conducted a white paper on the whole of the kimono industry in 2008. This showed the state of the kimono as a product in the market. The interview data was obtained from kimono wearers who were accessed through the snowballing technique. They were between the ages of 20 and 50, (the age group that Yano identifies as a significant new age group), and were comprised of 5 men.
and 7 women from various walks of life. Interviews were open-ended and were conducted in coffee shops. Kimono wearing groups were visited regularly over a period of about 3 years from (2008-2012). Over the same period internet data was collected through searching the number of kimono blogs and making a kimono fandom page on facebook.

Results

1. Japanese fashion as subversion

The Edo period sheds light on the deep relationship between politics, status and clothing. Social mobility is cited by Western fashion theorists as a condition for development of fashion systems. Those in the lower classes imitate the clothing of those in the upper, leading to a trickle down spread of fashion from upper to lower classes (Simmel). However, the results of my examination of Edo period clothing history, demonstrate that a system of fashion developed at this time without any social mobility. It was not social mobility, but the inverse relationship between class and the distribution of wealth, that led to people’s ostentatious dressing up.

The feudal social system of Tokugawa ruled Edo period Japan had four strict castes, comprised of samurai, farmers, craftsmen and traders, (and also nobles and various unclean people). The military government was particularly concerned with maintaining social order. The growing city of Edo presented a problem as there arose an inverse relationship between social status and wealth. Samurai (unemployed military), and farmers (heavily taxed), had less economic power than the lower classes. The newly wealthy merchants chose to spend their income on dress, as an effective way of displaying their new-found wealth. To dress above one’s station was considered a serious offense by the government and could be severely punished by heavy fines, confiscation of property or even banishment. According to Minnich (1963:198) commoners began to dress in the most lavish and expensive kosode, requiring months of labour. Maruyama (2008) argues that the townspeople’s kosode shaped the visual image of the new city, exemplifying Breward’s (2004), theory that there is a strong relationship between sartorial appearance and the new urban environment. These displays of wealth were continually held in check by the rank conscious government who aspired to a realm of frugality and samurai ideals. Slade says of this period:

Merchants in Edo had begun to amass large fortunes and to live in a manner which the samurai believed suitable only for themselves. The sumptuary laws sought to reinforce the distinctions between classes, encourage frugality and maintain a neo-Confucian system of moral conduct. The concern would appear to have been that the morals and discipline of the samurai class should not be undermined by ostentatious displays of wealth amongst their social inferiors (Slade 2009:36).

Minnich documents the story of one Mrs Ichikawa, a merchant’s wife, who loved showing off her kosode so much that she stationed herself in Ueno Park when she knew that the Shogun would be there, in 1681. On discovering that she was a merchant’s wife, the shogun had her and her husband’s property confiscated and they were banned from Edo (1963:208). Her crime was to appear to be above her station. Another example, according to Nagasaki (speech 2013), was the enlarging of sleeves from a tube sleeve, suitable for working in, to a large dangly sleeve, such as nobles wore. The sleeves were not the same as nobles’ sleeves, but were an adaption for the purpose of showing that the wearer no longer had to work. They are thus an example of Veblen’s theory of conspicuous leisure.

Starting in 1683, a series of sumptuary laws was enacted. Importation of woollen cloth and gold thread was forbidden, and neither was to be used for making kosode (Wool was a luxury fabric as it was not produced in Japan). Gold brocade, embroidery and fine kanoko shibori, tie-dyeing were next to be outlawed (Minnich 1963:209). Following this, new orders came almost weekly. “No one was allowed to pay more than two hundred pieces of silver for a kosode. Feb 5, 1683” (Minnich 1963:209). The following laws were particularly severe.

February 24: No maidservant, on pain of imprisonment, shall wear any bit of silk on collar, sleeves, or cap. Detectives will be sent out to enforce this law.

May 4: For special observance by women: the law must not be evaded by wearing richly decorated kimono which were owned before promulgation of the edict. No decoration of any kind is permitted, not even an embroidered family crest (Minnich 1963:209).

Neither ostentatious displays of wealth nor sumptuary laws were unique to Japan. Costume historian Ribeiro (1986:64) says such laws in England were originally said to be for the protection of the native textile industry, but in reality were to protect the upper from being challenged by the middle classes. According to Jones and Stallybrass, sumptuary laws are enormously difficult to police. “The sumptuary laws in England were more honored in the breach than the observance...” (Jones
and Stallybrass 2007:188). In Japan they were sometimes referred to as “three day laws” as they were forgotten within three days. One could ignore or obey the new laws but in Edo, the people did neither. To ignore them was too dangerous, but to obey them did not suit their fashionable tastes. They could not give up fashion, so instead they adapted it. They made it oblique and subtle instead of straight, and hid it, taking it underground.

New technology - usually motivated by a desire for profit - was developed as a means of subverting the severe clothing prohibitions. When extravagant and labour consuming techniques were banned, new technologies were developed to reproduce them. Couching replaced embroidery, and imitation kanoko shibori, fine tie-dyed dots, was stencil dyed onto kosode using resist paste. The new yuzen dyeing process was a far quicker and easier way to decorate the surface than by using complex outlawed tie-dye or embroidery, so it flourished. Slade says that:

Edo period sumptuary edicts were, in a practical sense, directed at controlling the more visible displays of social status, and they were issued with increasing frequency in the seventeenth century. This is perhaps one of the influences on the development of the more internalized aesthetic of iki amongst the merchant classes, stressing details, and simplified perfection (Slade 2009:36).

Eventually the laws accelerated the move away from gaudy, ostentatious, big designs to new concepts of beauty embodying simple stripes and plain kimono. Easily dyed browns and blues became popular, while displays of opulence, if used, were hidden inside kimono. This understatement came to be called iki. Underwear was not covered by the clothing edicts, so people continued to dye bright red underwear. Ukiyo prints show many scenes of Edo people wearing plain brown outer kimono, with wonderfully coloured layers inside. When this change in taste occurred, the people began to celebrate subtle and plain clothing for its simple beauty, but they would also appropriate the extravagantly made kosode inside the garments, on their linings or underwear, if they so wished. Edo komon and indigo and white cotton stencilled yukata became popular among working people at this time, and perhaps represent the first trickle up cases of fashion diffusion in Japan. Dalby says:

Iki denies the obverse and obvious. And the notion that what is truly valuable is hidden has political reverberations. As a mode of expression, iki flaunted the rebellious heart while concealing it (1993:60).

In his work on Japanese taste as iki chic, the philosopher Kuki gives the following explanation:

It boldly brackets everyday life, and engages in autonomous play in a manner disinterested and purposeless, as it breathes a neutral air, transcending all of life around (Kuki 2008:50).

Iki was more than just a style. It was representative of an attitude about life and expressed a cool detachment from ones possessions. Iki was subversive resistance, rather than compliance. It appears to fly in the face of communicative theories of fashion, and Goffman’s theory of the presentation of self, which assume that clothing communicates through the surface. The Japanese fashion system is not only concerned with the surface, but also with the principle of wrapping and with depth. It caters to multiple audiences, and there is more to it than meets the eye. This is in line with many other aspects of Japanese culture that demonstrate the importance of wrapping.

The principle of wrapping as a social phenomenon would appear to operate on many different levels, and in my view, an understanding of its importance in Japanese society can aid an understanding of many of the so-called paradoxes pointed out by commentators on Japan (Hendry 1994:30).

2. Japanese fashion as social comment

In the Taisho period, (1912-1926) the history reveals strong trend-based clothing behaviour. Taisho no Kimono, Taisho Kimono (1980) edited by Kondo, reveals detailed kimono trends. Minami writes that Mitsukoshi Department Store set up its first trend hunting committee in 1907, establishing itself as a fashion hub for the newest kimono and collar designs (Minami 1980:14). Women flocked there to buy the latest embroidered collars for kimono underwear. Kato writes that designs changed seasonally, and were related to current events, (Kato 1980:47). In 1915 Mitsukoshi Department Store held an Egyptian art exhibition following which lilies, mosaics and papyrus designs became all the rage. Kimono collar trends included stained glass, Indonesian chintz and western flower designs such as roses and tulips. Yasuda writes that not only fashionable motifs but also preferred textiles and colours changed each season (Yasuda 1980: 22).
Art nouveau was a world-wide macro movement, radically altering fashion. The S shape of corset and bustle vanished, replaced by a straight, kimono-like line, and fashion designer Vionnet introduced the ‘kimono sleeve’ to Western fashion. While the West was busy learning Japan and kimono’s lines, Japan was eager to absorb the art nouveau arabesque plant designs, which were originally largely inspired by Japanese artworks. Art deco, with its emphasis on modernism, line, shape and colour, found a perfect home on kimono because kimono fashion is all about inner and outer surfaces rather than shape. Jackson writes:

The evolution of art nouveau and art deco in Europe and America owed much to inspiration provided by the arts of East Asia, and it was this cultural affinity that gave the styles such special resonance in Japan. The striking motifs on these kimono thus reflect both East and West. By wearing such garments, a Japanese woman was able to simultaneously embrace both the traditional and the modern (Jackson 2005:31).

Kimono remained in vogue for all of the 1920s and 30s, and was still worn by half of all Japanese women in the 1950s. The history of Western fashion in Japan is, in reality, less than 100 years old. The height of fashion in the 1920s was an art nouveau or art deco inspired, brightly coloured meisen kimono from the Isezaki area. Originally marketed as home wear, later as a fashion item, meisen enjoyed a boom in the 20s, in spite of the economic depression. Middleman Inanishi started the magazine, Senshoku no Ryuko Dyeing and Trends in 1919, “for the express purpose of stimulating new production and enhancing quality through the transmission of fashion information” (Yamauchi 2009:12).

Throughout the modernist period the kimono continued to incorporate novel images. In addition to florals, images of buildings, Western goods, and technologies of transportation appeared in kimono. In a 1937 essay, Kon wrote that for the previous two or three years, Western clothing had lost its fashionable edge. With its new and interesting designs kimono was more fashionable. He argued that the only recent change in Western clothing had been in the type of cloth and the addition of scarves and hats. This indicated a loss of direction, because fashionable change in Western clothing is about the change in shape (Kon 1973:170-171), whereas fashion in kimono is about surface design.

Men’s kimono since the Meiji period have been almost universally plain or striped, like Western suits. However kimono, with its flat geometric canvas, and multiple layers it offered perfect surfaces for personal expression, which were not available on Western clothing. A world showing designs of movies, transportation, travel postcards, sports events and erotic images is found in men’s inner wear. Removed from the inexpressive public arena, in accordance with principles of iki, magnificently detailed designs, provide a unique record of lifestyle, interests and preoccupations of Japanese. Particularly worth mention are propaganda textiles, which show a love for country which could not be expressed in alien Western clothing.

Japan of the 30s was laced with discourses of war. After fighting China and Russia, it was extending its influence throughout the Pacific region. Propaganda permeated every aspect of people’s lives and nationalism became fashionable. The kimono was nearer to the Japanese heart than modern skirts, dresses or suits. These war textiles were market generated propaganda for the home front and there was a base of consumers for such garments which express the desire for victory in battle. These designs are to be found on nagajuban, under kimono, and the linings of haori, jackets. Like meisen, these faddish textiles were once rejected for their poor quality, but are now collectibles as they expose the heart of the Japanese nation at this period. Detailed images of specific models of planes, ships, tanks, flags, binoculars, scores of patriotic songs or bombs are found. These garments are the opposite of the fast fashion that is made everywhere, to go anywhere. They are the product of one specific location and moment in time. They also demonstrate the principle of depth and how Japanese fashion caters to different gazes as they would have been seen only by intimates in the process of undressing.

3. Japanese fashion as continually relevant
Yano Research White Paper

The road from kimono to Western dress was never as fast or complete as has previously been described. Market research For Kansai Ministry of Trade and Industry by Yano (2008) found only 4.7% of women had never worn and had no interest in wearing kimono. They have not been buying kimono, in spite of a high level of interest in kimono. The reasons given were: a) It is too difficult to wear by myself (71.2%), b) I have nowhere to wear it (58.8%), c) I think it will cost a lot (48.5%). These perceptions were industry-generated. We are now witnessing a critical social juncture with new ways of understanding and “doing” kimono emerging.
Interview Data

The experience of kimono wearers interviewed is diametrically opposed to the three beliefs of non-wearers above. Kimono is comfortable, can be worn anywhere, perhaps with the exception of work, and affordable. Wearers criticized the kimono industry and by-passed official channels for education and purchasing kimono. They prefer used kimono shops, flea markets and the internet. Wearers see kimono as fashionable, long-lasting and ecological, with links to culture and history making it richer than Western fashion. Fashion and tradition were not framed as oppositional but as being incorporated within the same clothing. Men, (who showed no interest in western dress) began to be interested in fashion through kimono, experimenting with different colours and patterns and dressing for the gaze of others (as kimono is the marked form of dress in Japan today). Kimono wearers across age and gender boundaries are interested in the presentation of self through dress. As coordination of kimono, obi and accessories enables customization, the same kimono can be used across generations without looking old-fashioned. The geometric shape was seen as a strength. It is wrapped and fitted in the dressing process, thus fitting more comfortably than Western clothing which makes the body submit to standard sizing. Wearers see kimono as being a healthy choice, improving posture, breathing and movement.

Wearers want cheap casual kimono, which can easily be appropriated to construct a wide range of images. Most are not buying expensive hand-crafted kimono but used garments or prêt-à-porter ones, which appears to be the way of the future, as Nakamura, of Tansu Ya chain, predicted (2006). This is in line with evolution of fashionable garments in western dress, such as ball dresses or lounge suits.

Kimono as national dress, an item of social distinction or cultural capital was not discussed by the wearers. They were concerned with kimono as dress, fashionable or fun clothing. They demonstrated a desire to democratically share knowledge and increase the number of wearers. Kimono wearing emerges as a meaning-making practice, with creative dressing resulting in exciting looks, and kimono practice a way of connecting with people. Kimono connects not only with a rich Japanese cultural heritage, with deceased relations and with memories, but also with new friends and groups. Kimono emerges as a ‘relational cement’ between people. It makes conversation easier, and people become more gentle and sociable with each other.

Kimono Wearing Groups

Kimono wearing groups emerged in 1999 when Kimono de Ginza provided a ‘legitimate space’ for men to wear kimono, when it was seen as exclusively for women. Since then kimono groups have sprung up all over Japan. There are still more women but the number of men wearing kimono is increasing fast. These groups are a democratizing force, providing a safe space for inexperienced wearers. Knowledge, experience and kimono are passed on freely, enabling younger and poorer people to partake. Groups cut across gender, class and age boundaries, being composed of ordinary people wearing ordinary kimono. Groups provide the pleasures of being under the gaze, and of consumption. One group, Kimono Project breaks with this tradition somewhat, linking kimono with community service, and Edo period ecology and community minded citizenship. These groups are relatively non-hierarchical contrasting with hierarchical kimono schools, where lessons, tests and licenses must be paid for and one moves up ranks.

To say that kimono groups have not been under the watchful eye of both media and police would be untrue, and Kimono de Ginza have been warned not to block the streets. Kimono Jacks move around in order to avoid such problems. Police surveillance could be considered the modern day equivalent of the suppressive Edo period sumptuary laws which aimed to stop the public visual display of wealth. Kimono wearers appearing in large groups on the street, walk a fine line with the authorities. In the modern day case it is the size of the group, rather than the display of wealth that is the problem, but it seems ironic that the wearing of native clothing should become policed. If kimono wearers can be seen as a subcultural force of resistance in any way whatsoever, it is in their rebellion against a fast and anonymous fashion in favour of one that is rooted in a specific location, and lasts for several generations.

Internet Data

Until now technological developments were largely in production of the kimono, though printing developments in the Edo period birthed new marketing techniques. There continue to be technological developments in the silk and textile industries, but the present communications revolution, with its impact on the dissemination of information appears to have an even greater influence on the kimono world, than do new technologies of production. It is through digital channels that a resurgence of kimono wearing is being generated. The Internet emerges as a key tool in the dissemination of information about kimono. It is an effective message board for announcements about events. Mixi, Twitter, and Facebook are the favoured platforms for spreading news. Kimono wearing groups would
not have developed without the Internet. YouTube, blogs, forums and Mixi, provide platforms for education about all aspects of kimono, including how to dress, thus posing a challenge to the hegemonic kimono school. One interviewee described the benefit of being able to ask a question about dressing on Mixi, and have numerous answers within a few hours.

The online kimono community is important. Many a meaningful relationship has been forged through networking and the sharing of learning, advice, experiences and information. Often online activities lead to real life meetings and friendships. Though kimono groups are not bound by a specific, small community location, by kinship bonds or lesson fees, they are bound together by a strong desire to communicate and share about a specific interest. They are bound by choice. The internet is also birthing a generation of kimono wearers who have never been to Japan. It provides the only source of kimono and is the preferred way to learn to dress without a teacher. The biggest significance of this group is that all their kimono and their kimono knowledge comes from outside official channels, providing proof that the kimono schools are no longer a necessity. Internet activity between these non-Japanese kimono wearers and Japanese kimono wearers is increasing, and some non-Japanese wearers are well-known in Japan for their dressing skills.

I traced growth on one Japanese blogging host site, ブログ村 blog mura, blog village over three years. There was a three fold increase in blogging about fashion and a corresponding increase in kimono blogging, indicating that it is a part of the general increase of interest in fashion. In particular, by 2012, there were so many kimono blogs that six new categories were created. Rates of increase in the various types of blogs are different. For example, increases of tenfold in the areas of kitsuke, dressing, men’s kimono, wasou, Japanese fashion are recorded. Also, everyday kimono blogs outnumber furisode, formal kimono, blogs by ten to one. This data all points to the fact that the people are interested in and would like to wear kimono as everyday dress. Few people are interested in kimono as a form of social or cultural distinction - which would be demonstrated by a higher number of formal kimono blogs. A large increase in the kitsuke, dressing category testifies a change from wanting metaknowledge to wanting practical knowledge. A tenfold increase in blogs about men’s kimono indicates that there is growing number of men interested in kimono.

Meisen Revival

Today’s kimono revival is about ordinariness. Cheap kimono made from meisen were out of favour for many years, and production has almost ceased, but since 2002, among antique kimono lovers, meisen kimono have enjoyed a revival. There have been exhibitions of meisen kimono around the world, and many publications on the meisen phenomenon, increasing their credibility within Japan. There are parallels to be drawn between the rise of the mass-produced meisen kimono in the Taisho period - originally lowly home wear - the fashion movements of the Edo period and of the present day. A used meisen kimono offers similar attractions to those it offered in the 1920s: durability, bright bold art nouveau or deco designs which appear strikingly modern, and exciting use of colour on a cheap kimono. A Western parallel can be seen in the rise of jeans. Indeed, meisen is often seen as the ‘jeans of the kimono world’. At the forefront of the 21st century revival of everyday kimono, Taisho style can be found. Perhaps it is because of meisen’s ordinariness, ‘jeanniness’, its accessibility, that it resonates with wearers, or perhaps it is because it makes a bright and bold cheerful statement, in a period of economic decline. The ‘zeitgeist’ of Taisho speaks to kimono wearers now, and the power of Taisho in design and spirit lives on.

Discussion

In this section the findings are placed in a global context. Evidence shows that subversive dressing took place in Japan, just as in the West, in the form of conspicuous consumption which led to sumptuary laws. The inverse relationship between social status and available economic power was enough to enable dressing above one’s station, without there being social mobility. If, as Dalby says, Western clothing began to seem more practical in the 20th century, this begs the question why women stuck to their kimono for so long. Western items were originally prohibitively expensive, but other forces were at work. Lack of cultural, seasonal, historical or contemporary discourses in surface patterns meant that shaped Western clothing was aesthetically limiting for Japanese. Neither did Western dress offer inner layers for propaganda or hidden patterns. Functionality was the only vector on which it could be sold, and functionality is the enemy of fashion. Perhaps Japanese women did not choose Western clothing for so long because they wanted to remain in fashion.

I examined global trends in order to establish whether innovative kimono dressers have any relationship to these trends. Increasingly branding has come to be seen as an emotional marketing tool, and the customer is framed as a co-creator, looking for an experience in a product. Kimono can be framed as a personal brand, providing similar satisfactions in terms of quality, to Western fashion’s
branded goods. Customers are requiring core and foundational values and ecological products. Innovative kimono wearers can be considered leaders or ‘early adopters’, who first take up new styles as they begin to diffuse through the population. They are kimono producer / consumers. Campbell (2005), describes a new group of consumers which he calls ‘Craft Consumers’. Previously consumers have been framed as ‘dupes, rational heros or postmodern identity seekers’, but he argues that the difference between industrial and craft production is whether the machine controls the worker, or the worker controls the machine. The craft consumer is involved in an act of creative self-expression. He agrees with Miller (1998) that consumption has ‘dealienating potential’. Craft consumers transform products and their meanings, by bringing “skill, knowledge, love and passion” to their consuming practice. Their purchases are raw materials which they customize and personalize. Singularity and uniqueness are brought to their garments through hand tailoring. Campbell argues that a rise in craft consumption represents a reaction against increasing commodification, and the two phenomenon go hand in hand.

Further evidence of a rise in crafting comes from trend forecasting expert Morace of Future Concept Lab, Milan. ‘Since the Global Economic Crisis following 9/11, there is emerging not a ‘new trend’, but a ‘new renaissance’, which is luxury democratizing and becoming part of the everyday, and also a spread of ‘creativity, authenticity and a spirit of craftsmanship’” (Morace 2010). This is evidenced in people buying less quantity, but more quality, such as the purchase of designer jeans. Everyday life becomes a workshop where “accessible luxury and the evolution of basicness” can meet. Morace says:

Fashion that makes original use of materials and available resources, and puts into circulation critical projects in which the originality of style, comfort and sensorality are not in contradiction with sustainability, is popular, as are clothing garments and accessories that distance themselves from the rules of short-lived fashion and present a ‘natural’ life cycle (Morace 2010:105).

He describes a return to true qualities, meaning a return to substance and authenticity rather than concentration on the surface and image. True quality is thus more important than communicative ability. Consumers, he says, ‘have unmasked the game, and the toy has broken’. These are global trends in fashion and consumption, now being played out, and this puts individualistic kimono wearers at the forefront of such developments. Kimono is by nature about depth, quality, sensorality, and long-lastingness. It is in line with vintage and slow fashion. Kimono fashionista’s bring to kimono, obi and accessories their art and craft skills to construct new outfits which are personalised expressions of authentic modern kimono beauty, placing them at the forefront of global trends in consumption. Kimono today has become a bond between people not because it is national costume or high status but because it embodies a human level, depth and intimacy that is not found in expendable Western clothing. In the face of kimono, fast fashion — and Japanese fashion is perhaps faster than anywhere else — begins to look faddish. Kimono embodies much more than fashion, being wrapped and tied. In our world of loose bonds and impersonal technology, people across all ages and professional statuses are choosing to be wrapped and tied, to kimono and through kimono to others, restoring intimacy and human connections to their busy lives.

References
Hendry, J. (1991) “Humidity, hygiene, or ritual care: some thoughts on wrapping as a social
Abstract

The beginnings of the modern manifestation of the aesthetic of kawaii in Japan appear to come from the early 1970s, a period immediately following significant political and social unrest. The university riots and the dramatic coup d’état attempt and suicide by Yukio Mishima mark the end of violent action as a legitimate strategy by both the right and the left. The period that followed the perceived failure of physical force to affect social and political change in Japan was called the disillusioned calm (shirake), a period when alternate strategies for social change and new approaches to existing power structures were experimented with. This paper seeks to examine the emergence of kawaii in this period and its sociopolitical meanings and seeks to locate the pleasures of cute fashion in an ironic mode of expression. Recent psychological research has focused on kawaii aesthetics as promoting careful behavior and narrowing attentional focus both of which have clear social and political implications and could even be argued to place kawaii in the realm of a political statement. Narrowed attentional focus induced by kawaii-triggered positive emotion that is associated with approach motivation might even be argued to be a desired cultural state in consensus celebrating hierarchically and functionally stratified Japanese society. Neoteny and paedomorphism can be read as alternate social strategies in this light and their attendant sartorial forms understood as having political origins. Naturally, clothes always exceed their original instrumentality and kawaii has now developed a logic far exceeding its sociocultural origins. Yet as one of kawaii’s major areas of manifestation, along with ephemeral merchandise and gendered social interaction, fashion becomes a place where the perceived lack of political meaning (nonpori) would actually seem to have very potent political symbolism. The cute handwriting craze (marui ji, burikko ji, koneko ji) of the 1970s was another manifestation of youth seeking their own language and ability to express emotions outside of a patriarchal system that placed Japanese language and culture as unassailable and highly serious. The growth of the cute aesthetic was an expression of the loss of legitimacy of that seriousness. Cute handwriting, influenced by the romanization of the Japanese language gave school-children an awareness of the arbitrary nature of their previously unassailable language, culture and social structure. Cute undermines the seriousness formally demanded by the hierarchical nature of Japanese society. The pleasure of cute is similar to kitsch; a reflexive pleasure of irony. Cute fashions that express notions of innocence and purity do so without reference to the original referent; virginity in Christian patriarchal culture. Cute is not the absence of adulthood but an ironic comment on it and its undesirability. Starting with the popularity of Pink House from 1973, founded by ex-revolutionary Waseda students, this paper will examine various fashions that used the cute aesthetics that went on to become a dominant modality of Japanese contemporary fashion.

Keywords

Kawaii
Cute
Shirake
Neoteny
Irony

The student unrest at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, known as the zenkyōtō era, revolved in its specifics around the relationship between the university and the state (Takahara, 1996: 70-71) and this was also a proxy for generational resistance to patriarchal, hierarchical and social structure in general. In 1968, modern Japan was a nation where protest and resistance were seen as a legitimate, effective and even cool way to affect social change, challenge the acquiescence to the United States, replace hierarchical structures with more democratic ones and resist the dominating logic of materialist, capitalist culture. The notion of struggle was central to the way student activism
(gakusei undō) sought to redefine the character of Japan’s democracy (McCormack, 1971: 37-52). A distinguishing feature of the student agenda was an attitude of antipathy towards the existing institutions and ideas that governed Japanese society. There was also a corresponding belief in individual and collective agency outside of existing institutions. Maturity, agency, active participation in democracy, being informed, unified action (bōitsu kōdō) and resisting authority were all part of this youth identity seen clearly throughout this period.

Yet despite the enormity of the university struggle and its potential political importance its inability to define itself effectively and translate action into tangible social change led to its collapse by the early 1970s. Partly it was the victory of the allure of materialist culture into which the Japanese economy and culture was rushing. The symbolic space of the state over which established and new groups were fighting was actually being abandoned as the logic of business and capital and the dreams of advertising and materialism replaced the nation as dominant in the public imagination. The government also successfully decentralized the student movement by building rural campuses, such as Tsukuba University, moving potential protest out of Tokyo. The rise of diverting popular culture provides an opium of the people reason as well. Conceptually the confluence of ideals, excessive violence, and radically different impetus for activism were also potential reasons for failure. Also the different ways ‘the people’ were conceptualized meant that a unified idea for what Japan could be, and how the individual and collective agents would act to realize it failed to materialize. This left, perhaps ironically, a conceptual void which was filled by a nationalist sense of an essentialised, primordial Japan that existed regardless of temporal political machinations (Yoshikawa, 1995: 125-126).

It is this sense of the failure of agency, the inevitability of social and economic structures, and surrender to materialism and popular culture that I argue the modern form of the Japanese aesthetic of kawaii emerged from. It emerged, however, not as a acquiescence to it but as an ironic form of disassociation and resistance. I will also argue that the pleasure that derives from being and observing kawaii is not just the pleasure of desirability or of being deferred to or played up to in a normally gender-based power relationship but an ironic pleasure of knowing expression, similar to kitsch and camp, that undermines the seriousness of the dominant cultural values. Self-styling and fashion use a perceived lack of political meaning (nonpori) that actually involve a potent political symbolism. It is the part of any ideological agenda to establish itself as non-ideological and therefore true and natural (Zižek, 1994) and both the patriarchal and hierarchical establishment of Japanese culture and undermining elements such as kawaii present themselves as non-ideological and natural.

Sharon Kinsella (1995) has argued that the modern form of Japanese kawaii originated from the disillusioned calm (shirakē) after the student riots and that manifestations amongst school children predate any commercial forms. The forms of rounded handwriting such as circular letters (maru-ji), kitten letters (koneko-ji) and paedomorphic letters (burikko-ji) were all popular in the early 1970s and constitute an attempt by youth to establish their own language and express their own emotional needs outside the cultural establishment which placed Japanese language as unassailable and highly serious. Japanese youth, denied a legitimate voice in the Japanese state with the failure of the student riots, sought to establish new means of expression in a social strategy that deliberately ignores mainstream values. Mainstream commercial interests, however, quickly recognized the aesthetic and Sanrio launched the quintessentially cute character, Hello Kitty in 1974.

The timeline for establishing kawaii as an aesthetic form after the student riots is not perfect. Osamu Tezuka had noticed and adopted the large eyes and other cute elements of Walt Disney’s Snow White (1937) and Bambi (1942) incorporating the cute aesthetic into his own major work such as Astro Boy (tetsuwan atomu) as early as 1952. Tezuka has stated that in his manga and anime, he sought to be cuter than Disney, via bigger eyes and the innocent earnestness of young characters, with the conscious purpose to erase the caricatures of evil Japanese with small eyes in American war propaganda. Yet the step from enjoying the aesthetic of cute in objects and texts, arguably even also found in Edo period netsuke (Sugiyama, 2006) and even The Tale of Genji to it becoming a desirable form of self-styling and fashion comes later. It is also arguably linked to the fashion phenomenon of youthquake (Vreeland, 1965:112) where from the 1960s the first post World War II generation seeks to not imitate older peoples’ fashion styles but define themselves against their parents clothing. This was the first reversal in fashion where a top-down (or trickle down) influence flow is replaced by a street-up (or bubble-up) flow, with designers, and upper-classes imitating the styles of the street. The post-war desire for participatory democracy and potential of resistance, both in the form of protest, and in the symbolic form of clothing was a universal result of horrors of war, nuclear terror, the rise of popular music and the revolutionary aspiration of 1960s social movements.
Brian McVeigh (2000) has argued directly that kawaii fashion, particularly in school uniforms and their deliberate alternation by their wearers constitutes a direct form of resistance against the dominant, male, productive, official ideology of uniformity. For the powerful bureaucratizing forces of statism and corporate culture kawaii represents a forms of resistance associated with women, children, leisure and self-expression. McVeigh also notes that this resistance is very quickly co-opted by the corporate and bureaucratic institutions it resists and as it does there appears kawaii advertising campaigns and kawaii police mascots and logos. Kinsella (2004) as also argued that school uniforms, particularly girls uniforms constitute a key anti-symbol of rebellion and sexuality and the fact that the iconic sailor uniforms come directly from Japanese Imperial ambitions and military reforms makes their use as a kawaii symbol especially potent and political. It is school girls who are able to establish a lasting, anti-establishment, counter-culture where mostly male university radicals failed. Kawaii self-styling is a kind of rebellion or refusal to cooperate with established social values but also with realities. It deliberately denies reality but is all the more powerful for doing so. Just as the aesthetic of cool deliberately ignores mainstream tastes and assumes a cool composure which does not care about mainstream values so too kawaii as a social strategy does not directly enter into or challenge mainstream cultural and aesthetic values but establishes its own values and aesthetics by ignoring mainstream tastes. It doesn’t seek to be sexy, serious or maturely beautiful but instead establishes the desirability of paedomorphism, the silly and the adorably dysfunctional. Admittedly, it is a demure rebellion (Kinsella, 1995) unlike more aggressive, direct and sexually charged fashions of American and European youth rebellion, kawaii emphasizes immaturity, lack of agency and acts pre-sexual and vulnerable, even while being neither.

The Milk boutique in Harajuku, which opened in 1970, and Pink House, a fashion brand by designer Isao Kaneko, which launched in 1973, both lay claim to the origins of kawaii in fashion (Kawamura, 2012: 67-71). Pink House launched their Lolita theme in 1979 and is now a purely Lolita themed brand. These fashion designs came directly out of the huge social changes that occurred after the riots as youth sought new means of self-definition after the failure of direct, active resistance to the establishment. With these brands, started by former revolutionary students, kawaii performs a political function of undermining current ideologies of gender and power. They also deliberately oppose the western idea of a complete identity with an incomplete one. They posit immaturity and emptiness as a natural state. The later appearance of variations such as gothic-Lolita juxtapose the immaturity of romantic childhood with gothic symbols, creating the appearing contrast of life and death together is the same aesthetic. This fulfills the political and social needs of kawaii neatly, being both desirable, somewhat helpless, while also rebellious, and challenging the seriousness of the mainstream.

Kawaii and cute appear to have a biological basis, although as complicated culturally formed aesthetics they are of course much more than just a natural expression. Ethnologist Konrad Lorenz has shown that infantile features, big heads, stubby bodies, doe-eyes and clumsy movements trigger feelings of caring (Lorenz, 1949). Akira Matsumoto has also shown that in a series of unexpected juxtapositions (apple and strawberry, Spring and Autumn, soba and udon, etc.) there is an instinctual agreement (greater than 80%) of which item is more kawaii. He argues that kawaii objects or features are usually small, stubby, bright colored, soft, warm, vulnerable and smooth. This is important as it starts to link a biological imperative to care for the young into a series of aesthetic preferences.

Nittono et al. (2012), have take this further by scientifically studying the effects of viewing kawaii images on subsequent task performance. It was found that participants performed tasks requiring attention more carefully after viewing kawaii images. There was a seemingly natural tendency to narrow attentional focus induced by cuteness-triggered positive emotions that was associated with approach motivation and the tendency toward systematic processing. In both aesthetics and engineering this has implication in that innate processes are triggered by elemental features of the stimuli. Stimuli that are deemed cute, capture attention, trigger positive emotions and induce motivation and behavior for approach and caregiving. Narrowed attentional focus induced by kawaii-triggered positive emotion would seem to be a sophisticated social strategy embraced by youth in Japan that appears to embrace the desired cultural state in consensus celebrating hierarchically and functionally stratified Japanese society while actually seeks advantage and seeks to undermine mainstream values. Neoteny and paedomorphism can be read as alternate social strategies in this light and their attendant sartorial forms understood as being political.

Morinosuke Kawaguchi (2007) extends the research on kawaii into the field of engineering and further to national design branding. Kawaguchi maps design aspects onto the indices of both ‘adult’ and ‘childlike’ and ‘female’ and ‘male’. He characterizes various national design ideals via this scheme: France and Italy, being characterized as sporty and elegant, are in the quadrant of adult and female.
Scandinavia and Germany, being sturdy and spartan, are in the adult and male quadrant. The United States, characterized as sexy and powerful, is in the male and childlike quadrant. This leaves Japan in the female and childlike quadrant with its ideal qualities being girly and toylike. Kawaguchi lists Honda cars, the Toyota Prius, and Morning Musume as examples of this. He argues that the kawaii aesthetic, if extended to design principles is the key to a unique and successful design industry in the future. The lack of seriousness, anthropomorphism (Honda makes the “eyes” of its bikes and cars look angry if they are small as research shows this causes other drivers to keep their distance), theatricality, personification, silliness, and compulsion represent the transformation of a sociopolitical strategy of schoolgirls into a national design philosophy.

The option for girls to choose an alternate styling to being beautiful or sexy in the kawaii look expands from the 1970s. In Japan, adulthood is not the most desirable state, offering freedom and opportunity, as it is in other cultures. In Japan adulthood often brings social obligation and devotion to a company or family, and so kawaii has been characterized as the desire to extend the period of childhood for as long as possible. Youth-oriented consumer culture also focuses everything on the young, and on young women in particular, and so to end one’s time as the focus of socio-cultural production is not particularly appealing. Geopolitics too has been seen as a cause of the preference for kawaii, with Japanese dependence on America being the model for individual dependence on company, family or subcultural group. Being in the comfortable position of being looked after is at the centre of kawaii: the ability to cause in the other the desire to look after you. But while it is a social strategy of willed dependence, kawaii also performs a political function of undermining current ideologies of gender and power, allowing young women greater power in a patriarchal society. In clothing kawaii would also appear to be a postmodern aesthetic, rejecting modernism’s abstraction, unity, subtlety and fidelity to the body and pulling towards postmodern fashion’s arbitrary shapes, figurative patterns and disunity. Furthermore, what capitalist production processes de-personalise kawaii fashion is able to re-personalise, allowing for personalisation and personal meaning in mass-produced clothes. However, capitalist production then also uses kawaii to mask its homogenisation and depersonalisation.

At the center of the pleasures possible within the aesthetic of kawaii fashion is not simply the pleasure of subjectively becoming an object. The use of kawaii is not simply an act of self objectification and the abdication of maturity but a more complicated gesture of challenging the hierarchy of seriousness which keeps cultural establishments established and held in high regard. Kawaii is a knowing absence of maturity, as it has to understand what the construct of maturity involves in order to renounce it. In this way kawaii constitutes not just the lack of maturity but an ironic expression of maturity’s undesirability. It knowingly uses silliness, play, and irony to establish an alternative to rigid, perhaps fossilized, mainstream culture and sociopolitical establishment which no longer holds any appeal for Japanese youth. There is an argument that kawaii and youth culture from the 1970s developed in part because parents were absent, working harder and longer in Japanese companies, such that children imprinted on each other rather than authority figures. This is only partly true, the sociopolitical situation of the disillusioned calm was understood by children, if only in that there was an absence of a desirable model of citizenry and state of which they could be a part. Kawaii constituted a logical and desirable means of expression, belonging and also therefore of pleasure for youth in this age. Kawaii fashion continues to serve this function, although now it constitutes the cultural mainstream and has proliferated in forms and meanings far beyond its origins. Clothing fashions always exceed their desirable means of expression, belonging and also therefore of pleasure for youth in this age. Kawaii fashion continues to serve this function, although now it constitutes the cultural mainstream and has proliferated in forms and meanings far beyond its origins. Clothing fashions always exceed their original instrumentality (Carter, 2013) and kawaii fashions now assume a vast space in Japan’s cultural imagination. Yet the pleasure to be found in kawaii fashions remains the same; a knowing, reflexive, pleasure of undermining and ignoring the seriousness of hierarchical, patriarchal Japanese maturity.

References


*Cruise! Sekai Kitty Senpu no Nazo [Follow-up! The Mystery of Worldwide Kitty Boom]*. TV documentary by NHK. Originally broadcast on May12, 2012.


Abstract
Since the development of proportional drawing techniques, documented initially by Greek scholars, it has been common practice to use the human head as a unit of measurement to develop an understanding of the proportions of a figure. Many scholars propose the head length relates proportionally to the body as one eighth of height, evidenced by drawings from this era, and this is still prevalent in many published figure-drawing texts. Current guidance, offering exercises to draw the figure using head theories, often propose elongation of the height for aesthetic purposes in establishing the heights of key body location and their widths. Analysis of these methods indicate that many fashion figure images are taller, slimmer and often defined as a single ideal shape, not representative of the customer who would later wear the designs and with no consideration of variations in body size or shape.

Recent technological developments using 3D body scanning technology have enabled the collection of large volumes of measurement data and techniques have been explored to establish how real bodies and their proportions compare to those developed using figure drawing techniques. This has been expanded to recognise the different figure proportions for different body shapes, which the current head theory is not equipped to implement.

The available data from the 3D scanner exposes a flaw in the concept of using the head length as a unit from which to determine proportion, particularly when drawing figures of varied sizes. If the ‘head’ theory was implemented this would result in size ten figures having a smaller head than a size sixteen, opening the debate of which reference dimension on the figure would be a more successful unit. This research proposes other suitable benchmarks for developing drawing theories that would produce more criteria specific figures, which are more representative of real people and take into consideration ratios, that allow for the development of different body shapes.

1. Introduction
Garment development is reliant upon the application of proportional rules to create figures on which designs can be based (Szkutnicka, 2010; Ireland, 2000) and in the creation of patterns (Kunick, 1984; Aldrich, 2008). However these proportional assertions, which can be traced back to ancient Greek and Egyptian origins (Simons, 1933) have little by way of supporting scientific evidence other than their historical application. Designs created on fashion figures form the initial stages of the conceptual creation of clothing and if the proportions of the figures do not match those of the customer population difficulties will arise when the design needs to be translated and interpreted to actual patterns and then into garments with the aim to achieve the same visual appearance. A figure created from an eight head length is most often suggested (Ireland, 2000; Szkutnicka, 2010), where the major lengths and in some cases circumferences are relative to the head length and the vertex of the head to the chin is said to equal one eighth of height and therefore the set measurement which determines the proportions of the complete figure.

Continued reliance on figure drawing instructions which are based on the head measurement, and without suitable scientific support that they are relevant to the population will result in simplified and idealised figures. As a result these developed figures will provide limited resources for which garment designs can be based upon due to the fact that the figures produced will not be representative of the many varied consumers for which a garment could be designed for and in the end should fit. As a result this will not only be limiting but also create the sense that there is a similarity between people. Analysis of population data collected through body scanning suggests this similarity is not borne out by analysis of dimensions of populations and there is recognition within sizing systems of
the difficulties of expecting people to meet proportional requirements (Robinette et al., 1997). Using these figures will present further problems when abstract fashion illustrations are then translated into the pattern and garment for the proportions of a consumer population and the requirement to adjust for shorter lengths and a potentially wider silhouette. Current methods of figure drawing are explored with particular focus on the use of the head as a measurement, these techniques are then compared to proportions derived from a large dataset of body scans representative of a subset of the UK female population to establish if they are relevant.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Figure drawing and proportion

The proportions of the figure in fashion are given in-depth consideration by Simons (1933) and here we see considerable evidence of prescribed proportional relationships from historical influences into current practice. The early inception of figure drawing by proportional techniques, imposed often by social structures, through to modern techniques shows how current concepts have been borne out of historical practice. Whilst some techniques were informed by measurement of the body, it is clear that artistic representation of the body played a larger part in the development of these rules, than did actual scientific exploration, this work also pre dates many of the 20th centuries large scale anthropometric surveys. When considering more recent discussion of proportion in clothing, Kunick (1984) details the development of sizing systems and pattern creation methods with continued usage of proportional techniques, notably the use of the head as a measurement benchmark and the assertion that stature is equal to eight head lengths. It is also clear that many measurements which were difficult to take from the body were often derived proportionally, in some cases with reference to proposed proportional head relationships. Haughton (2004) suggests a constant theme to convey a beautiful body through art, has been the application of the same golden rules of symmetry by different artists. More recent developments in clothing creation also suggest a significance to eight head theory (Tao & Bruniaux, 2013) though have little to support this in terms of current data.

2.2 Head relationships to the body

The relationship of the head to the complete body is central to the creation of fashion figure drawings and whilst there is variation in proposed relationships, the most constant is the use of a head proportions to determine an overall figure height. Whilst the use of head theory is purported to be derived from ancient Greek and Egyptian systems (Kunick, 1984; Drudi & Paci, 2006; Simons, 1933; Ireland, 2000) it still persists in modern techniques. Some authors suggest a theory of eight heads being equal to height (Ireland, 2000; Szkutnicka, 2010), whilst others recognise that actual populations may be shorter, being closest to 7.5 (Drudi & Paci, 2006; Abling, 2012) and still others suggest a greater number of heads to height in some cases up to ten (Abling, 2012; Burke, 2006; Riegelman, 2010; Thames, 1985).

Abling (2012) identifies the difference between ‘realism and fashion idealism’ when extending the number of heads to create elongation of the ‘natural figure’. This shows a clear awareness of the misrepresentation, but does not address the required altering of proportion to then create the garment and maintain the aesthetics of the figure drawing. Other authors suggest nine heads (Burke, 2006; Riegelman, 2010; Thames, 1985; Ireland, 2000) and often once feet have been added the overall proportions are further increased. There are suggestions by Szkutnicka (2010) and Drudi & Paci (2006) that the extended figure creates an appealing silhouette and allows the foot to be viewed successfully. The role of altered proportion in the creation of an aesthetic is an important consideration that requires greater recognition in how figure drawing may be interpreted, especially when it is then used to drive product development. Analysis of pattern literature also shows the influence of eight head theory in the derivation of dimensions for the creation of clothing patterns (Kunick, 1984), indicating that this idealisation of the human form is ingrained in the clothing development process.

2.3 Extending and elongating the figure

Drudi & Paci (2006) suggest the difference between the 8 headed figure and 8.5 headed figure is the raised position of the waist, that consequently shortens the upper portion of the torso. Abling (2012) in contrast suggests extension occurs in the legs to add height and also indicates techniques such as lengthening the neck, upper torso and arms. This corresponds with Burkess (2006) suggestion that the extra length is added to the legs to create a more stylised appearance and Riegman (2008) who discusses the idea that the figures main function is to display the clothing in the most effective manner possible. None though discuss how these changes should be contextualised in the stage of product realisation.
Abling (2012) further suggests the alteration of head length to achieve three specific fashion figures: Petite (can also include plus-size?); Model—taller and slightly elongated and Elongated—exaggerated and stretched to an extreme ‘fantasy’ height. Key to this is the suggestion of a relationship between head length and height, an area neglected in research but key to supporting the theories of any head based figure creation system. Importantly within the text these figures are only created to the ankle, so actually the figures total height would be half a head greater and give a total number of ten and a half heads in the elongated figure, the largest suggested in current guidance. There is also a suggestion of free elongation of the figure to larger heights, but no grounding or appreciation of the difficulties of then aligning this to a consumer at the stage of garment creation. Whilst it is clear that elongation and stylisation is the focus of the nine head croquis (figure drawing technique) establishing a good basis to design garments on top of, however accuracy and a realistic perception is not mentioned even though the direct connection of garments to the body is identified.

Riegelmans (2006) systematic theory of creating the figure acknowledges the extensive effect of the figure to the way garments are designed and continues to suggest the nine-headed theory will enable the reader to achieve a ‘correct’ figure. Drudi & Paci (2006), Ireland (2000) and Szkutnickas (2010) in contrast provides no direction other than the drawn figure without any clear identification of head markers and points on the body. As a result the reader is left to determine the proportions of the figure from analysis of the images.

The idealisation of the figure and influence of artistic interpretation is documented by (Simons, 1933) and shown in the depiction of the figure. It is clear artistic representations of the body can be controversial, similarly the use of actual nudes caused an outcry in the nineteenth century (Postle, 2009).

The application of proportion within figure drawing techniques is subject to a great deal of inconsistency between sources. Some suggest the use of head length (vertex to the chin) for all lengths and widths (Riegelman, 2010) whilst others indicate widths relative to head widths (Burke, 2006; Ireland, 2000) though these are not controlled relative to other dimensions. This coupled with the inconstancies between the written guidance and accompanying figures makes it difficult to understand the legitimacy of these techniques in doing anything other than imposing an author informed aesthetic standard on figure representation. Drudi & Paci (2006) do not divide the figure as specifically as Riegelman (2006); no widths are indicated, however, statements establish direct proportional connections between measurements, the shoulders and pelvis are of equal width and the waist width two-thirds of them.

2.4 Hands & Feet.

Drudi & Paci (2006) record the hands and feet as 1 head in length, although, neither of these measurements are supported by initial diagrams. Riegelman (2006) advises that the foot and hand is 1 head in length and breaks this down further by dividing the hand in half for the palm and fingers. Dividing the hand equally into two sections is reinforced by Thames (1985) who following on from suggesting a direct connection between the head measurement and hand notes the hand can be equally split by the length of the index finger and the palm. Thames’ (1985) diagram indicates the feet (pitched) are a head in length and although the hands are shown short of a head measurement it is later commented that an open hand should be able to cover the face. Burke (2006) shows the hands shorter at 0.75 heads but the feet remain consistent at 1 head in length. Ireland (2000) fails to remark on the hand and feet measurement, neither does Szukutnicka (2010) however, the diagram shows the hands as approximately 0.5 heads in length. Abling (2012) advises the reader to sleek out the hands and feet.

2.5 Other Figure Types.

Abling (2012) acknowledges the use of petite and fuller figures, suggesting they are both to be drawn within the eight-eight and a half head figure, though no guidance on their achievement is given. Szukutnicka (2010) also discusses the relevance of using a suitable template for a particular market, suggesting figures adapted according as a standard template would be too slim, however, no instruction is provided on creating different sized figures. It is also not suggested how the head measurement aides with establishing a broader or slimmer figure. This highlights how the use of the head can not be used as a consistent unit.

3. Methodology

3.1 Content Analysis of Figure Drawing Literature

Combining a content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013; Neuendof, 2002) and case study approach (Thomas, 2011), this research started by investigating current literature on figure drawing for fashion. This is often the initial starting point for the development of fashion drawings, key texts were
identified within the existing stock of a University library where figure drawing is taught as part of clothing product development. Search terms, ‘figure drawing’, ‘clothing’ and ‘human proportion’, were used to determine the breadth of texts, further literature was determined from reading lists, an internet search using the same terms and by shelfmark within a library stocking books on clothing product development and figure drawing.

Identified texts were analysed, initially by index for terms relating to figure drawing and proportion (Croquis, figure, template, 9 heads and proportion) and each text was visually checked page by page to identify guidance on proportions for the figure. Content was analysed for structured guidance on proportion, primarily from visual sources, though text was checked when it was evidently related to proportion and results structured in an Excel spreadsheet to enable comparison of proposed figure proportions. Whilst there exists guidance on the creation of a male and female figure, only guides for the female figure were used in this research, as they are more detailed and allow comparison to the large volume of female measurement data accessible to this research.

3.2 Analysis of a sample scan population
A sample population of female body scans was obtained, and filtered into two age categories (18-35 and 56+) these were then classified according to the different body shapes categorised by the FFIT shape system (Lee et al., 2007). The rectangle shape was identified as the one occurring most frequently within both of the age groups and this provided 258 scans of the 18-35 and 142 of the 56+, these 400 scans were then analysed to determine the relative proportions of key heights and widths relative to the head. Further analysis of proportions by different shapes, age categories and other variables would be undertaken in future analysis.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Content analysis of figure drawing techniques
The proposed relationships between head length, and height and width were recorded from the selected figure drawing cases. The average proportions recommended show a consistency of approach to many of the proposed dimensions (Table 1).

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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>8.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Proportions proposed in figure drawing literature

The average head height to stature is eight and a half, but some methods recommend ten and there is even the inclusion of a seven and a half head technique. Heights of each of the key divisions of the body are given more consistently, whilst widths are specified with much less frequency, however some indications of waist width is given in the pictorial representations accompanying the written guidance. There is a great deal of consistency between the sources suggesting a common origin and the possibility of influence between sources.

It is clear that all twelve guides provide details of the key height relationships of height and crotch position in relation to head length, however, fewer provide details on all lengths and even less on key
widths. When guidance is not provided in terms of prescriptive measurement or ranges for the figure it is clear that the drawer will impose their own or use the accompanying images to determine what would be considered appropriate. For those learning to develop figure images it is unlikely they would be confident in creating their own proportions and so the implicit influence of the drawn figures must be suitably considered.

4.2 Comparing age and shape
To allow for suitable comparison it was necessary to alter heights to record distance from the floor to allow clear comparison of height related data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Figure Drawing</th>
<th>Population Analysis</th>
<th>Difference figure and population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>18-35 Rectangle</td>
<td>56+ Rectangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stature</td>
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<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder Height</td>
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<td>6.05</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust height (nipple or most prominent)</td>
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<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waist Height</td>
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<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3.89</td>
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<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knee height</td>
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<td>2.03</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Calf height</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankle height</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 – Comparison of figure drawing with population age and shape

Analysis of the proportions of the two scan populations relative to head length show that the older demographic whilst appearing to be on average taller, are also wider at the key dimensions of bust, waist and hip (Table 2). This suggests a need to create a larger figure relative to head length as a foundation figure for designing clothing for an older demographic. Further to this though they are taller, their bust height is lower, clearly relative to recorded changes in body morphology due to ageing and this marks a clear difficulty with purely applying proportional rules. There is no notable indication of figure adjustments to account for aging in current literature. Both populations are shorter and wider than the average figure created through current figure drawing techniques.

4.3 Comparison of figure drawing techniques and proposed shape proportions
Because there was a sufficiently large scan population for the 18-35 group and this consisted of suitable numbers of scans for the three main shape categories of Hourglass, Bottom Hourglass and Rectangle it was possible to determine their relative proportions (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Figure Drawing</th>
<th>Population Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>18-35 Bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18-35 Hourglass</td>
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<td>Stature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bust Width</td>
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<td>1.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waist Width</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hip Width</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoulder Height</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust height (nipple or most prominent)</td>
<td>6.48</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ankle height</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 - Comparison of proposed proportions from figure drawing and scan data

Although the relative heights may be affected by the possible inclusion of elongated feet on the figures, this is not a consistent practice amongst the techniques. The averages for height clearly indicate that all shapes are shorter for the population than the figure drawing techniques, though
hourglass shapes appear to be taller, this increased height may contribute to the better waist definition observed in classifying them as hourglass. Each of the major dimensions of bust, waist and hip appear to have significant variation sufficient to create distinct figures for each of the shapes and indicate a possible evolution from the narrow shape categories created through current figure drawing literature.

5. Conclusion

Figure drawing texts whilst being highly prescriptive of head lengths for height have little consistency in terms of clearly indicating firstly the actual head measurement and then as a result other related body proportions and seem to expect the reader to impose their own judgment in the creation of the actual figure. This means that the figure images created by the author become a heavily prescriptive tool in how the reader will create their figure image.

When comparison is made between the figure developed by figure drawing guidance and that suggested from analysis of body scan data both by different shapes and ages, it is clear that elongation occurs to differing degrees in current texts whilst all are reliant on the use the head as the initial measurement.

There is clear evidence using population data that current figures will not provide a suitable foundation for fashion drawing as a basis for product development without some consideration of corrections. Analysis of this population data can suggest variation in proportions due to both age and shape that will allow for the generation of more accurate figures to use as a foundation for fashion illustration. It must be noted that whilst the aesthetic principals of figure elongation are recognised, proportionally correct figures would cause fewer difficulties when creating products that retain the characteristics of the design.

The results of this research question the premise of using the head length as a basis for the creation of the figure template and suggest the need to define more appropriate metrics. Although different proportional or shaped figures can be produced, any change in body size would require a change in height and head length. Whist head length may have a relationship to height, that appears to be supported within this work, the width of the body, related to girths, have not been found to correlate to heights in any historical surveys. This suggests a need for a more evolved figure drawing technique that allows more flexible creation of fashion drawing figures that better represent real people and the variation of shape and size within a population. This analysis will provide a clear foundation for more in-depth research and the development of more flexible figures to suit different populations initially in terms of age and shape.

References

Ireland, P. J. (2000) Figure Templates for Fashion Illustration. London: Batsford.
Disrupting Fashion through Innovation: How Crowd-sourcing is Changing the Business Model for Fashion Brands and Prompting Engagement with Communities

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Abstract

Context of the investigation
The current economic scenario demands that businesses continuously reinvent themselves to adapt to complex and dynamic market realities (Roser at al, 2013). As customers are demanding greater levels of personalization in their consumption experience (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000), firms have to re-assess their business model in order to become more responsive to consumer needs and demands (Sheth et al., 2000). As noted by Pine and Gilmore (1997), the gap between what a company can offer and what each customer truly desires opens new and exciting business opportunities. In addition, the mass diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the growth of social media have had a tremendous effect on organizations’ dynamic capabilities. Companies must learn how to incorporate customers’ views and ideas into the process of value production, from the initial conception to the final realization and diffusion of a product or service. Involving customers in these processes of “co-innovation” (Lee, Olson, and Trimi, 2012) and value co-production can offer new opportunities to generate a sustainable competitive advantage. In this new perspective, consumers are seen as co-designers, marketers and sellers, whose creativity, devotion, and engagement drive the future direction of the business.

Purpose of the research
Crowd sourcing, initially intended as the practice of making an open call to solve a problem (Howe, 2006), has quickly demonstrated its potential as incubator of innovative ideas. One of the earliest examples of “crowd-based” fashion companies is the threadless.com website – a cross between a social network and a fashion brand. The website allows for users to submit their t-shirt designs and have them voted into production by a community of followers. This innovative business model demonstrates how the power of technological innovation was taken further by democratizing the design process and allowing “regular” users to co-create limited edition clothing and accessories. Within this evolving context, this paper sets to investigate motives and methods behind fashion brands’ utilization of crowd sourcing as driver for innovation across the value chain. In particular, this research explores the extent to which crowd sourcing is changing the business model for fashion brands and prompting engagement with communities of consumers both online and offline.

Methodology
In this research study, a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted over a period of two months. Interviews have involved managers, agency professionals and consultants with specific experience of crowded-based initiatives and will focus on understanding the strategic rationale (motives) and implementation procedures (methods) behind such initiatives. The adoption of an exploratory approach in this study, will allow for an in-depth exploration of the crowded-sourcing phenomenon and of its managerial implications within the context of various fashion organizations.
Introduction
In today's global economy, no brand is local. The new global business environment for fashion implies changes to the traditional business models. According to Lee et al. (2012) information and media technologies are transforming society from a producing culture focusing on manufacturing to one that focuses on information exchange. Companies need to acknowledge the strategic role that innovation plays in order to adapt to the new challenges posed by this “network society” (Lee, Olson, & Trimi, 2012). The new premises are based on collaborative and shared value, co-creation and innovation in order to create organizational and shared value. The key driver that has allowed for this dramatic shift was technology and its influence in building consumer-brand relationships.

The Internet has facilitated the conversation between a brand and its target audience thanks to interactive nature of social media (Pickton and Broderick, 2001; Sashi, 2012; Ubeda et al., 2013). Instead of being passive recipients of brand information, customers that are engaging with brands make active contributions to these brand interactions (Hollebeck, 2011). Internet as a communication medium has also facilitated geographically dispersed individuals who shared same interests to gather online (Thomsen et al., 1998) originating new types of brand/consumer interactions. The Internet poses as a driver for consumer-to-consumer communications (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Technology based systems not only connect brands, but especially consumers, and therefore provide access to online content, and communication through this same medium (De Valck et al., 2009).

The virtual brand landscape is a powerful and interactive engagement platform for consumer-to-consumer recommendations (Sawhney et al., 2005). The use of technology has facilitated this level of exposure and customer engagement well beyond what was previously possible (Belch and Belch, 2012). Social media platforms have the power to develop a meaningful connection and provoke conversation with actively engaged audiences (Hermida et al., 2012).

Social media has facilitated the formation of brand communities (Muñiz and O’Guinn, 2001; Muñiz and Schau, 2005). When brand community members share a common interest, it generates a bond (De Valck et al., 2009) and increases consumer feelings of empowerment (Cova and Pace, 2006). In such a demanding environment, where consumers are constantly informed and have the power of creating products by themselves and contribute to the generation of new business models, questions regarding the relevance of traditional business models arise.

The aim of this research is therefore to investigate motives and methods behind fashion brands’ utilization of crowd sourcing as driver for innovation across the value chain. In particular, this research intends to explore the extent to which crowd sourcing is changing the business model for fashion brands and prompting engagement with communities of consumers both online and offline and is helping to create an increased and more sustainable competitive advantage.

Literature Review
A changing environment for fashion brands
Today's sophisticated consumer is approached by a much more complex array of messages in the media and by competitive retail environment (Easey, 2009). In this environment, consumers need to be not only informed but also entertained.

Today’s brands have to continuously reinvent themselves in order to adapt to the ever changing and dynamic market reality. Consumers are becoming more demanding and wanting greater levels of personalization in their consumption experience (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000) and brands need to provide them with more effective responsiveness (Sheth et al., 2000).

Another trend in the changing relationship between brands and consumers is the growing importance of the consumption experience, with consumers increasingly seeking not only to purchase products and meanings, but also to participate in unique, memorable consumption experiences (Gouillart, 2010). This fact was highlighted by Pine and Gilmore (1999) and predicted the growth of an experience-based economy, where consumers would seek full immersion in unique contexts and experiences which confirm the meanings, cultures, symbols and identities behind their chosen brands.

The basis of the experience is brands promising not only the product and value set announced by the brand and its advertising, but also places, spaces, and contexts within which the “potential world” of the brand can be experienced. In this environment, the consumer can act out a part in creating its stories and experiences and explore the brand’s deepest values and meanings (Semprini 1996). Consumers nowadays are interested in much more than simply the product. It is not about the utility or quality of a particular item, but about that story behind it. Whether this story is about quality of material, integrity of design, innovation, exclusivity, value or trend setting, the consumer interest is triggered by the story and that is what facilitates the purchase. This engagement can be defined as
a combination of both rational and emotional bonds.

Co-creation
The purpose of co-creation is to engage people to create valuable experiences together as well as enhance network economics (Ramaswamy and Gouillart, 2010). According to the authors, the core principles of co-creation are: experience mindset, context of interaction, engagement platforms and network relationships (p. 36).

Co-creation can be defined as a collaborative process of communication between a consumer and a company to create a brand identity (Bogoviyeva, 2011, p. 371). Through the use of co-creation, companies are providing a framework for the audience to communicate, aligning with Smith and Taylor’s pull theory, where by creating a vehicle for co-created content, brands pull consumers in to create brand evangelists.

According to SunIdee, a global innovation agency, co-creation can be defined as collaboration with customers to develop new products and services and entails involving customers or end-users in one or more stages of the innovation process.

Through involving customers in the process and by exchanging ideas and capabilities, brands are able to create higher value products to increase the success rate of new innovation. SunIdee (2010) defines the five types of co-creation as: co-creation workshops, crowdsourcing, open sourcing, mass customisation, and user-generated content.

Co-created workshops involve the users in brainstorming sessions to generate ideas or involve them in the conception to enhance ideas - suitable to gain insights on consumer needs or to find ideas that are easy to implement (SunIdee, 2010).

Crowdsourcing is used to define a problem with a large audience by offering a reward for a ‘winning idea.’ The customer develops and shares the ideas. Crowdsourcing is used to find a solution for a specific problem, to look for inspiration or to generate awareness around an upcoming product or brand.

Open sourcing involves a large number of volunteers to develop and maintain a product, often used for developing new software. Linux and Firefox are examples of this approach (SunIdee, 2010). Mass customisation acts in getting customers involved in the process of designing a product, within the framework a company has set. This is usually used as a way to turn customers into brand ambassadors.

User-generated content happens when customers create their own ‘products’ that are shared through the company platforms. Information can be shared rapidly and the platform can become a brand of its own.

Co-creation can acquire different forms: an emotional engagement of customers, with advertising and promotional activities being one of the forms; self-service; engaging the customer in any sort of experience; using processes to allow customers to solve their own problems or engaging with suppliers and companies to help in the process of designing a product.

A way to achieve innovation and value creation in this changing landscape is through co-creation. It is a privileged manner of nurturing customer relationships and lowering cost for marketing and research and development (Sawhney et al, 2005; Prandelli et al, 2006). By doing that, a brand achieves greater customer satisfaction (Nambisan and Baron, 2007) and reduces risk for the company (Maklan et al., 2008).

In order to improve a company’s competitiveness and brand perception (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) companies are adopting strategies that allow them to co-create value with all stakeholders. According to Bhalla (2011) co-creation can be defined in terms of tools and processes. The author recognises that today’s customers are not mere spectators but want to be heard, they want to have a say in how customer value is created and what they want to consume. They are defined as active collaborators and co-producers of value.

“Understanding the current and desired brand knowledge structures of consumers is vital to effectively building and managing brand equity. Ideally, marketers would be able to construct detailed “mental maps” to understand exactly what exists in consumers’ minds… unfortunately, such brand knowledge structures are not easily measured because they reside only in consumers’ minds. Often a simple insight into how consumers think of or use products and the particular brands in a category can help create a profitable change in the marketing program” (Keller, 1998, p. 325).

Through a two way narrative, redirecting focus from the organisation to the consumer, co-creation allows a mutually beneficial process to occur between brands and consumers. This mode of communication encourages relationship building with consumers (Christodoulides et al., 2012) and introduces a model for understanding the process of user generated content and how it impacts consumer-based brand equity.
Creating value through Co-Creation

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2002) consumers define value as experiences and push companies to see value the same way. Co-creation has emerged as a new business paradigm with customers actively participating in the production and marketing process (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

Today’s consumers are extremely connected and actively networked, they constantly engage in sharing experiences with products and services with their peers. They also have increased will to participate in designing the products and services that they use, providing an on-going and two-directional conversation between businesses and consumers. Consumer experience is now at the heart of value creation, innovation, strategy and executive leadership (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

Ramaswamy and Gouillart (2010) suggest that value is increased when customers work together to create value, rather than creating value inside the business, due to the fact that customers want to feel a sense of freedom in their interaction. By taking part in co-creation, value is created for both the consumer and the company.

"Consumers now seek to exercise their influence in every part of the business system. Armed with new tools and dissatisfied with available choices, consumers want to interact with firms and thereby “co-create” value" (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 6).

The value creation process is being challenged by the changing relationship between consumers and companies. Whereas the traditional value creation formula places consumers outside of the process, holding distinct roles of production and consumption, consumers now are equipped to extract and create value.

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), the building blocks of interaction can be defined as DART: dialogue, access, risk-benefits, and transparency. Dialogue is created in form of conversation between customers and companies, implying interactivity, engagement and action on both sides. It is only possible if there is transparency of information.

When the brand and the consumer collaborate in co-creation the process of co-created experiences create a unique value, benefitting both the company and the consumer (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004).

To Potts et al. (2008), social media has enabled co-creation through new forms of situated creativity, suggesting that it enables stakeholders to co-create by having more transparency and dialogue. Social media will not sell products but it will help increase digital presence and create stronger relationships with customers to increase brand value.

By giving customers the opportunity to actively participate in the co-creation process (Füller et al., 2007) through innovation and product design, consumers undertake a sequence of experiences that is developed and reinforced over time.

Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing was initially referred to in an article by journalist Jeff Howe in 2006 in a Wired article ‘The Rise of Crowdsourcing’ and explained as the practice of companies making an open call to solve a problem, either through competition or collaboration, and has quickly become a major trend in a number of industries.

One of the first examples of crowdsourcing in the fashion industry was the website Threadless.com. The platform provides artists with a platform to submit t-shirt designs and have them voted into production by a community of followers. Since the website's launch in 2006, other websites have incorporated crowdsourcing into their functionality.

Crowdsourcing allows users to vote or give feedback on specific pieces from designers and also to found the production of such items due to the pre-ordering system. Crowdsourcing empowers the consumers, allowing them to decide on product via social media networks, forums, and high-tech web platforms.

According to Humphreys and Grayson (2008), participants in crowdsourcing projects can be identified as prosumers, engaging in “the novelty of asking individuals to simultaneously play the role of consumer and producer.” They are motivated by the enjoyment of participating in the project and have a desire to create and use consumption in order to express themselves. Consumers who engage in such activities have an established sense of identity, as they perform tasks previously reserved for the producer.

Crowdsourcing websites are helping to change the fashion industry. By collecting users feedback and suggestions, they are able to shape fashion collections and dictate trends. Users are able to rate new collections, recommend new ideas, and critique the overall direction a designer is moving. Users become more involved than ever in the fashion industry and additionally, have the opportunity to fund product development.
Participants are usually attracted by creative opportunities as well as the privileges include, pre-order discounts, online store credits, and tickets to many fashion events. Offering such incentives attracts a large population of crowd sourcers who are able to generate a large number of ideas and opinions, which accurately represent consumer needs and desires. They democratize the design process, allowing users to co-create limited edition clothing and accessories. Crowdsourcing works on the premise of a two directional flux: D2C (designer to consumer) and C2D (consumer to designer). The added value is that brands and designers are able to track data about who their users/consumers are and how those users interact with the fashion process, from the design part to manufacture to sale. Also, depending on the depth of insight it can provide opportunities for accurate product development. Advantages are reducing sample biases and allowing for the isolation of which attributes of these designs are preferred, allowing for more efficient business decisions, by producing only the highest in demand concepts. By discovering what consumers want pre-production, it enables brands to cut down on inventory risk. It also impacts largely on gaining brand awareness, due to the high exposure that it allows.

Methodology
An exploratory study was chosen as the research method in order to get new insights regarding the use of crowdsourcing in fashion. It allowed for an in-depth exploration of the crowd-sourcing phenomenon and of its managerial implications within the context of various fashion organizations. The qualitative data gathered from a variety of data sources was organized according to Yin (2003). Multiple data sources proved to be a fundamental aspect of the analysis as it ensured that a large variety of perspectives were taken into consideration. The data included both primary data, gathered through in-depth interviews and observation, as well as secondary data taken from corporate information, the companies’ own websites, press reports and other published sources. A series of qualitative semi-structured interviews was conducted, involving managers, agency professionals and consultants with specific experience of crowd-based initiatives. The interviewees were selected according to their involvement and knowledge of crowd-sourcing platforms. The aim was to understand the strategic rationale (motives) and implementation procedures (methods) behind such initiatives.

Case selection
During the case-selection process, we have chosen cases that covered all relevant categories of the phenomenon under investigation, to ensure that findings could be properly generalized. The cases were selected using “theoretical replication logic” in order to produce contrasting results in a cross-case methodology and to find a balance the different case studies (Yin, 2003). They had specific crowd-sourcing features in common but included enough contextual diversity (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). We have selected 4 case studies that had varying degrees of interaction and with favorable reactions from consumers: Luevo, Stylyt, Stitch Collective and Threadless.

Brief identification of the different cases studied
Platform 01 - Luevo (http://www.luevo.com/)
Luevo was founded in 2013 in Toronto as a product-based crowdfunding platform that connects independent fashion designers with consumers. The platform targets both fashion designers and consumers. Luevo aims to target fashion designers that source locally and ethically and enable the launch of these independent fashion designers by providing them with means to obtain pre-production guaranteed orders. After being approved on the platform, the designers will set up their online shop and determine the minimum number of orders they require for the collection to go onto production as well as the maximum orders they can fulfill. As soon as they receive the required number of pre-orders to start production, they get the funds to create their products and send them out to the consumers that have ordered them. On the consumer’s side, they are able to shop a curated collection of limited edition pieces from independent designers. They also support the launch of that same designer through the pre-ordering system. The more friends they engage in shopping the same item, the quicker that piece goes into production.
**Platform 02 - Stylyt** ([http://www.stylyt.com/](http://www.stylyt.com/))

Stylyt is an online community that collaborates with fashion brands and lets consumers inspire their designs. It was founded in NYC in 2011 and aims to give members a chance to be part of the design process by co-creating different ranges of products. They intend to provide consumers with the experience of designing for a real brand.

Through customizing materials and colors, consumers can create unique and exclusive pieces. After the design, the Stylyt community votes and the winning pieces are produced and sold in a limited edition collection.

The platform is based on an incentive system, as consumers that vote on that piece are given a discount on that same purchase. To those consumers that design the winning piece, they are given the limited edition for free. In this platform, consumers are expected to act not only as designers but also as curators, sharing, voting and commenting on different pieces.

Winning designers get their pieces for free and also see their item being featured as part of a brand collection.

As soon as the winner is announced, the pre-sale starts and if voting for the winning piece, consumers are eligible for a discount. Winning pieces are sold exclusively through the platform.

**Platform 03 - Stitch Collective** ([www.stitchcollective.com](http://www.stitchcollective.com))

Stitch Collective was launched in 2012 in NYC with the aim of producing crowd-sourced handbags. Designers are requested to submit their original sketches for a specific style and users of the platform vote on their favorite.

Once the voting has ended, Stitch Collective makes the piece available for pre-order giving the company an indication of how many to produce, avoiding excess inventory and eliminating the pre-production barrier. The company then produces the pieces and incorporates them as part of a limited edition accessories collection.

On the website they display the profiles of their featured designers as well as the story behind every competition and every winning piece and designer.

All pieces are produced locally in the Garment District in New York City and are sold online directly to the consumer. They have a showroom in New York City where they feature all the styles designed.

**Platform 04 - Threadless** ([www.threadless.com](http://www.threadless.com))

Threadless was founded in 2006 as a web-based t-shirt company that crowdsources the design process for their shirts through an ongoing online competition. Members of the community can submit their designs and vote on what they intend to be the winning design. All designs are scored and the new designs become available to the community. Designs remain available for voting for two weeks, and the highest scoring designs are selected by Threadless staff to be printed and made available for sale on the website. Winning designs receive money prizes as well as gift certificates.

Threadless also rewards its members with purchasing credits for referring sales by linking to the website or by submitting photos of themselves wearing Threadless shirts.

At Threadless.com, the process also continues post purchase. According to the company, they do not advertise, but all their efforts are directed towards word of mouth. They give upcoming designers the chance to promote their own work through creating tools that allow them to spread the message: banners, sending mass e-mails and newsletters.

They have also created 3 additional platforms:

. **Tattoodo** – a social marketplace for tattoo designs where visual artists are inspired and can submit new tattoo ideas.
. **Creative Market** – a platform for handcrafted and independent creative around the world.
. **Open Me** – a greeting cards platform that allows for customization and personalized delivery options.

**Findings and discussion**

The key findings from the 4 case studies were summarized in table 1 below.
Through the analysis of the observation and from data collected from the interviews, we were able to highlight the most important issues that help to design this business model.

According to our findings, the key challenges that these platforms address are around pre-production and post-production.

Pre-production barriers involve finding quality factories and suppliers and being financially stable for a production run.

The majority of existing online marketplaces where they can sell their creations is too wide and allows them to sell only one product at a time. That means that designers are not allowed to source

### Table 1. Main findings from case studies

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<th>Platform 02 Stylyt</th>
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Through the analysis of the observation and from data collected from the interviews, we were able to highlight the most important issues that help to design this business model.

According to our findings, the key challenges that these platforms address are around pre-production and post-production.

Pre-production barriers involve finding quality factories and suppliers and being financially stable for a production run.

The majority of existing online marketplaces where they can sell their creations is too wide and allows them to sell only one product at a time. That means that designers are not allowed to source
materials in large quantities because of the unpredictability of the demand, and for that reason rely on expensive supplies and production and that cost is transmitted to the buyer.

Crowdsourcing business models aim to be a solution to the designer’s challenges especially regarding production requirements, allowing them to obtain the pre-orders they need through crowdsourcing the demand. These platforms provide designers with the support needed, as the platform handles the manufacturing and sourcing. According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000), co-creation allows for two significant sources of competitive advantages: (1) productivity gains through increased efficiency and (2) improved effectiveness.

Productivity and efficiency gains are achieved due to cost-minimization as consumer’s inputs about the product development replace employees. (Bowers et al. 1990) Costs are reduced due to the acquisition of ideas and outsourcing efforts, reducing the need for traditional market research. Also, according to Lilien et al. (2002) co-creation can provide important gains in the effectiveness of co-created products, through their closer fit to consumer needs and higher commercial potential. The products usually possess high-expected benefits and novelty, which ultimately increases commercial attractiveness (Franke et al., 2006).

Forecasting demand is also another aspect. One of the key advantages of crowdsourcing, on the designers’ end, is the ability to predict the demand. Through voting, liking and sharing, designers and brands can learn from the consumers and then choose or modify products accordingly. For the designers/brands, the platforms provide an opportunity to make the business more efficient, allowing them to produce only the highest demand concepts. These incentive-based platforms are able to shape fashion collections and trends, by collecting member feedback and suggestions, and the ideas they generate are clear representations of consumer needs and desires.

“The best for engaging consumers and getting the most useful data for the brand. It reduces sample biases, and starts to isolate which attributes of these designs are what are preferred. We decipher patterns and say to brands ‘this is what’s trending’.” (Interviewee 04)

The post-production barriers involve visibility and inventory risk. Their visibility is maximized since these platforms often partner with key players of the fashion industry. Designers get introduced to an international community of fashion conscious people and that same community also takes a part in the process. Positive attitudes towards the product are increased as well as subsequent purchase intentions, willingness-to-pay, and referrals/word of mouth. Higher awareness also stimulates faster diffusion, thus improving its likelihood of success.

“The biggest gain is the exposure. The winner of our last challenge was featured on The Cut in New York Magazine, Refinery29.com and Racked National, among others. He is now getting ready to start his own line.” (Interviewee 03)

Inventory risk is reduced, since demand is gauged through pre-production voting and for that reason only in-demand items are produced.

“We discover what our customers want pre-production, which allows us to cut down on inventory risk. We hope to serve as an early indicator of fashion trends.” (Interviewee 01)

With regards to the identification of the drivers for motivation, the success of crowdsourcing projects depends on a variety of aspects. The concept of community was found to be the most significant one. The different users on the Internet compose innumerable online communities - composed of people with similar interests and as highlighted by Howe (2006), the basic organizing force behind crowdsourcing is the community. Consumer’s relationships with brand communities translate into direct relationships with a brand, through strong commitment to that same brand (Ahluwalia et al., 2000). Membership to a brand community produces an ideal social imagery and nurtures feelings of belongingness (Schau & Muniz, 2002)

“People want to feel that they have a relationship”. (Interviewee 01)

Consumers deeply involved with a brand that offers them symbolic benefits develop “a common understanding of a shared identity” (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001, p. 413) and for that reason they are more likely to engage in new product development and experience sharing (Ouwersloot and Oderkerken-Schroder, 2008).
Community members are usually motivated by learning, identification and status, especially when that is shared through social networks (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

“Never before could people influence fashion design on this scale. People come to design for one brand, but design for the other brands too. People get really excited and passionate about it.” (Interviewee 04)

Some of the common characteristics of successful crowdsourcing projects include a sense of community, a high level of commitment to that same community, and collaboration is its own reward (Howe, 2008).

Another common characteristic is the rewards aspect. In addition to commitment, consumers also need to feel rewarded for their efforts in order for crowdsourcing to work. People are drawn to participate because of the psychological, social or emotional need being met. If there is no need to be met, they will not participate (Howe, 2008). Consumers are willing to provide ideas for new products that can fulfill needs that have not yet been met by the market (Ernst, Hoyer, Krafft, and Soll 2010).

Exclusivity also appears as a key aspect. Consumers seek individuality through the acquisition of brands that develop and express their distinctive personal and social identity (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; Belk, 1988). This search for uniqueness can be express by avoiding brands that have become commonplace (Tian, Bearden & Hunter, 2001). This desire for unique offerings increases consumer’s efforts to acquire brands and products that few others have or know of.

“I see people that want to wear something that is not mass-produced, that cannot be found on every third person they ran into.” (Interviewee 03)

Our research showed that they are not only buying a product, yet, they are buying into a story, a process, the fact that they helped to discover a new brand.

“I think that as a consumer, what is more interesting in these types of platforms is that the brand is secondary, because you are most interested in the person behind the piece, who are you buying it from, what is the story, where do they come from…” (Interviewee 02)

According to our findings, fashion crowdsourcing platforms combine two retail strategies: satisfying demand and building customer loyalty. The creation of innovative business models that can create value for all stakeholders has proved to be a successful outcome of these platforms. Some of the implementation procedures that contribute to the success of such platforms are listed below:

- Clarity and easiness to be used by all members of the community
- Collaborative dialogue through all parties involved
- Transparency of processes
- Allowing for customization of existing piece or designing a piece from start
- Incentive based system: benefits for both consumers and brands
- Consumers acquire the role of designers, curators, buyers and marketers
- Constant engagement between the platform communities

Conclusions
The rise of the experience economy has driven brands to bond with consumers through holding holistic brand experiences (Schmitt, 1999; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Crowdsourcing is regarded as the ultimate edge of the experience, made possible through the use of social networks and digital channels. The digital transformation with the rise of Internet and social media platforms has revolutionized the business models with the emergence of e-commerce and m-commerce.

These crowdsourcing platforms are using social media to increase both the breadth and the depth of inputs it can obtain from consumers at a significantly lower expense (Evans et al, 2005; Hull 2004). By involving consumers in the early stages of product development, up and coming brands and designers can save both time and expenses and reduce the risk of failure of the new product. The co-creation that takes place during this context can be defined as “a collaborative new product development (NPD) activity in which consumers actively contribute and select various elements of a new product offering” (O’Hern and Rindfleisch 2009, p. 4). For this NPD to succeed, it requires a deep understanding of consumer needs and through using
traditional marketing research methods, these needs are not always identified (O’Hern and Rindfleisch 2009; von Hippel 2005).

When consumers are actively involved in the product process, new product ideas are generated and these ideas are more likely to be successful, allowing designers and brands to achieve a competitive advantage (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004).

The significant change of consumers profile has also contributed to this scenario. Today’s consumers demand more than the traditional values of price, quality and speed. They like to be engaged in the process of experiencing the product or service and they like to be provided with opportunities to learn new things. Through co-creating with the community, the consumers become an active stakeholder, both in the interaction and in the context.

At this stage, value creation takes place through the interaction and experience of creating unique products. Through crowd-sourcing platforms, members of a community share ideas to solve a problem and join efforts to create favorable exchange conditions for the community’s benefit (Dell, 2008).

As a consequence, consumers are increasingly connecting to these platforms as a way to engage in compelling experiences and through matching customer value and new business models, innovation in fashion business formats is made possible.

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Abstract
Nowadays people use portable electronic devices both for professional and recreational purposes resulting in a requirement for lightweight wearable electrical equipment. Textile structures being strong, lightweight, flexible and foldable are able to conform to almost any shape are ideal materials for this purpose. Technological innovations appearing in both textiles and electronics have started giving performance related benefits resulting in the innovations of smart and intelligent electronic textiles and garments. Smart textiles are materials that sense and react to environmental conditions or stimuli, such as those from mechanical, thermal, chemical, electrical, magnetic or other sources. Innovative products might be developed with the ability to sense, respond, and adjust to different types of external stimuli and adjust to changes in pressure, temperature or electrical charge. To produce such products, it is necessary to make a textile fabric that has sufficient electrical conductivity to transport a signal to a specific site within the fabric. The necessary conductive properties can be imparted at different stages, during fibre processing, yarn formation, fabric formation or after fabric formation. Thermo responsive and shape memory polymer is used to regulate body temperature. Deposition of polymer on fabrics in micro porous form enables development of breathable garments. Integrated with nano-materials, textiles are imparted with very high energy absorption capacity and other functions such as stain proofing, abrasion resistance, light emission, etc. The smart textiles and garments have applications in the field of protective clothing, work wear with safety communication features, defense, medical for monitoring health care, athletics, leisure, fashion wear etc.

Introduction
A tremendous development of science and technology has been observed since the beginning of the twentieth century due to inventions of electronic chips, computers, the internet, the discovery and complete mapping of the human genome, and many more, which have remarkably improved the lifestyle of the people as a whole. Keeping pace with others, textile and clothing industries having history of many thousands of years have been geared up in the tune of recent advances. Usage and processing technology of natural fibres and manufacturing of synthetic fibres have fetched solid foundations of scientific understanding (Tao X, 2001, pp 1). Synthesizing polymers or textile processing has been rightly diverted through biological routes, which has proved to be environmentally friendly and sustainable in utilizing natural resources. Computers, automation with remote centralized or distributed control, and internet-based integrated supply-chain management systems are majorly governing design and processing and as a consequence the customers are brought very close to the overall chain of management.

The materials and structures that sense and react to environmental conditions or stimuli such as those from mechanical, thermal, chemical, electrical, magnetic or other sources are commonly known as smart materials and structures. Depending upon the extent and uniqueness of reaction, the materials can be classified as passive smart, active smart and very smart materials. A single cell living creature highlighting the fundamentals may be cited as an example of smart structures (Fig 1).
Force, temperature, radiation, chemical reactions, electric and magnetic fields are different forms representing various environmental conditions or stimuli having effects on the outer layer. The cell reacts to these environmental conditions or stimuli in different ways. Movement, changing chemical composition and reproductive actions are the manifestation of all reactions. These effects are detected by sensors in the outer layer. The resulting information is conveyed for signal processing and interpretation.

Electronic textiles (E-textiles) may be defined as multifaceted fibre assemblies that can sense, actuate, communicate and compute data according to the requirement. Through weaving, digital components and electronic devices and interconnections are ingrained in these materials. Components and interconnections remain hidden within the materials as a part of the fabric and surroundings can not create adverse effects on them. Greater flexibility in adapting to changes in the computational and sensing requirements of an application is the inherent property of E-textiles.

Methods of imparting conductive or semi conductive properties to a textile material at different stages of processing and Production Techniques

Various techniques are incorporated during fibre processing to impart electrical properties to the fibres and making them conductive (Kim Anderson, 2004, 17-22). The techniques are draw-blending of metal and textile—slivers, treatment with metallic salts like copper sulphide and copper iodide utilised to coat fibres like nylon, polyester, wool and acrylic, galvanic coating for carbon and graphite fibres, coating fibres with conductive particles suspended in a resin in which a high concentration of conductive particles has been dispersed and vacuum spraying.

Core spinning, yarn wrapping, production of yarn from bi-component fibres, braiding techniques, plying and cabling and novelty yarn production are used to make yarns electrically conductive.

In order to impart electrical properties after fabric formation following techniques are adopted:

**Electroless plating**—plating a metal to a substrate without using an electric current (Ni & Cu) Deposits a metal from an aq. Medium. Metal coating is formed due to chemical reaction between metal ions and a reducing agent.

**Sputtering**—The sputter process takes place in a vacuum chamber equipped with a target (cathode) and a substrate (anode) to be coated. The electrical potential which is applied produces a low pressure glow discharge, known as plasma, between the electrodes. Positive ions within the plasma accelerate towards the target. The target in response ejects atoms into the gas phase which reach the substrate at a high velocity. It condenses and forms a thin layer. Electroless plating, sputtering, evaporative deposition techniques and coating fabrics with conductive polymers can be used. Polyaniline and Polypyrole have been the conductive polymers of choice because they have relatively high electrical conductivity and water solubility and are stable under changing electrical and environmental conditions.

**Evaporative deposition**—Takes place in a vacuum chamber. The metal is heated to a temperature which increases the rate of evaporation. The fabric passes over a water-cooled drum where it is exposed to the vapour of molten metal. The metal (Al) condenses on the fabric surface.

**Conventional coating techniques**—Application of a paste or semi-liquid material such as rubber, PVC or polyurethane to one or both sides of the fabric. On drying, the coating forms a bond with the fabric.
Coating fabrics with conductive polymers – Intrinsically conductive polymer (ICP) could be doped to become electronically conductive. Polyaniline and Polypyrrole have been the conductive polymers due to high electrical conductivity and water solubility. They are stable under changing electrical and environmental conditions. The production techniques are done during yarn formation, weaving, knitting and embroidery stages as shown in Fig 2, 3, 4 & 5.

Conducting fibres are used to produce fabrics for electromagnetic shielding and electrostatic charge dissipation (Khandual, 2006, 79-82). Woven fabrics with integrated sensing elements can monitor biomedical information and environmental conditions around the wearer. Conductive textiles have been produced successfully by using metal wires in woven and knitted constructions, while semi conductive fabrics have been made by impregnating a knitted, woven or non woven substrate with carbon on metal powders. Conductive textiles are also referred to as ‘smart textiles’, which are intended to be active and multifunctional. This can able to sense, respond and adjust to changes in temperature, pressure or electrical charge (Kim Anderson, 2004, 17-22). The electrically conductive network is incorporated into the structure of smart fabrics. This works in accordance with the environment, soft switches, and micro electromechanical systems. It responds appropriately to signals by sensing accurately. A multifunctional interactive product is enabled by incorporation of these devices within the textile structure. This product is to be developed without the need for subsequent sewing of electronic devices.

The development of microfibers as shown in Fig 6 is a very good example, starting from studying and mimicking silk first, then creating finer and, in many ways, better fibres. Microfibres are very passive. They are not only waterproof, but are also permeable to water vapour.

**Working Mechanism of Smart Material**

Smart materials basically consist of three components: sensors, actuators and controlling units. The sensors function as a nerve system to detect signals. Thus the existence of sensors is essential in a passive smart material. The actuators act upon the detected signal either directly or from a central control unit. Sensors and actuators are the essential elements for active smart materials. Polymer materials are tried to function as so-called ‘smart’ or ‘intelligent’ materials (Fig. 7). After the sensor detects a signal, the processor analyses and evaluates the signal. The actuator acts upon the detected and evaluated signal either directly or from a central control unit. There are attempts to make artificial muscle or intelligent actuators (Hirai,T, 2001 p 7). Organic compounds are originally targeted for this purpose. An electric field application is preferred particularly because of the easy control to investigate triggers used for actuation. Very limited polymer materials are investigated from this point
of view and have been known to generate much smaller strain than inorganic materials. On the contrary, when various triggers such as solvent exchange, pH jump, temperature jump, etc. are used, polymer materials such as polymer gels have been known to generate huge strain, although the response and durability are rather poor and they have not been used in practical actuators.

Basics of heat-storage material
Heat storage may be categorized in three types: sensible, latent and chemical reaction heat storage. Latent heat commonly known as ‘phase changed’ heat storage is the most classical way of storing heat. For a long period, materials usually called as phase change materials (PCM) are extensively used for storing latent heat. With a slight temperature change PCM can absorb or release heat according to our desired purpose. In order to utilize the latent heat of fusion to absorb, store and release heat or cold during phase conversions, PCM may be repeatedly converted between solid and liquid phases. The sensible heat capacities of the materials are much less than the latent heats of fusion (Zhang, X, 2001 pp34-57).

The possible applications of heat-storage and thermo-regulated textiles and clothing are under development which can be used for face fabric, linear fabric, thermal underwear, jackets, sports garments and skiwear etc.

Impact of Smart Technology on Fashion
There is always a demand for new varieties designs in the world of fashion. This demand creates a requirement to explore the possibilities of incorporating new technologies in (Amsamani, 2010, pp 38-48) developing new generation fabric and garment. This will lay the foundation to sustain financial and competitive advantages in future fashion.

Many exciting applications in the area of smart garments have been demonstrated worldwide. They are used in space programs, heat generating/storing fibres/fabrics in the arena of skiwear, shoes, sports helmets and insulation devices. The first generation of wearable motherboards having sensors integrated inside garments is capable of detecting injury and health related issues of the wearer. The information can be transmitted remotely to a hospital through servers. To produce a range of high performance fabrics for sea-going garments, shape memory polymers are applied in the form of fibre, film and foam. Smart fibres, in the form of sensors, capable of measuring temperature, stress/strain, smell etc. can be applied to textiles. The moisture diffuses through the clothing and can reach the human skin. As the moisture evaporates, the wearer feels cold and uncomfortable. To detect the position of the wearer, Global Positioning System (GPS) and mobile phone technology, are incorporated in the garments of the wearer. Textile composites integrated with optical fibre sensors are used to reinforce buildings and bridges (Bajaj, P, 2001, p 69).
Moisture that can diffuse through the garment reaches the wearer’s skin, and thus on its evaporation, the wearer might feel cold and uncomfortable. To avoid this undesirable condensation of perspiration in the garment, breathable fabrics are developed. A breathable fabric is waterproof and breathable because of the enormous difference between the size of a water droplet and a water vapour molecule. Breathable fabrics are classified as coated, laminated and high-density woven fabrics. In Nike’s breathable garments the textile is coated with a thin Polyurethane membrane having micro pores. They are developed from the “Fashion x Function” concept (Fig 8a&b). The trendy look is equipped with waterproof, wind-cut, and oil release functions which is the smartest choice for modern urban fashion.

It is light weight, soft, noise free and wrinkle free, which provide modern people with the high capability of daily maintenance. It also has waterproof, windproof, breathability and more features. The idea is to vaporize the sweat produced when wearing on the move, through the micro pores and successfully keep the human body dry and clean. This new technology of Ever Fusion not only allows the wearer to show his/her stylish and trendy taste, but also to find the luxurious experience of wearing.

Another significant developments in breathable waterproof was the introduction of the Gore-Tex rainwear fabric. It is a micro porous polymeric film made of Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). Stimuli Sensitive Materials are embedded in textile structures by micro encapsulation or printing techniques to produce Intelligent fabrics. They are special polymers, packed into micro capsules which act as tiny containers and exhibit changes in response to the external stimuli.

To meet the functional requirement, the core contents are released from the containers, and after stimulation the inherent properties can change favorably. In order to produce temperature sensor fabric, the stimuli (Chapman. K, 2002, pp15-19) sensitive materials are incorporated, which sense the change in temperature in the environment and respond accordingly. These changes may one or a combination of physical, chemical and biological factors such as temperature, pressure, pH, electrolytes, bacteria, fungi, etc.

Temperature controlled fabrics and Garments
In extreme climatic conditions, the wearer requires clothing that keeps him comfortable. In a hot climatic condition a lightweight material and during cold climatic conditions a heavy, bulky material is used by the wearer. A Phase Change Material (PCM) is a latent heat-storage material which can absorb or release heat energy with change in temperature. It is a lightweight fabric, incorporated (Zhang.X, 2001, pp35-37) with, a stimuli sensitive material which keeps the wearer cool or warm, according to the climatic conditions. Phase change materials absorb heat energy when it changes from solid to liquid state to utilize their latent heat of fusion and releases heat energy when it reverts back. Thus the user will feel cool at an extreme hot climatic condition and warm during extreme cold condition.
Shape Memory Fabrics
Shape memory fabrics are made of copolymers of hard and soft segments. In response to external stimuli, the fabric and garment tend to change their physical shape. The fabrics return to their original shapes and sizes in accordance to suitable temperature conditions. They have a metallic look and appear completely different in colour under various light sources. They have easy maintenance and are non-allergenic in nature. The fabrics respond to external stimuli such as light, temperature, electric field etc. and exhibit special functions like actuation, sensitivity and damping. The world of fashion is enamored with such special features of the garments (Hu, J, 2007, pp 39).

Another interesting product known as "Smart Bra" has been developed. It has got special abilities to loosen and tighten its straps. It can also relax and stiffen its cups, thus restricting breast motion which prevents breast pain and sag. The fabric sensors attached to the straps and midriffs of a bra perceives the movements of the breast which prevents the breast clavicles snapping of excessively heavy breasts and, hence, encourages women with large breasts to participate in sports. In response to breast movement, information gathered from the tests will be stored on a tiny microchip that signals to the polymer fabric to expand and contract. This innovative technology will widen the scope for designing lingerie for full busted women and helps them look fashionable without discomfort (Amsamani, 2010, pp-42).

Colour Changing Fabrics
Colour changing fabrics are developed by incorporating chromic materials within the fabrics which changes its colour with the changes in atmospheric condition (Australia. M, 2000). Reversible change in colour of such chromatic materials is termed as "Chromism". Chromic materials change their colour, when induced by the external stimuli. The thermochromic materials are incorporated into fabrics by microencapsulation or printing (Gupta S, 2005). The garment fades with increase in atmospheric temperature, and darkens when the temperature is decreased (Fig. 11).
Conductive Textile
Conductive textile was developed to manufacture wearable electronics, considered as e-garments, having wearable electronic features. It is the futuristic in nature and incorporates more intelligence features through a wide range of micro-systems having minute components developing unique and exclusive products which create a new domain of fashion range. Shape-sensing glove, an LED array display (Fig. 12), and a single-cluster beam forming fabric are some of the e-textiles prototype of Virginia Tech which are embedded with a communicating network of sensors and computing devices and can run for significant period of time (Parker. R, 2002, 59).

The first successful step towards wearable electronics was the ICD+ line at the end of the 90s, which was the result of co-operation between Levi’s and Philips (Marzano.S., 2001). Electronic apparatus such as microphone, earphone, remote control, mobile phone and MP3 player etc. could be put in the specially designed line’s coat architecture. Smart technology using electronic devices in the field of sports is applied T-shirts, jerseys, sports shoes and pulse monitor belts, available from various brands, and are marketed for professional and athletes for training purposes. The electronic data are transmitted via wireless communicative to standard consumer electronics devices; Mp3 players, training watches and iPhone or Android apps.

Work wear with safety communication features
Smart garments have a wide range of applications in the market segment of professional uniform and work wear that enable hands-free communication for a number of professional users including police officers, technical personnel, with easy-to-use radio communications construction workers and many others (Sakthibel. S, 2010, 75). The Functional Hi-tech jacket (Fig. 13) equipped with various electronic devices was designed for fashionable wear and also provides some functional requirement. It can be applied for mountain rescue services having radio communication features. The thermal sensor technology was integrated into the jacket using textile cabling and silicon encapsulation with an alerting system provides fire fighters the required warning signal in case of a critical rise in temperature level.

Accessories and special applications
A running shoe that senses the terrain and adjusts cushioning in a shoe heel for absorption of shock, is designed by Adidas, the ‘Sports Giant’. Presently, it is marketed in the basketball market on a wide range. Bags with integrated controls, and various apparatuses of MP3 player or iPod are the common
applications in this area. Other products with various features have also been in use. For example, a bikini with audio player, a shirt with pre constructed mobile phone, an auto temperature regulated ski-jacket which is also capable of giving alerts about the position of other skiers, etc. are nowadays commonly in use.

Hug Shirts armed with electronic sensors that gauge body temperature, pressure and heart rate. The Hug Shirt allows wearers to give long-distance embraces to loved ones and copies the strength, length, temperature and heart rate of the hug. Time Magazine has quoted the Hug Shirt as ‘one of the top inventions of 2006’ (Loreffrey, 2006).

Researchers at the University of South Australia are working on a special jacket that has wearable computer and facilities of a cell phone, and is termed as a “Smart Suit”. This has “smart hanger and wardrobe” that recharges electronic gear, and synchronizes the suit with a desktop computer upon every hanging. Obviously, these garments with electronic facilities copiously augments the precincts of techno fashion with many interesting and exciting features. For example, a jacket named ‘Musical Jacket’ can play the wearer’s favourite music, stored in a chip. It also facilitates radio. The jacket is capable of showing moving images on the in-built screen. A solar bikini has been developed that overlays the basic swim-suit with narrow strips of photovoltaic film sewn on with conductive thread. The suit produces a five volt output that, can recharge gadgets like the iPod by means of USB connector.

**Defense Application**

Nano-fabrics offer a wide range of possibilities for the military in defense application:
- Instant camouflage to environment
- Manipulate light to make soldiers invisible
- Change a shirt-sleeve into a splint or cast
- Possess built-in sensors of soldiers’ physical condition and location
- Weave radio communications directly into the uniform’s fabric
- Automatically administer medicines and transmit vital signs to distant medics
- Provide impact protection materials and systems
- Provide chemical and biological protection

Clothing with its own senses and brain are integrated with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and mobile phone technology to provide the position of the wearer and directions. The GPS system is applicable for military and occupational products during the battle to detect the position of wounded soldiers in the battlefield. The smart shirt worn by the military personnel in the battlefield detects the position and identity of the wounded soldier, localizes projectile penetration and assesses biological damage. The data is transmitted via satellite to teleoperating surgeons at remote facility and to in-theater contingency hospital. Finally after receiving the information the combat casualty care units deployed for rescue and evacuation procedure.
Self Cleaning Fabrics

Self-Cleaning Fabrics are fabrics which are cleaned by molecular disintegration using the photo catalytic properties of titanium dioxide, which is used in the field of nanotechnology for solar cell applications (Amsamani, S, 2010, p38). The fabric is coated with a thin layer of titanium dioxide particles measuring only 20 nanometers in diameter. This coating of titanium dioxide enables in the continuous disintegration of stains that does the cleaning operation and also maintain a fresh look of the fabric.

Wearable Solar Jacket

Solar jacket is one of the most important applications of solar power for the garment industry. It enables the user to carry, connect and charge their portable electronic and digital devices. The solar panel is located on the back of the jacket (Fig 17). This panel converts the sun’s rays into energy, which feeds a hidden battery pack charger, attached in the lining of the jacket. The charge pack can be wired to all the pockets of power devices such as light, cell phones, pads, MP3 players and other mobile devices (Kumar, A, 2010, p 48). The solar jacket has an integrated charge control and optional battery charger system. It provides the conveniences of backup and always on-demand in the market of smart garment for effective utilization of solar electrical power.

Luminex light emitting fabric

Luminex is a new generation non-reflective fabric that can emit its own light. It is created with various types of yarns that can emit light in different colours. The innovation of this smart fabric has many diversified and useful applications, in a wide domain of areas yet to be discovered. This technology combines electronics with textiles with the use of highly efficient LEDs to spread light safely at very low voltages (Kothari.V.K., 2007, p 69).

Spacer fabric is a three dimensional warp knitted fabric that has unique ability of preventing pile yarns from protruding outwards from the surface (Kothari.V.K., 2007, p 69). This unique variety of warp knit has become very popular in the world of fashion due to unique physical properties, extraordinary diversity of end-use and constantly expanding surface pattern potential to meet fashion requirements.
Active Cooling
The temperature control of human body is mostly dependant on the production and evaporation of sweat. As the sweat in the form of perspiration gets evaporated it carries away the heat energy from the body in the form of the latent heat of vaporization. At very hot and humid climates and at very high physical activity levels it becomes an essential criteria. The ideal ‘active cooling’ textile material should posses good wicking or water transport properties. The material should allow water evaporation next to the skin in order to achieve maximum cooling of the human body.

To investigate the differences of the active cooling properties of Lyocell and polyester fibres, ergometer tests were performed on subjects wearing T-shirts consisting of two halves. The left half was polyester, the right half Lyocell. Both have single jersey with the same construction. It was observed that the surface temperature for Lyocell fabric is higher, suggesting that there is better heat dissipation through Lyocell fabric during high sweat generation as compared to polyester fabric (S. Sakthivel, 2011, p 46).

Smart Jersey and high-tech vest
Fabric area networks enable electronic devices to exchange digital information, power, and control signals within the user’s personal space and remote locations. Smart jerseys are used for athletics (Fig.18) to monitor their physiological conditions, energy levels and for activity monitoring at the time of active sports. Different electronic components such as sensors, actuators, signal processing units, energy supplies and communication systems are integrated in the smart jersey. This multifunctional suit can monitor body signals e.g. respiration and heart rate, internal and external temperature monitoring, wireless communication and chemical detection.

A new generation high-tech vest has been developed to help keep soldiers, firefighters, etc. alive in the extreme temperatures of deserts, mines and major fires. The vest uses a personal cooling system (PCS) integrated inside, which is based on heat pipe technology. It works by collecting body heat through vapor filled cavities in a vest worn on the body (Fig.19). The heat is then transferred to the atmosphere with the help of an evaporative cooling heat exchanger through a flexible heat pipe.

A combination of sensors and small flexible light emitting displays (FLED) can able to receive and respond to stimuli from the body. This enables a warning signal which is necessary to be displayed. The sensors can monitor heart rate, respiration, body temperature, and pulse readings. If vital signals were below critical values, a FLED would automatically display and send a distress signal to a remote location through a wireless communication system.
A future wardrobe is seen in Fig. 21 where pants embedded with computing devices, shirts with embedded sensors along with shoes, belts, buckles and wallets all with sensors and electronic computing systems are available.

Conclusion
The present trend of production of electro textiles and smart garments show nearly the same speed of growth as the conventional textiles due to fast emerging phase in the field of electro textiles. The present versatile advancement in this respect gives exhilarating challenges to the future. Smart garments need proper manufacturing processes and consumer care. Moreover, smart clothing should be produced at a mass-scale and profound improvement regarding washability, and wearability is necessary. There is now a fast increasing demand in the field of fashion and high tech industries need to integrate the technical potentiality and intelligent functionality into fabrics for manufacturing smart garments. Clothing has become carrier of entertainment and communication systems. Keeping pace with this trend, electronics and technology sectors have developed wearable technology in the present decade. At the very outset of material development, designers need to work with close association and consultation with scientists and technologists to ensure seamless integration of technology into diversified and innovative products. These concerted efforts would help to materialize creativity and imaginations to deliver more smart products with intelligent features. Such innovative approach will hoist fashion to a whole new realm and usher a new era in the field of smart textiles and garments.

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Fashioning Knitwear: Case Studies in 3D Conceptualisation

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Abstract
The fully fashioned knitwear industry has been described as conservative in its approach, which arguably is incompatible with the demand of a change driven fashion market. In terms of shape, fully fashioned knitwear tends to conform to classic styles that are knitted in panels and are two dimensional in form. In contrast, fashion aware consumers expect garment silhouettes to conform to current trends. Skilled fashion designers therefore should not only understand how body measurement is applied within pattern making but also how patterns are manipulated to create a wide variety of garment shapes that fit the body. A wealth of literature exists that explains pattern cutting theory and novel pattern cutting techniques. It is difficult to find studies that provide guidance on how body measurement is applied when developing fully fashioned knitwear and the literature tends to describe formulaic methods of garment shape creation. Advancements in knitting machinery specifically complete garment technology, changes the way knitwear is conceptualised from 2D panels to 3D whole garments. The machine builders, Shima Seiki and Stoll, are clearly aware that this presents challenges and opportunities to knitwear manufacturers. They have consequently made considerable investment into the development of new garment templates to inform the design process. However, for knitwear designers to be truly creative, they need to be empowered to fully exploit the tools they are using. If the development of complete garments is reliant on external parties to generate the initial templates, the ability to create garments that reflect both individual brand identity and fashion related silhouettes must be limited. This study therefore evaluates the potential of complete garment technology to empower knitwear practitioners to create innovatively shaped fashion knitwear whilst maintaining brand identity. As a result of this investigation specific factors that constrain the exploitation of the technology within UK knitwear manufacturers have been identified. The study employed qualitative strategies of data collection. Initially, semi structured interviews with representatives from the machine builders provided background information regarding the potential of complete garment technology to create garment innovation. A process to map the UK knitwear industry provided a sampling frame for case study research. Seven companies were found to be utilising complete garment technology, three of these were selected for case study investigation. Interviews, and garment observations were conducted and company documentation was systematically scrutinised. It was apparent that the utilisation of complete garment technology changed the product development process. Particularly challenging for the practitioners was the transition from 2D to 3D conceptualisation. A critical analysis of data from garment observations highlighted key issues in regards to shaping the complete garment. It was evident that outmoded, fully fashioned methods were being employed and the ability to design and develop complete garments autonomously was restricted by a lack of skills. Consequently, the UK manufacturers were heavily reliant on the machine builders as the only providers of garment templates and skills support.

Introduction
Clothing practitioners must understand how to apply body measurements in order to create garments that fit. Fashion garments must conform to short term demands for trend led styles and silhouettes and designers and pattern cutters must consider a whole range of aesthetic details relating to proportion and symmetry (Wesen Bryant 2011). Pattern cutters also need an understanding of anatomy and the kinetic nature of body parts (Jenkyn Jones 2005) and the skills to manipulate 2D fabrics to create a wide variety of 3D shapes (Aldrich 2005).

Keywords
Fashion
Complete Garment
Knitting
3D Design
Body Measurement
Case Studies
Pattern cutting is related predominantly to woven garments. It is common practice to use a basic pattern block, which is constructed using body measurement data known as a size chart (Bray 1986; Beazley and Bond 2002; Aldrich 2004; Joseph-Armstrong 2010). Although methods provided to guide the drafting process can vary they all tend to follow a set of steps that plot the key body dimensions on paper, using points, straight lines and right angles. The armhole depth for instance is drawn at a 90 degree angle to the line that squares the shoulder point to the centre back. The process of constructing basic blocks translates body measurement data into a pattern, defining the relationship between the garment and the body. The block then becomes a tool which can be creatively manipulated in order to produce a wealth of different garment shapes that maintain a controlled relationship to the body (Shoben and Ward 2000).

An alternative method of creating woven garments that conform to the body is to drape or model the cloth directly on to a dress stand (Silberberg, L. 1997). This method is suggested to be helpful for fashion designers as it enables a three dimensional approach (Mee and Purdy 1987). Many pattern cutters will use a combination of drafting and modelling to achieve the desired results (Di Marco 2010). Unlike garments that are cut from fabric pieces, the process of knitting to shape on flat-bed knitting machines creates the fabric at the same time as the garment (Eckert 2001). The development of garment shape is therefore very different, the use of modelling methods are clearly not a logical choice and the pattern cutting process is not generally used either (Power 2008; Brownbridge 2012). The application of body measurement to garments knitted to shape must therefore be considered specifically.

Shaping the weft knitted garment

Traditional fully fashioned garments are knitted as shaped panel pieces on a machine then constructed (Spencer 2001). There are a number of ways to create shape and vary the dimensions of fully fashioned garments (Brackenbury 1992): changes in the knitted structure, alteration of stitch length and fashioning, a process of transferring loops onto different needles to narrow or widen the width. This study focuses on methods of fashioning to shape knitwear.

Commonly fashioning occurs at the edge of a panel but integral fashioning will transfer a number of loops to create a loss or gain in fabric dimension within the body of the fabric. The angle created by the fashioning process can be controlled by the number of loops transferred and the number of courses that are knitted between each fashioning course (fashioning frequency). Only one source has been found that provides guidelines on how to apply body measurement when calculating fashioning frequency to create a knitwear block (Sissons 2010). This method creates a very simple block with no suppression and no differentiation between the back and the front. Literature relating to knitwear practice does not appear to reflect a sophisticated knowledge of the body. Garments have traditionally been constructed as flat 2D shapes and rely heavily on the extensibility of a knitted fabric to provide fit.

Machine developments now provide the ability to create integral 3D shaping to create a similar effect to darts used in woven garments (Brackenbury 1992; Black 2001). Guy (2001) also notes the potential to create 3D shaping but claims that designers need an increased technical understanding of knitwear construction in order understand how to exploit this capability. This lack of technical understanding might shed light on why manufacturers producing fully fashioned garments have a tendency to be conservative and only produce a few classic styles (Walsh 1966; Spencer 2001; Power 2008; Kumar Puri 2010). These tend to be named in accordance with the method used to attach the sleeve to the body, such as the raglan sleeve and set in sleeve. A number of other factors including; poor communication channels and imprecise methods are blamed for restricting design practice (Guy 2001; Eckert 2001). In the UK it is the quality knitwear manufacturers with a rich knitting heritage who are most likely to survive the industrial decline (Mintel 2008). However to satisfy a change driven fashion market there is a need to balance this respect for tradition and heritage with the introduction of newness (McKelvey and Munslow 2003).

Complete garment knitting

Research aiming to develop the ability to knit tubular garments on flat-bed machinery can be dated back to 1940. A number of different methods using two needle beds have been patented (Macqueen 1962; Robinson and Nunnerly Chell 1967; Benetton 1995). Commercial application was not achieved until 1995 when Shima Seiki launched their Wholegarment technology (Gibbons 1995; Millington 1995). The German company Stoll also introduced commercial viability (Hunter 2004; Choi and Powell 2004). It has taken years of development to achieve machines with complete garment capability and there is evidence to suggest that it will take many more before the skills and knowledge to realise its potential are obtained (Mowbray 2002). In recognition of this, both machine builders produce a range of sample garments which contributes to the development of knitting techniques specific to
complete garment generation (Mowbray 2005). The following simplified account of the complete garment knitting process illustrates why more sophisticated technical skills are needed. The development of complete garments forces the consideration of all the component parts of a garment simultaneously. The body and sleeve tubes commence knitting on specific needles with an exact number of available needles between each tube. These needles are introduced to create underarm widening. The three tubes must meet at the correct location to merge. The sleeve tubes can then be gradually moved across and narrowed to eventually create the neck dimension (Brackenbury 1992).

Methods
This study evaluated the potential of complete garment technology to empower knitwear manufacturers in the UK to create innovatively shaped fashion knitwear whilst maintaining brand identity. It focused on the experiences of the technology providers as well as the practitioners who were using it.

A process to map the UK knitwear industry was conducted. Two industry data bases; fame and compass were compared and cross referenced. Trade journals and newspapers were scrutinised to solicit additional information and trade associations related to the clothing industries were contacted. Finally the complete garment machine builders were asked to provide information. A data base was developed providing a sampling frame of UK weft knitting manufacturers.

The second phase of the research was to conduct semi-structured interviews with representatives from the two leading machine builders. Two UK representatives from each company were interviewed face to face, on site in the UK. Two additional interviews were conducted with representatives from the headquarters of each company, one of which was via email. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The analysis process was informed by grounded theory and used a system of coding to identify key themes. The analysis acknowledged that the interviewees were likely to have a vested interest in promoting their own product and therefore may reflect some partial opinions.

To evaluate the impact that complete garment technology has had on knitwear practitioners, case study research was conducted. Three companies were purposively selected from the sampling frame using the following selection criteria:
1) uses complete garment technology,
2) produces women’s garments,
3) UK manufacturer,
4) produces innovative garments.

Three methods of data collection were selected: semi structured interviews, garment observation and analysis of specific company documentation. Interviews were conducted with purposively selected personnel who had knowledge and experience of complete garment product development. The case study interviews were semi-structured with open questions. A total of nine interviews were conducted in the premises of the three knitwear manufacturers. The participants were made up of three designers, three technicians, one technologist, one sales director and one retail director. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Garments were photographically recorded on site. A convenience sample of garments, made available at the discretion of the knitwear manufacturers formed the basis for observational analysis. Details from each garment including: the knit structure, the construction of the shaping, and any special garment features were recorded on a checklist. Analysis of the garments helped to contextualise the interview data and was particularly informative in regards to garment shaping. In addition, journals, marketing information and company websites were reviewed to provide background information about each company. Requests for supporting documentation such as size specification or size charts were also made. The case study interview data was analysed using the coding system informed by grounded theory. Information from the observation checklists was categorised to accord with the themes used for the interview analysis. During the initial stage of analysis, data from each case study was managed individually. The data as a whole was then comparatively analysed. The analysis focussed on the impact complete garment technology had on industry practice and the ability to create innovatively shaped fashion garments for the female body.

Findings and discussion: the machine builders perspective
The interviews with the machine builders suggested that the utilisation of complete garment technology has a considerable impact on the process of product development. It was generally agreed that the technology will provide new opportunities to knitwear designers and technicians in terms of shaping. The sample garments developed by the machine builders were thought to demonstrate innovative shaping methods. They also agreed that complete garments had improved fit. However, when asked to provide the key body dimensions the replies indicated that garment and
not body measurements are applied during sample production. Although UK knitwear manufacturers utilising complete garment technology can download sample garment programmes from the machine builders, it was agreed that this facility was rarely used to recreate a sample. Instead, manufacturers tend to incorporate some of the technical design features into their own knitwear ranges. It was generally agreed that when the machinery was initially purchased, UK manufacturers had copied fully fashioned styles before developing new styles that exploit complete capabilities. Examples of this development were identified as knitted yokes, unbroken knitted patterns and new methods of joining the sleeves to the body. The interviewees recognised that the cost of product development, a lack of skills and a reluctance to experiment inhibited innovative garment design.

Creating 3D garments: the technician’s perspective

In all the three case study companies, the product development teams consisted of designers and technicians. All those interviewed had previously worked on fully fashioned knitwear. The technician’s role was clearly pivotal to the product development process and an extensive period of training was considered essential. All the technicians interviewed admitted to being challenged by the need to conceptualise the garment as a 3D structure, instead of a number of 2D garment panels. The interviews revealed that the garments were knitted on two opposing needle beds with an equal number of stitches on each needle bed to prevent damages. It was common for the technicians to use one needle bed for the front of the garment and one for the back of the garment. Although tubular in structure, the garment was regarded as two flat, equal panels forming the front and back of the body and sleeves. Knowledge gained through experience of fully fashioned development was applied to narrow or widen the edges of these tubes. In one particular case, acute fashioning angles specified by the designers had caused severe production problems. This example demonstrated very clearly the difficulties the technicians faced when transferring outmoded skills and data to a new knitting method. Joining the sleeves to the body was described as particularly arduous and the most difficult area of the garment to achieve good results. The process of generating knit programmes for new garment designs was clearly laborious and appeared to frequently produce unsatisfactory results. To minimise this problem any successful garment programme was used as a template for the creation of new styles. Although the technicians acknowledged that their shaping skills had a direct influence on garment fit, measurement data was only considered in the form of garment dimension, not body dimension. A chest measurement for instance, referred to the dimension of the garment measured across the underarm point. The technicians all complained that the specifications provided by the designers were not accurate and they frequently re-interpreted the information.

Design restrictions: the designer’s perspective

No specific complete garment training was provided for any of the designers interviewed, which was a source of frustration. Designers were found to be far more concerned with the conceptualisation of the 3D garment on the female body and how to achieve satisfactory fit than the technicians. A number of unsolved fit problems were identified by the designers, one common example related to armhole shaping limitations. Fashion was influential and even the designers working for classic and luxury knitwear companies, felt it necessary to comply with trends. The design role included a high degree of trend analysis and at all three case study companies, the designers expressed their desire to create garments that conformed to the fashionable puffball and draped silhouettes of the time. They did not however know how to specify new and untried shaping methods. If they had understood the 3D shaping opportunities that tubular construction offers, it is more likely that they could have met their design expectations. It was evident that the utilisation of complete garment technology had actually exacerbated the role differentiation between designers and technicians.

The propensity for 2D knitwear

Analysis of the garment observation data shows that it was common to conceptualise the tube as two flat panels with shaping localised at the edge of the tube. A particularly interesting example of this is shown in table 1. This garment was an attempt to create a puffball skirt, a shape that should form a 3D balloon like structure around the body. However this example clearly shows that the shaping created by the technician is predominately localised at the sides of the skirt and forms a 2D shape with curved sides. It is indicative of a failure to understand how to create 3D garments within the confines of the needle beds. There were however a few examples of integral shaping used to shape the tube in a way that does create a 3D structure. Table 2 shows a garment where the tube is narrowed evenly around its circumference to shape the shoulders and the neck. The garment observation shown in Table 3 highlights another problem. This garment has been knitted
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KM2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Garment code &amp; description</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>balloon skirt (KM2.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knit structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plain body, rib welt</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovative garment shaping created by integral shaping</td>
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</table>

Shape created by integral fashioning in towards the hem of the garment. Image 2.8.2 shows half the skirt. Image 2.8.3 & 2.8.4 show the integral fashioning undertaken to create the curved shape.

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<th>Company</th>
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<tr>
<td>KM3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Garment code &amp; Description</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Striped sweater (KM3.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>spring</td>
<td>medium</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knit structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1x1 rib</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yoke neckline. Unbroken stripes around the circumference of the garment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nekline with integral shaping to form the neck and shoulders, raglan shaped sleeve.

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<th>Company</th>
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<tr>
<td>KM2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Garment Description</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drape side balloon top KM2.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spring</td>
<td>Small</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knit Structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plain body, pointelle sleeves Rib cuffs and welt</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Image 2.9.3 shows that the garment is made as a 3 dimensional shape creating a drape affect falling diagonally towards the hem line both sides of the garment. The box has been placed on the image to highlight the crease which has been formed during the pressing process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Image</th>
<th>Photograph taken by the researcher of garment purchased from KM2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Table 1 Garment Observation 1

Table 2 Garment Observation 2

Table 3 Garment Observation 3
with 3D shaping and although the shaping is still not completely successful, it is a better example than the skirt in table 1. Unfortunately this top has been steam pressed flat on a board, leaving a crease at the side and damaging the 3D structure. This example shows how difficult it is for knitwear manufacturers to not just shift their conceptual thinking from 2D to 3D but that the manufacturing infrastructure also fails to support this shift.

Technical skills issues
Although it has been widely acknowledged that complete garment technology provides new ways to shape and style knitted garments (Black 2001; Karasuno 2000), this study asserts that both the designers and the technicians were not yet able to realise its full potential. Designers who are expected to initiate the development of garments need to fully understand how to exploit shaping capabilities. Whilst the case study analysis provides considerable evidence to show innovative garment design is possible, much of this innovation was introduced externally through the sample garments produced by the machine builders, who conducted all the training and provided support long after the machinery had been implemented. They were therefore the sole provider of information regarding specific complete garment development. The industry is highly proprietorial in patent innovative garment development. Therefore, Information will only be released in formats that protect the machine builders’ intellectual property. Training that is conducted independently from the machine builders would provide UK manufacturers with an increase in autonomy over design and development processes. However If the specific skills needed to exploit complete garment technology are unavailable within the industry, it is doubtful that they are widely available for training and educational purposes either.

Creating programmes for complete garments involves an understanding of how to create 3D shapes that relate to the body. Within product development processes for woven garments, this is the pattern cutting role. Within knitwear product development teams, an equivalent role is absent. The unsolved fit problems such as the limitations experienced when shaping the armhole, could reflect this absent role. Armhole shaping occurs at the side of the bust and fit problems should consider how the curvature of the bust impacts on armhole shape and fit. This approach to problem solving can only be adopted if an understanding of how to create 3D garments that relate to the body is applied. The female body is a complex geometric shape which changes through movement. The case studies confirm that fit is reliant on the ability of an extensible knitted fabric to conform to the body. Without a methodology to follow that is more than just replicating formulaic methods, knitwear design will be limited.

Conclusion
The study provides evidence to show that designers working for UK knitwear manufacturers utilising complete garment technology were focussing on producing garments that conform to a fashionable silhouette. This aim however was restricted by their own lack of technical skills, and the difficulties experienced by the technicians when conceptualising the garment as a whole 3D structure. There was an over dependence on pre-established garment templates and highly valued technical skills. The only source of specific complete garment support and information were the machine builders. This created a situation where; inappropriate fully fashioned methods, templates and information were being applied within the 3D environment and manufacturers were reliant on the machine builder to supply more relevant information. This study provided evidence to show that this situation limited design autonomy. It was concluded that the development of skills and knowledge within the product development teams was insufficient, restricting design innovation, the creation of fashion silhouettes and opportunities to improve fit.

Throughout this study the evidence indicated that knitwear is not traditionally constructed with suppression to create a 3D structure that conforms to body curvature. It is not deemed necessary to take such an approach as the properties of the knitted fabric enable the garment to stretch and mould to body curvature and flat 2D garments are thought to adequately conform within fit parameters. It was also evident that within the traditional fully fashioned industry, garment panels are shaped or fashioned at the edges of the panels, representing a two dimensional approach. 3D, integral shaping is not generally considered.

There was very little evidence from the case study analysis to indicate that new shaping capabilities to specifically improve fit had been utilised and the majority of the garments conformed to a traditional 2D structure. However, the potential to exploit the 3D tubular structure of complete garments and the shaping capabilities was evident. It can therefore be concluded that UK knitwear manufacturers have not yet fully exploited this potential. A key finding of this study was that traditionally, within the knitwear product development process there are no opportunities to utilise and apply body measurement data. It was also evident from the interview analysis that practitioners, technicians and designers, did not have the skills to relate fit demands to the appropriate shaping
methods. There was a very real lack of knowledge and understanding of the basic principles needed to create fit within a 3D environment. Unlike pattern cutters working with woven fabrics who understand how to create complex garment shapes that fit and flatter the body, knitwear practitioners do not develop these skills. This study not only provides evidence to show that the implementation of complete garment technology demands a high level of specific skills, but it demonstrates an additional need for new approaches in relation to 3D conceptualisation. New methods that specifically relate to the application of anthropometric data to create 3D complete garments are required. It is recommended that further research to investigate how woven pattern cutting methods could inform the development of complete garments is conducted.

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New Dimensions in Knit Design

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Abstract
This paper addresses shifts occurring in knit design pedagogy resulting from a re-think of knitted textile design through new digital knit technologies, leading to new possibilities for 3-dimensional form building, new material qualities and a reordering of the role of the designer. The authors discuss the limitations of advanced digital knitting technology in relation to software that is based on both traditional industrial roles and 2-dimensional approaches for conceptualising and producing knitted product and new textile properties. The paper draws from experimental, practice-based research to critically engage with the limitations and speculate on the potential of these new technologies and methodologies of design and production and the issues they raise for textile design education.

The introduction of electronic, seamless knit technology in the mid-1990s enabled a new mode of textile production; shaped 3-dimensional knitted forms could be produced entirely by machine. The software and user interface for this technology is built around the established knitwear industry roles and goals, requiring a knit technician to produce mass-producible, standardised garment shapes. While widely adopted by garment manufacturers for its economic efficiencies, the design capability of this advanced machinery and its potential for innovative textile production practice remained largely unexplored. This paper suggests a re-thinking of knitted textile design through better understanding of digital knitting systems, 3-dimensional form building and smart materials development.

The work presented in this paper is based on a series of practice based explorations by knitted textile designers, technicians and teachers with access to digital knit technology within the university’s textile research and development centre. Seamless knit design has become a central focus of this centre with innovative 3-dimensional forms being applied across a range of applications ranging from garment to medical and product. A key aspect in the success of these investigations has been in breaking down established roles and knit design methodologies. The authors’ show that a more direct engagement by knit designers with the technology and knit development process allows for progressively, more advanced evolution of knitted forms and creative aesthetic expression. Further, the 3-dimensional nature of the technology forces shifts from traditional 2-dimensional design methods to new design practices. This new, more integrated way of thinking and making with knitted textiles promotes a repurposing of digital knit technologies for aesthetic and form innovation rather than normative knit conventions.

Introduction
This paper discusses shifts occurring in knit design practice and associated pedagogy resulting from a re-think of knitted textile design through new digital knit technologies. This shift in practice leads to new possibilities for 3-dimensional form building, new material qualities and a reordering of the designer’s role and subsequently, their education. The limitations of advanced digital knitting technology are considered with regards to software derived from traditional industrial roles and 2-dimensional approaches for conceptualising and producing knitted product. The importance of the relationship between the design or conceptualisation of a product and the digital and physical making processes in its production are highlighted along with the benefits of this understanding in development of new textile properties.

Historically textiles have been recognised as two-dimensional materials, crafted from fibre or yarn using woven, knitted, crochet, lace or felting techniques. The materiality of fabric emerges from the interlinking of yarns, forming the textural topology of the fabric. Clothing and products are created through the manipulation of these two-dimensional textiles into three-dimensional forms. The textile is folded, cut, pieced together and sewn from flat fabric to the third dimension in the

Keywords
Knitted Textiles
Design
Practice-Based
Research
CAD
Seamless Knitting
E-textiles
semblance of a body or product shape.
The introduction of digital technologies such as CAD and 3-D printing has prompted the development of textiles that are designed and produced as 3-dimensional structures, with textural content and form integrated into the production process. Knitted textile technology has also been developed to provide three-dimensional form building capability, resulting in integrated textile machinery capable of producing ready-to-wear, seamless knitwear with little or no post-production make up necessary. In many areas, digital design and production technologies have generated new methodologies and conceptualisations leading to new areas of application and novel business strategies. However, seamless knit systems, developed primarily for commercial garment manufacturing, have focussed on the time and labour saved in production, rather than design innovation. The old industrial roles of knit designer and knit technician are echoed in the dualistic structure of the software that controls this technology. Further, the software replicates established processes for knit design and manufacturing with a design system based on pattern libraries of standardised garment shapes, even though the technology itself, accessible through the technician interface, has enormous potential to be used in new and highly innovative ways.
The authors propose that a re-thinking of knit design methodology is required to challenge and extend beyond these system limitations and fully utilise the creative capability of the technology. The cases discussed suggest a change in the traditional role of the knit designer, with a need for designers to develop greater technical understanding of the production system so that designs are not restricted by inbuilt software norms. A need for collaborative design models that will support the work of cross and interdisciplinary teams in the development of both new knit textiles and applications is also proposed. Three alternative approaches are discussed from projects conducted by knitted textile designers, technicians, industry partners and educators within a university based research and development centre. These projects address three areas: seamless garment shaping, form development for home wares and knit structures for e-textiles. Drawing from these projects, the paper critically engages with perceived limitations to speculate on the potential of knit technologies alongside developments in methodologies of design and production, the subsequent implication for textile design education and the questions this raises about knit design pedagogy.

Technology

Seamless knitwear technology results from centuries of knitting machine evolution. It was developed to produce knitted garments that are essentially ready-to-wear, with little or no post-production assemblage process necessary. This has many cost advantages for manufacturing companies, because of reduced yarn wastage and lower labour in post-production costs (Choi & Powell, 2005; Underwood, 2009; Yang, 2010; Smith, 2013).

Traditional knitwear design processes are based on the development of a textile swatch, which is then knit to size to produce a front, back, and two sleeves. In this traditional process the main methods of manufacturing are cut, make and trim and fully-fashioned, make and trim, with most methods involving shaped pieces of fabric where shaping has been determined by flat-pattern making techniques.

Figure 1: Knit garment production techniques.
The design systems within the seamless knitwear paradigm continue to promote a two-dimensional cut and sew knitwear design process, with the visualisation of programmed knitwear represented on a flat front, back and sleeve shape. It also uses a scripted design process for creating swatch, stitch structure and colour-ways, which are then added onto flat, two-dimensional silhouettes, resulting in a constrained system akin to a colouring-in tool box. Seamless knitwear technology is successful for mass-production and global markets, where design has become synonymous with pre-programmed silhouettes, embellished with surface decoration, colour or texture. Yet, there is little support within the design system for the textile or knitwear designer who wishes to differentiate their knitwear and explore novel stitch structures or three-dimensional aspects. To access this capability, the designer has to use the technical system 'Knitpaint' which has evolved from, and within, the traditional industry role of a knitwear technician.

Context
The projects discussed in this paper were conducted at the Textile and Design Laboratory (TDL); a research centre supporting innovation through new design and textile technologies based at Auckland University of Technology. The lab houses Shima Seiki knitting machines including a WHOLEGARMENT® (N.SES183-S WG) machine, an accessories machine (SWG 041), a 21 gauge, 32 colour intarsia machine (SWG-173X) and a digital textile printer capable of printing on knitted garments. SDS One CAD design systems are also part of the facility. This technology, along with specialist technical and management staff and associated academic researchers, form the basis of the TDL.

Teaching programmes for the textiles degree, run through the Department of Fashion and Textiles at AUT cover the basic components of a textile degree education within the field of knitwear and print design. Students have training on domestic and hand-flat machines, learning to develop fabric swatches, colour-ways, stitch structures and knitting techniques such as fairisles and jacquards. They are also taught garment construction using cut and sew and fully fashioned techniques. Through these programmes students gain an understanding of basic knitted textile principles, developing both technical and design knowledge of knit structures, fabrics and construction methods. Students are introduced to electronic knitted textile design and production in their second year. This method can become a central focus through work completed within the final year of the undergraduate programme, or through more specialised engagement in postgraduate studies. In gaining an understanding of both technical programming and design knowledge from this early stage students are able to progress to more advanced levels when entering the postgraduate programmes. It has taken several years to implement this staged process. Students who have come through this system into postgraduate study are now beginning to drive new areas of research and application using digital knit technology. Central to this success is the relationship between the Fashion and Textile Department and the TDL, which acts as both a teaching and research support unit.

The TDL also fosters linkages between the university and industry. It supports New Zealand businesses, graduate students and start-ups in design development, prototyping and small-scale production runs, and engages with industry on R&D projects. Further, it facilitates teaching and learning of students and staff from different areas of the university, offering production capability for students and running public workshops to introduce artists, designers and companies to its design and production technologies.

The resident TDL knitwear technician supports both student and industry knitwear developments. For students, developing ideas through the lab also exposes them to industry projects happening within the facility. For example, the development of e-textile design was introduced to the TDL through industry-initiated projects and has since extended into more experimental areas through staff and postgraduate student research. The lab supports a growing community of postgraduate and research staff engaged with digital knitting technology and has enabled exploration of the technology's limitations and potential leading to the development of new design methodologies and areas of application. In turn these insights inform the ongoing evolution and refinement of our courses and approaches to teaching and learning textile design with computerised technologies.

Case Studies
The following three case studies demonstrate the importance of an integrated approach to both design and technical understanding within university based knit design education programmes. They also emphasise the value of a research and development unit such as the TDL, which provides both technical and research support to enable knowledge discovery and innovation. The cases report on two single project studies and one multiple-project study. Though they describe three
different approaches to knitted textile design, all show a blurring of traditional roles within the knitted textile industry and, in the case of e-textile development, a move towards the formation of collaborative teams. This is not seen as a disintegration of roles, but a merging of knowledge boundaries, recognizing the complexities and opportunities for new textile technologies and the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration.

Case Study One: Building new garment forms
Seamless knitwear produced within the fashion arena generally conforms to pre-programmed design silhouettes. This case study references a PhD investigation that focused on re-thinking this approach to seamless knitwear technology from a design perspective. The objective was to ascertain whether it was possible to fully engage with the three dimensionality of knitted garment form-building using seamless technology in a more open design process. This was accomplished through a series of practical experiments working from the perspective of an experienced knitwear designer with a traditional knit design education and little technical CAD training. This lack of CAD knowledge introduced an un-premeditated approach to the use of technology allowing for adaptation of the standardised software through iterative design practice. Challenging the structured, commercially focused system of seamless knitwear technology enabled a haptic and creative design process as part of an integrated design strategy for production. The outcome was a distinctive seamless knitted garment collection that emphasised the three dimensionality of its formation.

The Shima SDS Design System comprises of two major functions, Design and Knitpaint. In a normal production situation, the designer operates within the Design System and the technician utilizes Knitpaint. Initial investigations revealed that there were no pre-programmed seamless garment shapes for a designer to work with within the design component of the SDS One System, other than a glove. This necessitated working in the technical component, Knitpaint. In this module, basic silhouettes of sleeveless tunics, sweaters, skirts or trousers were the only pre-installed garments available to work with. Through the automatic software process, alterations can be made to sizing but there are limited choices for the style/features of these garments, resulting in collections of traditional garment shapes.

The three-dimensionality of seamless knit technology is, to an extent, a mythical concept. New approaches to form can be achieved if a technician programmes a garment from beginning to end in Knitpaint, but this can take many hours and trials to achieve. Addition of shape into the pre-programmed rectangular bodies needs to occur within the original form, creating points of inflection and extrapolation and thus three dimensionally orientated garments. In this project, the creation of directional changes, or vectors, within the knitwear is achieved using the knitting technique flechage: short-row, partial-knitting, or integral-knitting.

The practice proceeded by pushing beyond the limitations of preinstalled garment shapes. To alter the basic tunic shape a new Package, a pac was developed by the technician at the TDL. The imagery for where the pac would be used was drawn on to the front and back of the two-dimensional images in the Knitpaint component as shown in Figure 2. These ‘wedges’ became areas of movement, caused by directional forces being introduced to the basic rectangular form. A series of garments were developed based on this principle. Each garment was developed, knitted, analysed and incrementally altered. Garments were placed on mannequins to observe their lines, proportion and drape and potential improvements noted. In this way a shape lexicon was developed. With each arrangement, a series of different forms were created.

Figure 2. Smith, A. (2011). Screenshots of five tunic designs in Knitpaint, each with a different arrangement of the pacs.
Further pacs were developed for similar movements to be accomplished across the range of pre-installed garment shapes. The TDL technician developed all of the pacs, but once this stage was completed, it was possible for the designer to apply and work with these pacs independently to create new garment shapes. As more practical experiments were completed, the designer built an understanding of design and technological capacities. The resultant garments create singularities of design that, though machined, are not of a standardized shape. They are singular though entirely replicable. They move around a body, creating asymmetrical lines away from the parallel, course to wale lines creating organic forms. Each interpretation of a garment changes with its point of view. The distorting course to wale creates curvilinear shapes, inflective surfaces and, due to the absence of seams, enables free rotation. These unique garment forms were achieved by allowing the designer to become central to the design process. The designer has thus become enabled by the technology and not excluded from it.

This case study suggests that it is possible to work with seamless knitwear technology, without complex technical CAD training, if provided with the right tools (designer packages) and support (technical help). The development of a series of ‘packages’ which elicit interior design movement can easily be applied to standardised shapes. Such a toolbox would enable knitwear design students to utilise seamless knitwear technologies in a more innovative manner, at an earlier stage in their education. This shift would help develop a greater understanding of 3 dimensional design capacities and introduce a means to develop 3D modeling and enhance 3D thinking within design pedagogy. Further, it will open up new approaches to garment shape and design possibilities that better utilise the potential of seamless knit technology.

**Case Study Two: Machine-crafted home wares**

This case study reports on practice-based research completed as part of a Master of Art and Design degree. The project aimed to explore approaches for exploiting the creative capability of seamless knit technology, particularly with regards to its 3-dimensionality and the potential for aesthetic expression in the construction of knitted fabric. The researcher’s background knowledge of knitted textile construction was acquired through undergraduate teaching modules and self-directed research practice in a range of knitting technologies (domestic flatbed, manual V-bed Dubied and Shima Seiki’s electronic V-bed). More specifically, the project began with a basic understanding of the Shima Seiki programming interface, but no exposure to Wholegarment™ software. Significant to the research approach was the intention of retaining a ‘craft’ aesthetic – characterised by expressive, unique and engaging fabrics that invite viewer interaction through their combination of fibre, texture, colour and pattern.

Across design disciplines, the use of industrial technology and the prevalence of CAD/CAM interfaces is often seen to result in a designer’s detachment from design and production processes. A number of issues can result from this detachment, including a loss of the exploratory process, and an inability to realise original intentions (Kettley, 2012; Cochrane, 2007; Smith, 2013). Some practitioners address this detachment by approaching technology as a craftsman would a hand-held tool, such that its use is accompanied by a deep working knowledge of materials and making processes (Cochrane, 2007). It is also suggested that an improved understanding of design and production processes enables the designer’s hand to be applied more directly to the entire process, ensuring creativity along the way.

For this research, the TDL provided a facility where engagement with design and production processes could be maintained, but where the researcher’s technical skill to operate within the
seamless knit environment was lacking. Consideration of a craftsman’s approach led to immersion in a domain more common to a knit technician as a means of developing a technical command of the technology. The intended outcome of the research was prototypes of knitted objects for the home. The choice of a non-garment application provided a framework in which it would be necessary to work outside of the pre-programmed software modules, encouraging a deeper understanding of how the technology operated.

Initially, knowledge was derived via two paths of replication. The first involved a repetitive process of working through the Shima Seiki user interface for a variety of the 3-dimensional garment forms on offer. By repeating the computerised development phase for a single garment with varied design parameters in each repetition a basic understanding of seamless knitting techniques was learnt alongside understanding of the language describing these techniques and their impact on the shape produced. This path did not require any programming skills; rather, the process provided a basic understanding of garment shaping technique and the seamless knitting process.

The second path involved replication of another practitioner’s work. Jenny Underwood’s PhD thesis (2009) includes detailed documentation of selected shaping techniques alongside programming directions. Guided by these directions and assistance from the lab’s technician, programs were written to replicate these shapes, leading to acquisition of basic programming skills. These paths of replication resulted in a small collection of seamless samples shaped using techniques such as widening, narrowing, curves and short-row knitting.

The process of converting selected samples into large-scale finished products prompted a second phase of learning, focussed around self-generated ideas. Aesthetic development of the textiles design focussed on exploration of stitch structures and yarn combinations to determine feasible options within the seamless environment. Also, the forms required closures. With nothing to replicate, it was necessary to develop new, self-generated programs to execute these ideas. This was a time-consuming process involving a large amount of trial and error. Most often, knit programs were tested in production to determine whether they worked as intended. It is difficult to write effective knit programs without an understanding of aspects such as needle movements and carrier arrangement and it was through this phase of programming that a deeper understanding of the mechanical operation of the machine was gained. Essentially, such understanding enables a knit programmer to link program instructions to a specific, physical action at the machine.

These three phases of learning combined to a point where procedural knowledge was combined with tacit knowledge and a deep understanding of the seamless environment. In the earlier stages, textile design and product forms were derived from what the researcher had already seen being produced. Reaching this point enabled ideas to be generated from an understanding of what was possible. This was highlighted with the production of more complex components such as seamlessly knitted corners.

In synthesising these learnings, a final collection of prototypes was developed in which the researcher was able to embrace the technology as a designer, with the knowledge of its creative capability, and of how this capability could be applied into seamless forms; essentially utilising the technical knowledge acquired to access the creative potential of the technology. This resulted in the design and production of a range of prototypical 3-dimensional seamlessly knitted objects for the home.
This research suggests that design and production are heavily linked within the electronic seamless knitting environment and that with technical understanding the technology’s creative capability can be accessed. There is a risk of excessive technical knowledge restricting creativity as designs are produced to fit within known constraints. However, given the vast unrealised potential in seamless technology, it is considered that the opportunities outweigh such risk.

Case Study Three: E-textile structures
The area of knitted conductive textiles or e-textiles has grown at the TDL through a series of projects with commercial R&D partners developing medical and health applications, and through collaborative, university based projects involving staff and postgraduate students exploring expressive e-textiles. Drawing from four of these projects, this case study focuses on the importance of the specialist stitch structure knowledge of the knit designer and its correlation with the knowledge of electronic and computational experts. Texture, as a relation between material, substrate and scale is recognised as a core feature in the conceptualisation of new knitted smart textile compositions where the stitch structure integrates both physical and informational dimensions.

The case study includes observations from projects with Zephyr Technology Ltd (2007-2009) and with Footfalls and Heartbeats Ltd (2011 – ongoing), developing smart textiles for bio-monitoring applications. These projects were organised along traditional multidisciplinary lines with various experts associated with specific technical areas working on discreet parts of the project. For example, in both these projects the TDL’s knit technician worked with the company’s project leader to develop e-textile samples. These samples were tested elsewhere by electronics engineers with feedback to assist further textile development relayed via the project leader. The aim of these projects was to develop greater integration between textile and electronic components.

The Zephyr project involved the development of a knitted garment integrating the functionality of the company’s existing bio-monitoring technology. The challenge was to combine two separate conductive zones on the inside of the shirt to accommodate pressure-sensing pads, with a plain knitted exterior to the garment. Various samples were knitted using textured polyester and nylon in conjunction with conductive yarn and a fine covered elastomeric yarn, which contributed to a better fit. Assessment of the final sample recognised that while the level of conductivity was acceptable it was felt that a tighter fit, particularly in the chest region, as well as the repositioning of the conductive zones, would improve contact with the skin and result in more accurate and consistent monitoring. In spite of this success the company decided not to pursue further garment integration in light of the success of their existing Bioharness wearable technology range.

The project with Footfalls and Heartbeats Ltd., has involved the development of test samples and functional prototypes, experimenting with various conductive materials in combination with different yarn structures and stitch types for applications such as smart compression bandages and garments for medical and health applications. Recent advances in the development of conductive polymer yarns along with increased understanding of ways to optimise performance through stitch structure and more specific areas of product application have led to improved success and commercially sustainable outcomes. However the testing and control of electronic functionality into these products is done by electronics experts in another university, restricting the textile designers fuller understanding of the process.

This case study also draws from two ‘in-house’ e-textiles projects, The Dynamic Textiles Project (2012) that developed expressive smart textiles for dance costumes, and the Sonic Textiles project (2013 – ongoing), which is exploring textile-embedded sound generation. These projects involve
staff and students from the TDL, the Department of Fashion and Textiles and Colab’s Creative Technologies programmes. They have required close teamwork, with the use of open prototyping platforms such as Arduino Lilypad providing an accessible means for piloting ways that electronics and computational ‘intelligence’ can be incorporated into textiles (Joseph, 2013). This ‘open source’ approach has allowed the teams to experiment more freely, develop greater in-house understanding of textile/electronic integration and begin to articulate and share this knowledge. While there are limitations of such platforms, for example in developing ready for market products (Reily, 2009), their value in engaging textile designers with electronics and technologists with textiles is an important aspect of the development of new trans-disciplinary areas and collaborative design methodologies.

Knitted e-textiles are developed through use of conductive yarn and electronic sensing and responsive components. Fine metal threads or conductive polymers, are spun into yarn allowing electricity to travel along through them. These conductive threads are spun commercially with fibres like wool to produce smart yarns that can be used on seamless knitting machines. Within the knitted e-textile, sections of non-conductive yarn can be used to contain or direct current within conductive sections, allowing the development of knitted circuits.

The initial phases of these inquiries focused on sampling and testing of knit structures to measure conductive properties, performance or expressive attributes. Findings have shown that electrical conductivity in knitted e-textiles is affected by yarn composition, stitch structure and the degree of movement or tension within the textile. Electrical current will always flow along the path of least resistance. As knitted textiles are made up of interlocked loops, rather than traveling along the path of the yarn, current will flow across the stitches if the contact between stitches is more direct. Tension, introduced through stitch structure or by stretching the textile, can vary the stitch-to-stitch contact and thus the level of conductivity. Variations in levels of resistance and conductivity that occur when a knitted textile is stretched, for example across the ribcage while breathing in and out, can be collected as data and used to monitor and measure physiological functions such as respiration rate, with the textile acting as a sensor.

Recent developments have begun to explore the application of conductive structures in 3 dimensional forms such as shaped garments or products. There is potential for developing smart textile applications using seamless knit technology and integrated shape design for better fit and comfort. Bio-monitoring requires clear signals with precisely placed sensors and minimal noise generated by any unnecessary movement occurring between body and garment. While the inhomogeneity caused by the lack of integration between textile and electronic parts has been a significant problem in smart textile development, reduction in the size of electronic components and their greater textile compatibility are helping address the problem. Further integration of electronic functionality into yarns and fibres will greatly assist this process (Kirstein, 2013). Seamless knit design opens up the possibility for greater integration, where the shaping and structuring of textile forms can provide more precise process parameters through stitch structure rather than depending on traditional forms of pieced together, cut and sew garment or product construction.

As knowledge in this area is made more accessible and innovative ideas are taken through into commercial production, the demand for textile designers who better understand the relationship between knit structures and integrated electronics, and can bring their specialist textile design knowledge to participate in interdisciplinary teams, will extend beyond R&D arenas into new textile industries. At this emergent stage of the e-textiles field, proprietary R&D for commercial applications is leading the way in terms of technical development. However basic research in the field ‘still has a

Figure 6. Yun, H-J., Alexander, C., Reilly, L. and Joseph, F. (2012). Knitted e-textile sleeve.
long way to go’ (Kirstein, 2013 p.3). In many areas of computational development, there is recognition that more collaborative, open approaches to experimentation and knowledge sharing can support greater innovation. Such collaborative models are very different from traditional research and industrial approaches. While expertise is critical, the way different types of expertise can be brought together to inform new approaches is vital to overcoming problems of integration, durability, reliability, scalability and fabrication. It also requires the introduction of new areas of technical knowledge and better understanding of co-design methodologies in textile design pedagogy.

Conclusion
The projects and approaches outlined in these three local knowledge case studies engage with new technologies, methodologies and applications for knitted textile design and production. The first two studies present different approaches for developing deeper understanding of designing with seamless knit technology for garments and homewares. They highlight the limitations of working with software designed for traditional industrial models of production, and the need for new ways of engaging with and understanding these systems, challenging established roles within the knitwear industry to enable more creative and innovative use of this advanced technology.

The first study explores a way of introducing designers to the Knitpaint system using customised packages that allow the designer to manipulate traditional garment shapes to explore and develop new 3D knitted garment silhouettes through an iterative design development process. The project resulted in a collection of original and distinctive 3D garment designs that could not be produced using traditional cut and sew or fully fashioned methods. The approach suggests an educational method that could be used to help bridge student understanding between existing ‘flat’ electronic design and knitting systems and the 3-dimensional seamless design capability.

The second study recognises the need for designers to gain deeper understanding of both Knitpaint software and seamless production machinery. From an initial process of shape imitation the designer/researcher developed a basic understanding of the relationship between the CAD software and the knit machinery and extended from this into original shape development through an iterative and experimental process. The decision to design furnishings that were not supported by existing garment pattern library templates demanded a more independent design approach which further aided in understanding the technology and its potential. The design confidence that resulted led to the development of 3-dimensional textile products that were aesthetically innovative and offer considerable opportunity for new areas of high-end design application, substantiated by strong interest from potential commercial partners. This case suggests use of an educational method derived from the process of learning through replication, to establish a level of technical understanding which can then support more original and productive design exploration for students wanting to develop specialised engagement in seamless knit design.

Through the analysis of multiple projects, the third case study considers approaches to the development of knitted e-textiles. Aspects of the problem/constraints around the integration of electronic function with yarn can, in part, be addressed through knit structure. The placement and stability of conductive areas can be assisted by the use of seamless knit technology to maximise fit and placement through garment shaping. The study identifies two distinct approaches – one involving specialists working separately on different aspects of projects in a commercial research environment. The second uses a more collaborative, open source model in an experimental research environment that allows for a greater sharing of knowledge.

The approaches described in these studies are very different from traditional knit designer roles, which, based on fashion industry norms, are highly specialised and separate the design from the making of products. Extending the designer’s knowledge of both the digital and the physical making of seamless knit is critical. The studies presented demonstrate that a more direct engagement by knit designers with the technology and seamless knit development process allows for progressively more advanced evolution of knitted forms and aesthetic expression.

If textile design students are to engage in the emerging area of e-textiles they will also need to bridge another sort of divide between the digital and the physical, to develop an understanding of electronic and computational principals and ways they can be integrated into knitted textiles through stitch structures. Open prototyping platforms are a way of beginning to develop such technical and procedural understanding supported by interdisciplinary teamwork and collaborative design methodologies.

The 3-dimensional nature of seamless knit technology forces shifts from traditional 2-dimensional design methods to new design practices. A fourth, temporal dimension is introduced through knitted e-textiles. These new, more integrated ways of thinking and making with knitted textiles promote a repurposing of digital knit technologies for aesthetic and form innovation and for new areas of knit application beyond normative knit conventions. New design opportunities and significant economic
development can be made if our textile teaching and learning approaches can be adapted to address these issues and provide young textile designers with the knowledge and experience to work in these emerging areas of knit design.

References


Note

1. A ‘package’ (pac) is a set of knitting instructions represented by a colour-coded graphical notation. In this case the pac represented areas of flechage.
Abstract

Academic practitioners in higher education have faced several challenges due to changing economic and policy context in the UK. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) highlights the importance of graduate employability indicating that "Embedding employability into the core of higher education will continue to be a key priority of Government, universities and colleges, and employers. This will bring both significant private and public benefit, demonstrating higher education's broader role in contributing to economic growth as well as its vital role in social and cultural development" (HEFCE, 2011, p5). Similar to government policy, employers in the UK fashion industry also emphasise on recruiting "industry ready" candidates with the right skills and competencies for the organisations. John Lewis, one of the largest fashion retailers in the UK, even specifies the skills saying, "I want graduates to have commercial awareness, in-depth knowledge of the job roles and have good grounding".

Employability is, without a doubt, a national "hot topic" and it is key within this transitional economic climate. Within the UK, employability is expected to increase by 170,000 over 2010-15 (sources ONS and Cambridge Econometrics); in reality: employment levels are forecasted to remain below pre-recession by 2015. Even throughout this tough period, there will still be a demand for graduates in the labour market. A premium will be placed on graduates with relevant experience and a good range of generic skills. In addition, extortionate increases in tuition fees has led to much higher expectations from students and their parents/carers in terms of student satisfaction and graduate employment outcomes.

Given this, the issues that emerged highlight the importance of critical reflection from the higher education sector to the following questions: how do higher education practitioners make students employable? Is it really the lecturers' responsibility to enhance graduate employability? Are higher education practitioners not just here to educate students? The aim of this paper is to address these questions in depth and, consequently, reveal an approach of how to make students industry ready and employable.

The result shows a continued need for urgency in ensuring that 'new' graduates are ready and able to contribute to future economic growth through the provision of knowledge, skills and creativity in new business environments. More importantly, this paper reveals a clear successful pathway towards graduate employability. In the findings, the EMBEDDING approach of employability are well explained in detail demonstrating how Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) are actively embedding employability into the curriculum by creating a module to solely concentrate on the needed skill and competence set. From there, employability is taken even further by engaging with employers on a regular basis, through the placement year with visiting tutors/academic mentors, by working with associate lecturers who provide current input from industry and a practitioner's perspective. In addition, guest lecturers, company visits, industry seminars, study visits and trade shows. All of which embed industry practices and enable students to form valuable links and contacts with practitioners and potential employers and be industry-ready.

Introduction

Employability is, without a doubt, a national “hot topic” and it is key within this transitional economic
critically involved in this matter. As research was in lack of considering the views from students and employers who were also effectiveness of the proposed approaches related to embedding employability in higher education work on employability was mainly research-based and conducted scholarly. This may limit the proposed in literature (Cox and King, 2006). However, research further argued that a large body of employability into the curriculum and, as a result, several approaches of implementation have been Brown et al., 2003; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Yorke, 2006). Extensive research efforts on embedding concept with the aim to bridge the attributes between graduates and employees (Harvey, 2005; the following studies suggested that there required a broader understanding of the employability attributes which could cause mismatches between the needs and expectations of the associated industry and its graduate employees (Neumann and Banghart, 2001). In response to those concerns, showed concerns over the lack of correspondence between academic and employability skills. In addition extortionate increases in tuition fees has led to much higher expectations from students and their parents/carers in terms of student satisfaction and graduate employment outcomes.

Academic practitioners in higher education have faced several challenges due to changing economic and policy context in the UK. One of the challenges which has been widely discussed is the evolving role of higher education institutions in enhancing employability of their graduates. Given that, the issues that emerged highlight the importance of critical reflection from the higher education sector to the following questions: how do higher education practitioners make students employable? Is it really a lecturers’ responsibility to enhance graduate employability? Are higher education practitioners not just here to educate students? To answer the questions above this research collected data from 20 key players in industry and 450 students (a mixture of 2nd and 3rd year students). This paper aims to address these questions in depth and, consequently, reveal an approach of how to make students industry ready and employable. This paper will start with the discussion of employability in the UK higher education sector with the aim to set the scene of this study. The theoretical dimensions and reviews of the relevant literature on higher education for employability will also be presented. The literature has indicated that employability should be regarded as a set of subject-related knowledge. This leads to the argument regarding which role higher education institutions play in developing subject-specific approaches for embedding employability into learning and teaching. Next, the research methodology employed in this study will be discussed in order to justify the rationale behind the selection of action research. The EMBEDDING approach then will be presented with the aim to provide answers to the proposed research questions.

Research Context

Recent emerging research trends on employability have echoed the long-standing relationship between higher education and the economy. Embedding employability into the core of higher education demonstrates the broader role of higher education in contributing to economic growth as well as in facilitating social and cultural development. The Enhancing Student Employability Coordination Team (ESECT), founded under this climate in 2002, was identified as an early initiative that supports the higher education sector in its efforts to develop highly skilled employable graduates who can contribute effectively to the national economy in the UK. Since then, the enhancement of student employability has been prioritised in the UK higher education sector as a nation-wide initiative. This highlights the important role of higher education institutions in preparing students for not only advanced subject-related knowledge but also relevant employability assets throughout the student university life.

Higher Education Academy (HEA) defines employability as “a set of achievements- skills, understandings and personal attributes-that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”. This generic definition builds a foundation of embedding student employability enhancement alongside developing subject-specific knowledge into curriculum design. In other words, institutions in the higher education sector must take the lead on developing their unique subject-related approaches towards student employability enhancement in order to accommodate those specific needs and skill requirements emerged in the associated industry.

Addressing the issue of making graduates employable after completion of higher education has been at the centre of employability research in education (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). Prior research showed concerns over the lack of correspondence between academic and employability skills attributes which could cause mismatches between the needs and expectations of the associated industry and its graduate employees (Neumann and Banghart, 2001). In response to those concerns, the following studies suggested that there required a broader understanding of the employability concept with the aim to bridge the attributes between graduates and employees (Harvey, 2005; Brown et al., 2003; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Yorke, 2006). Extensive research efforts on embedding employability into the curriculum and, as a result, several approaches of implementation have been proposed in literature (Cox and King, 2006). However, research further argued that a large body of work on employability was mainly research-based and conducted scholarly. This may limit the effectiveness of the proposed approaches related to embedding employability in higher education as research was in lack of considering the views from students and employers who were also critically involved in this matter.
Employability as a set of subject-related knowledge and transferable skills has also been widely discussed in the literature. One of the most cited employability models, named Key to Employability, considers the aspects of both employability attributes as well as the development of personal and reflective skills that then allow students to develop their individual career path for future success (Pool and Sewell, 2007). This study shed important new lights on embedding employability in higher education as the model has suggested a broader concept of how employability can be embedded beyond programme and curriculum design. New directions of research on embedding employability has then emerged in the literature ever since. Following an extensive research efforts done by prior studies, this paper aims to develop a subject-specific approach of embedding employability that effectively connects academia with industry and, more importantly, benefits the students for employability enhancement in the fashion sector.

Research Method

Action research is a method that promotes collaborative inquiry and reflection in the higher education sector (Guskey, 2000). That is, educational issues are best identified within the context of learning and teaching. By integrating research into the educational context and engaging academic practitioners in research activities, the research findings can immediately be applied and implemented to ensure continuous improvement. Hence, this study applied action research in seeking to address the following issues: (1) how higher education practitioners make students employable, (2) whether it is really a lecturers’ responsibility to enhance graduate employability, and (3) whether higher education practitioners are not just here to educate. Action research in higher education was deemed an appropriate method as it serves the following purposes: making progress on university-wide priorities, building professional culture, and building the reflective practitioner (Baumfield et al., 2012). Unlike traditional research methods, action research is employed to change the current situation for the better rather than to focus on theory development. In other words, action research aims to identify and develop a path towards improvement in a specific area rather than generalise theoretical knowledge explicitly. Thus, there needs a series of tests and monitors on current academic practices and to make necessary changes in order to accommodate feedback and reflection.

The importance of action research on the topic of student employability enhancement has attracted increasing attention within Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). Given the shared commitment to achieving excellence with this specific focus, collaboratively studying the academic practices allows the university to contribute jointly to the achievement of the shared objective. In addition, action research in higher education has become an important platform to engage a group of colleagues who share an interest in common problems at the institutional level.

This study undertook the collaborative approach for research and had the level of focus across programmes at the departmental level. The research team consisted of four colleagues within the Department of Apparel at Hollings, engaging ten employers and 250 students. The research project started in 2012 and will continue as an on-going project for Hollings with aim to constantly monitor both student and employer feedback. Addressing the research questions listed above, a series of interview questions (Appendix 1) were sent out to the industry partners for data collection, for instance: “does MMU meet employers demands?”, “do we meet employers demands and meet their objectives with our students abilities?”, “what are the benefits of employing a placement student?”, “how important is a placement?”, and “do you regard our students as desirable graduates? if so please indicate ‘why’?”. Data were also collected from students (Appendix 2) who had been asked to provide feedback on support and engagement of employability enhancement.

By following carefully the action research process, including selecting a focus on student employability enhancement, clarifying theories of employability in higher education, identifying research questions, collecting data, analysing data, this study proposes a fashion subject-specific employability approach as a result. More importantly, action research allowed this study to not only develop an approach of increasing student employability but also constantly reflect on this proposed approach for continuous improvement.

Result: EMBEDDING Model of Employability

This study suggests original model of EMBEDDING employability into the curriculum, by creating a model to solely concentrate on the needed skill and competency set. Forming partnerships with industry MMU is able to obtain first-hand knowledge as to what skills and competencies they require from the students.

The model was developed from existing research into employability issues and the experience of the authors, who have had both industry and academic experience. The model is implemented into the curriculum on a weekly basis for all current students within the Department of Apparel with the
proposal of rolling it out through the faculties in the foreseeable future. The various elements of employability included in the model are discussed and their inclusion is justified on the basis of existing research. Hillage and Pollard (1998) propose that employability consists of four main elements. The first, a person’s “employability assets,” consists of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The second, ‘deployment’ includes career management skills, including job search skills. Thirdly, ‘presentation’ is concerned with ‘job getting skills’, for example CV writing, work experience and interview techniques. The fourth, a person’s ability to make the most of their “employability assets,” a lot depends on their personal circumstances, for example, family responsibilities/commitments and external factors for example the current poor level of opportunity within the labour market.

At MMU, we encompass all four of these elements by embedding them into the curriculum in the form of our module.

**EMBEDDING**

Employability
Marketability
Business ready
Educating
Dedication
Develop
Industry
Nurturing
Grow

Figure 1; The EMBEDDING approach of highly employable fashion graduates

Employability refers to making our students work ready, by providing them with the knowledge to learn new skills that their future employers require. One of the new skills they need before they even step foot into the workplace is how to proceed within an assessment centre situation. What does it entail and what it is that employers are looking for in them to succeed. At MMU, we create a trial assessment centre within a classroom environment, using real life examples from industry in all of the tasks. The tasks we rehearse are ‘group tasks’, ‘one to one interviews’ and ‘presentation skills’. Marketability refers to developing students who are fit for the purpose within the jobs market and who are in demand with future employers. Developing these students requires a comprehensive knowledge of the Fashion Industry with one key component being trade shows. At MMU, we offer the options to visit trade shows across the world, these enable the students to experience first-hand exhibitions organised by companies in their specific related industry. Many messages are conveyed to the students as to how the companies showcase and demonstrate their latest products, services, study activities of rivals and examine recent market trends and opportunities. The other key initiative allows the students to mix with future employees, enabling good networking opportunities. It also gives the students the opportunity to experience different cultures. The industry partner praised the marketability of our students:

“Generally speaking I have found MMU graduates tend to combine good ideas with commercial awareness which is a key to our business.”

Business ready refers to having all the skills the employer requires when leaving MMU; these are gained through training within the classroom. Over half of our lecturers have worked in industry before joining academia. This gives the students a well rounded and balanced approaches to both theory and practice in the classroom. The lecturers are able to bring their own real life experiences into their teaching giving the students a better understanding of how the theory can be put into practice. Our industry partner provided feedback on business ready by mentioning:

“The students are familiar with both pattern making and commercial software used which is an advantage.”
Educating refers to guiding and providing intellectual, moral and social instructions to our students. As lecturers at MMU, we exhibit an admirable command of content, and possess a variety of pedagogical skills, but we make sure we understand what is going on in our students minds, as the knowledge may be presented and the skill exercised in a vacuum of misunderstanding. At MMU to plan an effective course we take into account the students prior knowledge, intellectual knowledge, cultural background and general experiences and expectations.

Dedication refers that our staff are dedicated in both commitment and quality information to our students. As well as our full-time lecturers we also include associate lecturers within our teaching staff, currently 15 Associate Lecturers that provide MMU with up-to-the-minute industry knowledge contributing to the students insider information from industry. Having these insiders bring current industry life into the classroom and their dedication to making our students industry-ready.

Develop refers to becoming more economically and socially advanced through their studies. To gain these skills we introduce our guest lecturers – Subsequently from industry related roles, guest lecturers provide the students with “real-life” industry experts within their field, which help to develop their economic and social skills. At MMU, we endeavour to bring guest speakers to the classroom covering a whole portfolio of job specific roles, which our courses focus on. The guest lecturers help with CV’s, Cover Letters and the key skills industry requires. In addition they relay their day to day job roles and their past historical climb up the job ladder.

Industry refers to forming close links with industry to form partnerships to work together. These relationships are established through our placement year. MMU provides an optional placement learning opportunity within industry, during the students third year lasting from 36-38 weeks. This is a well-established and respected placement programme through the industry. It provides a dedicated, supportive placement team as well as visiting tutors (lecturers) to support and monitor the student's progress. At MMU, it has been regarded as a great “kick-start” to the students' career, which will gain them valuable skills, experience and contacts. In addition, it will enable them to apply university-based knowledge and understanding to the world of work. Evidence showed how placement can mutually benefit both the student and the employer, an industry partner explained:

"Employing a placement student is beneficial for a number of reasons. It is a fantastic way for us to see if a student is right for our business in a graduate role once they complete their degree and also for the student to see if we are the right organisation for them longer term. Placement students are able to bring fresh ideas to the business and put learning from their course into practice".

Nurturing refers to our students growing and maturing throughout their time at MMU. Central to the University’s mission is the provision of a high quality learning environment for its students that will equip them with skills to enable them to remain effective learners and able to make a significant contribution in their subsequent employment. Key to this provision, and indeed to MMU’s enduring popularity is our ability to offer courses and learning opportunities that are informed by employability, flexibility, research, scholarship, and enterprise. The narratives below show the example how students develop employability with substantial support from the faculty:

"The support of my academic placement tutor throughout my placement was invaluable, from the initial interview stage through to the completion of my placement, providing continuous feedback and helping me to grow not only as an individual and academic student but as a future professional."

Grow refers to developing and expanding students’ knowledge to progress to maturity. We carefully plan and balance the growth of our students and ensure alignment with our academic mission. Just one of the key ways to grow and expand the students' opportunities is provided in students visiting companies in situ, allowing them to put their theory into practice and to see first-hand what the “shop floor” is all about. Working closely with industry to open their doors to enable our students to see the running of a real life organisation. This goes hand in hand with growing knowledge of the industry as well as their communication skills.

Finally, it is essential to recognise that employers will judge graduates on the basis of how successfully they have completed their degree course, i.e. their degree classification, perhaps because this is often the sole measure available to them on their introduction to the student - their CV. There tends to be a case whether the students are entering an occupation with direct relevance to their degree or not and as such there is a need to recognise the central importance of this particular element of graduate employability. However, even though the subject specific knowledge, understanding and skills are still extremely important in many cases, these alone are unlikely to
secure a graduate a job role which they can be both satisfied with and successful in. This is why embedding employability into the curriculum enables our students to gain all round skills and competencies required by future employers.

Conclusion and Implications

From the literature to the research to the implementation, MMU has concluded that embedding employability into their curriculum on a weekly basis has proven a positive step for both students and future employers. Results have shown a continued need for urgency in ensuring that new graduates are ready and able to contribute to future economic growth through the provision of knowledge, skills and creativity in new business environments. More importantly, this paper reveals a clear successful pathway towards graduate employability. In the findings, the EMBEDDING approach of employability demonstrates how MMU is actively embedding employability into the curriculum by creating a module to solely concentrate on needed skill and competence set. From there, employability is taken even further by engaging with employers on a regular basis, through the placement year with visiting tutors/academic mentors, by working with associate lecturers who provide current input from industry and a practitioner’s perspective. In addition, guest lecturers, company visits, industry seminars, study visits and trade shows. All of which embed industry practices and enable students to form valuable links and contacts with practitioners and potential employers and be industry ready.

The implications of EMBEDDING may be summarised as follows: As the result has shown, partnerships with industry need to be established by firstly acknowledging who the industry is and secondly establishing a partnership with a mutual strategic initiative. In addition, establishing staffing career backgrounds to identify the level of industry experience is also key as there is a need for academic staff to be dedicated in contributing both commitment and quality up-to-date information. Finally, students need to understand the importance of both subject-specific and transferable skills and why those skills are being implemented within the curriculum to enhance employability. From the employers view they feel the students come to them with the key skills, however, they require further experience in implementing those skills in a real business environment. Given the research result, Department of Apparel at MMU, aims to continue embedding employability into their curriculum and to review and develop on a term-by-term basis, always working in conjunction with their partners in industry. By so doing, it provides the department with valuable opportunities to constantly enhance the EMBEDDING approach. Regular reviewing and refining the approach will ensure that students can benefit the most from the “up-to-date” method as well as the possible wider application across the entire institution through the reflection process on best practices of embedding employability. More importantly, there is a potential for the proposed EMBEDDING employability approach to be adopted in other higher education fashion institutions with the same objective of enhancing student employability.

References


Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview Questions for employers: -
What are the benefits of employing a Placement Student?
Do we meet employer’s demands and meet their objectives with our students’ abilities?
Do you regard our students as desirable graduates? If so please indicate ‘why’?
Does MMU meet employers’ demands?

Appendix 2

Interview questions for Placement Students: -
What is the value of having an academic tutor?
How important is a placement?
East Meets West: Cultural Empowerment through Fashion Photography

Margo Barton & Emily Hlavac-Green

Abstract
Two tertiary education institutions, Otago Polytechnic located in Dunedin, New Zealand and Shanghai University of Engineering Science (SUES) located in Shanghai, China worked on a collaborative fashion photography project in 2012. The project was structured to engage a community of practice, students and academics, in common goals and to thereby develop the cross cultural pedagogy and research practice of the participants and of their respective institutions.

The ‘East meets West’ project is the second and now ongoing iteration of a research project which derives its structure and theoretical underpinnings from a similar project undertaken in 2008. In the 2008 project, located entirely at Otago Polytechnic, there were two main groups of participants involved, one group, photographers from the School of Art and the other fashion designers from the School of Design. The participants were made up of students, academics and professional mentors. Although the groups were relatively close geographically, being less than one kilometre apart, and both part of the same institution, they brought disparate cultures with them. When the researchers considered the learnings uncovered within the 2008 project, differing cultural approaches and the divergence between ‘art’ and ‘design’ were highlighted. These divergences could be seen as a divide, much like the river which sits between the schools, however we viewed the differences as opportunities to learn from each other’s cultural perspectives. Although neither the 2008 nor the 2012 projects were assessed as part of the students learning, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), a learner-centred strategy applied notably in medical teaching was utilised as the project structure. PBL was selected as it offered participants the ability for flexible application of knowledge, experience and collaboration (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Schmidt and Loyens, et al., 2007).

The 2012 project reached over a larger physical chasm, the Pacific Ocean, and potentially a greater cultural split, with additional challenges, including language. The project took place in two locations, firstly the Western designs from Otago Polytechnic were juxtaposed in the Eastern location of Shanghai and then one month later the project was reiterated with the Eastern designs from SUES juxtaposed in the Western location of Dunedin, all participants were present in both locations. In 2012 the student participants were fashion designers; the academics were either photography or fashion specialists.

As is often the case in action research, the authors of this paper were also the participants. They participated in the 2012 project and critiqued it from this perspective, the authors included one who was an academic on the 2008 iteration and another who was a student on the 2008 iteration and had moved into the role of an academic on the 2012 cycle. The paper is presented as an illustrated reflective conversation between the authors.

Through the active collaborations offered in the project, many layers of learning are uncovered and reframed. All participants are empowered to connect as fashion professionals, to communicate, to navigate and to propel creativity across cultural boundaries.

Introduction
The fashion design industry is undeniably a global one; however it is problematic to incorporate a
global perspective into a predominantly experiential fashion education in some distant locations. This paper records and discusses individual perspectives and the shared experiences of educators and goes on to uncover learnings from the collaborative fashion photography project through personal narratives. The collaboration is between an institution located in a central and highly industrial eastern fashion manufacturing hub of Shanghai, China, with an institution from a remote less industrialized but design-rich western centre of Dunedin, New Zealand. Conversations ensue, we discuss how we attempted to improve understanding of the global fashion landscape for all participants through the new practice of cross cultural collaboration, and in doing so to partially overcome the tyranny of distance and develop intercultural maturity (King, 2005). The outcomes of the project showed that there was merit in the fashion communication project; however the project was not without its challenges.

While cross-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary collaborations are now commonplace in many fashion design educational programmes, in the remote Western location of Dunedin, New Zealand at the bottom of the world, cross cultural collaborations are not as common. A virtual or digital collaboration could be the answer to the problem of geographic locations, Kim and Bonk aptly state in their 2002 paper that ‘cross-cultural research in online learning settings should prove informative and exciting.’ Initial discussions took place via virtual communications, this was a minor element, and was included as a way to help organise the project rather than an integral part of the project.

There are many examples of digital or virtual collaborations in fashion and further afield where learners collaborate via the computer (Chen et al, 2012; DiPaola et al, 2004; Wang, 2011). Virtual is a valid and often convenient method of collaboration, in this particular collaboration we believed that immersion in the others culture would add another level of learning that sat outside the mechanics of fashion photography, and which aligned with the philosophy of experiential learning held close to the heart of Otago Polytechnic. We acknowledge that virtual collaborations may become a part of this ongoing project in the future, and that virtual collaborations do not preclude experiential learning opportunities.

Background
In 2001 fashion students at The School of Design, Otago Polytechnic attempted a shared project with fashion students at a less remote institution based in Australia. This project was instigated to attempt to break down some barriers of distance for fashion students. The 2001 project involved second year students working on a shared childrenswear design brief. Students worked in teams made up from both countries with the view that they would share research and then go on to share the development of the collections. One group of students had the brief as a compulsory element of their second year product development paper. The other group of students had the choice whether to go on to develop the product as a part of a project, or whether to leave the project at the conceptual stage. Although both institutions had the most recent software and hardware available, the technology was inadequate for the job, and frustrations from all parties, including lecturers, led the project to be only partly engaged with, and by only some students.

Even so, the participants valued the experience and the project showed us the potential for a cross cultural educational collaboration. We noted that the technology needed to catch up with the participants’ aspirations to engage if the collaboration was to be virtual.

In 2008 a further cross cultural educational project was undertaken, named the Ute Shoot. Margo Barton, who was one of the two lead academics on the 2001 project, was also lead on the Ute Shoot. In 2008, the collaboration was purely physical, there was no need or desire to incorporate technology; however it is acknowledged that if technology was used, that an engagement virtually could have been more successful at this time. While this project did in some ways break barriers of distance, in that Ute Mahler, a German photographer featured in an exhibition of fashion photography called “Zeitgeist Becomes Form, German Fashion Photography 1945-95” travelled from Germany to New Zealand to mentor students, it was not the prime reason for engaging. The prime reason in the 2008 project was to learn from a master photographer and to create fashion photographs. A secondary rationale was to bring two disparate cultures together, those of fashion based in a School of Design and those of photography based in a School of Art. Through this research project the lead academics of Max Oettli and Margo Barton exposed a number of issues and highlighted some differences of opinion between design and art in an educational context.

In 2012 the East meets West project was developed as a further iteration of the Ute Shoot, this project is the focus of this paper and a discussion follows.

Approaches
The suite of projects was structured within an action research framework, with the aim of engaging
a community of practice in common goals. This methodology supported and improved the understanding of professional practice and learning possibilities, which continue to develop and to inform further projects. An action research approach (Zuber-Skerritt 1992; McNiff, 2002), was used to plan, implement, reflect and re-plan for the projects, to date three iterations have or are occurring. Within this paper Otago Polytechnic staff participants Margo Barton and Emily Hlavac-Green reflected on their experiences from their present points of view. In addition Emily Hlavac-Green brought an interesting perspective, in that she had been a student on the first cycle, the Ute Shoot and was now a lecturer on the second and third iterations the East meets West projects. The learning approach was Problem Based Learning (PBL). PBL is a teaching strategy developed in medical schools, and which is now utilized as a learning strategy in middle schools through to professional education (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Schmidt et al., 2011).

Hmelo-Silver, 2004, p240 stated that ‘It [PBL] is designed to help students
1) construct an extensive and flexible knowledge base;
2) develop effective problem-solving skills;
3) develop self-directed, lifelong learning skills;
4) become effective collaborators; and
5) become intrinsically motivated to learn.’

In the PBL model the lecturer is part of the group and takes on the role of facilitator. Professional practice of the industry in question overlaps with education, thus bringing with it a valuable learning experience for all participants, both academics and students. As is the case within the real world situations, the participants act as a team, and also as an individual within the team. All participants, both students and academics, bring with them their knowledge and understandings of the culture and background which they represent, and take the knowledge constructed back to their respective cultures. In the case of the academics, the knowledge is utilised to inform further teaching and further iterations of the project.

The goal in the Ute Shoot and in the ongoing East meets West projects was the creation of meaningful representation of the work of fashion designers and models through photography. However as the project evolved, so did the goals.

![Figure 1: Action research cycles 1 to 3 from a western perspective](image)

**Cycles**

**Introduction to cycles**

This paper was stimulated by conversations about the experiences of working within this collaborative fashion photography project. We (Margo Barton and Emily Hlavac-Green) are the action research team, we are based in the Western institution and reflect on our practices as both
learners and educators through personal narratives. We are known henceforth as MB (Margo Barton, fashion academic); EH (Emily Hlavac-Green, photography academic).

**Action research – cycle 1, Ute shoot, 2008**

- Collaborating groups: two different cultures within different schools (Design and Art) in the same institution and city
- Collaborators: fashion designers with photographers
- Collaboration focus: fashion photography
- Lecturer input: facilitation, overseeing and mentoring
- Professional input: professional international photographer mentor

This cycle occurred due to an initiative from The Dunedin Public Art Gallery in conjunction with the Goethe Institute who also facilitated the parallel exhibition “Zeitgeist Becomes Form, German Fashion Photography 1945-95”, and the professional photographer/mentor Ute Mahler. After an initial meeting of all interested parties, students formed their own groups and worked in teams of student photographers and student fashion designers. Some teams were made up of more than one photographer, with photographers having shared authorship. As the project occurred during an Easter break, both lecturers and students who took part undertook this in their free time. Although all participants apart from the international fashion photographer were from the same institution, many cultural divides were identified.

**EH:** ‘In 2008 I was a second year photography student at the School of Art. I took part in a collaborative fashion photography project which was overseen by German photographer Ute Mahler. This project provided a scenario for images that were the result of collaboration between each fashion design student and each art photography student.

At this time, Art School teaching was very much comprised of individual projects and collaboration was not paramount. There was a concept-driven mentality, so to pull this back and work with the artistic vision of a designer to create something that shared a combined vision was challenging. This opportunity changed my approach to a working method; I was able to appreciate the need to interpret verbal ideas into visual ideas and draw on the expertise of others.’

**MB:** ‘In 2008 I was one of the lead academics involved in the planning, delivery, reflection and replanning of the projects. I worked on this with an art school lecturer Max Oettli and we structured the shoot to promote collaboration between all of the participants; this included between us, the academics, as we had not worked collaboratively before. Included in the mix of collaborators were the models, who also actively collaborated in the project for no financial gain.

Firstly the fashion and photography collaborators met and showed each other their previous work. They chatted and formed groups of varying sizes, some with one photographer and some with more than one; they gave themselves names such as the Belly Flops and the Zoes. The groups negotiated where and when they would shoot, they determined the type of model required and then negotiated casting with the local model agency AliMcD. We had an initial seminar with Ute Mahler and students had a week to organize the intricacies of the shoot.

One day was all that was available to undertake the shoot, the overall plan for the day was facilitated by the academics, to ensure a smooth, and rather long day visiting and mentoring the teams was possible.

It is worth noting that the location, Dunedin, New Zealand, is a small sized city and that the countryside and city were in close quarters. The day started early morning at the swimming pool, models had been recruited to be someone who enjoyed water, as did the designers and photography assistants who had to also enter the water. This was followed by a bush and lake setting, a sea and rugged coastal setting, a city museum, a street scene, warehouse scene, construction site and finally a restaurant.’

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**Figure 2:** Ute Mahler directing the ‘Belly Flops’, March 2008, model AliMcD Agency, image Max Oettli

**Figure 3:** Ute Mahler directing the ‘Zoes’, March 2008, model AliMcD Agency, image un-credited
While I believe fashion as a discipline can have one foot in product design and one in art along a design art continuum, in this case the two schools of design and of art worked very much in isolation. It is worth noting that at that time the School of Design did not have a Communication Design stream, if it had, it could have been a very different scenario collaborating across the School of Design. Collaboration between the two dissimilar cultures caused us to garner valuable information about each other’s cultures; in particular I learnt how much we didn’t know. These learnings went on to inform changes in the School of Design practices and research directions. The understanding of ownership was of particular note, both main parties (the designer and the photographer) believed they were the prime authors and in that respect they should be the sole owners of the work. On reflection, this is an issue that I should have anticipated, it concerned me, but it did not concern the School of Art lecturer. In addition the status quo in design collaborations was not satisfactory. I had come across numerous students and professionals who had encountered ownership problems as designers, photographers and models. Due to this learning, I initiated a Design Creative Collaboration Agreement in the School of Design. This document is a contract that allows for shared ownership of the outcomes by all parties, including the fashion designer, photographer, model, hair and makeup person and any other collaborator. All of these collaborators are at the beginning of their careers, all of them undertook this as a learning experience and often free of charge. All of the collaborators can use the outcomes in their portfolios, as portfolio building is often the prime motivator for the undertaking.

The Design Creative Collaboration Agreement is now an essential document at the School of Design, and is used by all design students from every discipline when entering collaborations with any external party, as it is by the modeling agency when the model works with an undergraduate student. The document or practice was not adopted by the School of Art.

Action research – cycle 2, East meets West, 2012
- Collaborating groups: two different nations, geographically and culturally dissimilar
- Collaborators: student fashion designers and fashion and photography academics from each institution
- Collaboration focus: fashion photography
- Lecturer input: facilitation, overseeing, mentoring and photography

In the second cycle we used information gained in cycle one to plan the way forward. This project would present a much larger cultural divide, as well as the communication problems of a different language. We acknowledged that global collaborations would be important to both the futures of the learners and the educators, and this project gave us the opportunity to experience it first hand.

In 2012 we reflected that although we had a long relationship with Shanghai University of Engineering Science (SUES), that we were missing an educational opportunity for all participants. I suggested that we use the 2008 Ute Shoot as a basis for an Eastern / Western fashion photography collaboration. Therefore rather than having a stream as the symbol of a cultural rift between the design and art schools, the divide would be the Pacific Ocean. In October 2012 the School of Design was invited to take a group of six year three fashion designers to Shanghai to show in Shanghai Fashion Week and to undertake a collaborative fashion shoot. SUES travelled to the Dunedin to undertake the same the following month. We embarked upon a slightly different undertaking to the Ute Shoot, and assembled a group of six fashion students, our photography lecturer (EH), the director of communications for Otago Polytechnic, a research assistant and me a fashion academic made up the team. The fashion design students were selected as their collections answered the brief suggested by the Eastern institution for 2012 - the green theme and also as they showed diversity in designing. Diversity was an important message we wanted to send to our Eastern colleagues. The diversity criteria meant that selections were not based on grades, and therefore some students who were chosen had a low grade average. From my point of view, one of the most satisfying elements of the project was to observe the C grade student rise to the occasion and create an A grade collection. Another unexpected result of the project was that the peers of the students who were not participating in this project also on the whole outperformed their previous personal bests.

Discussion and group forming occurred virtually; thankfully virtual methods of communication had progressed since 2001, and the dialogue undertaken in the planning of the project went well via Skype. Unfortunately, due to the financial constraints of overseas travel the student participation
was limited to six fashion designers and the collaboration this time was therefore to be within disciplines and between cultures. We did not have the ability to cast models prior to arriving and did this the day before the shoot. All models were student models at SUES studying for a Bachelor of Fashion Management and Performance; all were very able models and keen collaborators. Excluding the head of communications for Otago Polytechnic, none of the New Zealand based participants had travelled to China, and therefore none of us had any idea what we would encounter. One such challenge that was not confronted at home was the necessity to gain permits to shoot, and equally the ability to negotiate an extension of the permit with the officials who invariably did not speak English, as illustrated below.

All of the participants, both academic and students, went to all of the shoots, and at each shoot the fashion designers took different roles, albeit in a very ad hoc manner in the 2012 cycle. In addition fashion designers from the host Eastern institution acted as assistants on the Eastern shoot. Students and staff alike had to problem-solve and to sometimes act in a role within the team that they had not anticipated. However as all were consummately interested in the entire fashion cycle, all had some knowledge of assorted tasks and all stepped up to the challenge of undertaking new roles as hairdresser, as makeup artist or as photography assistant that in their home institution were completed by people specializing in that area, or by professionals.

The use of design thinking at every stage in the project demonstrated to us that all of us were learning while being engaged in this new experience and that the PBL approach did indeed encourage the professional development of both the students and the academics. The academics could be seen to be experts within their fields of photography and fashion respectively but the situation which presented itself added new challenges and with it new learning outcomes. Whilst the students were well versed in the area of fashion photography, they were by no means experts; however they understood the importance of communication with the other members of the fashion shoot teams.

Collaborations such as this are integral to the students fashion design educations, as well as the academics ongoing professional development. The addition of an entirely new cultural setting added a challenge that pushed all to achieve beyond the norm, and hence the results of the fashion photography also were lifted beyond the expected, as demonstrated by the images on the following pages.
Figure 7: designer Soohee Moon, October 2012, models SUES, photographer Emily Hlavac-Green

Figure 8: designer Carolyn Taylor, October 2012, model SUES, photographer Emily Hlavac-Green

Figure 9: designer Olivia Bloxham, October 2012, models SUES, photographer Emily Hlavac-Green
Figure 10: designer Samuel Ralph, October 2012, models SUES, photographer Emily Hlavac-Green

Figure 11: designer Hortense Rothery, October 2012, models SUES, photographer Emily Hlavac-Green

Figure 12: designer Rakel Blom, October 2012, model SUES, photographer Emily Hlavac-Green
In November 2012 the SUES participants, students and academics travelled to New Zealand and undertook their cross cultural experience. From a Western host's point of view this was also a very interesting and highly informative experience for the Otago Polytechnic participants and their peers, and made us acutely aware of our cultural differences. These differences are awaiting further discussion and exploration from our different points of view as Eastern and Western designers and design educators. We concur with Crabbe who stated (2013, p4), ‘We in the West tend to be task-oriented, and the Chinese tend to be culture-oriented.’ The discussion between the Chinese and New Zealand collaborators focusing on learning from our different perspectives will be part of a future research paper.

Conclusion
The action research cycles are now in a third iteration, and as this paper is written in October 2013 the New Zealand participants are about to depart for foreign shores to again experience something that will shift their understanding of fashion practice and expand cultural understanding. There are tangible benefits from engaging in cross cultural collaborations, including the sharing the construction of knowledge (Kim and Bonk, 2002).

When cycle two occurred, all participants, both students and academic staff identified a gap in the make-up of the teams and determined that if the project was to occur again, we not only needed diverse collections, we also needed diverse skills which sat outside being a fashion designer. A roster system for the 2013 fashion shoot was developed and all students nominated where their skills would be best used. In addition a photography student from the communication design stream was included in the cohort as additional photographer and as a photography assistant specifically to assist the photography lecturer.

It is unfortunate that the geographic distance and therefore the cost to travel has meant that the number of students and staff involved is limited. We have made a step forward adding the photography student in 2013, in addition two new fashion academics replaced two from the 2012 edition. This ‘tag team’ system will ensure that there is not only continuity, but that all of the fashion faculty will be a participant in this ongoing project over the next four years. Currently we are researching means that will enable more participation from the communication stream of the School of Design, and in 2014 it is planned that the photography academic (EH) will become a mentor and facilitator rather than the principal photographer on the project. We acknowledge that this may result in some unpredictable results in the fashion communications, and we look forward to these, yet another opportunity to utilize the PBL approach.

Emily Hlavac-Green came from a culture of individual practice at the School of Art, and was thrust into a culture of collaboration, as is the nature of design.

EH: ‘In my role as a professional photographer and photography lecturer, collaboration is absolutely fundamental. It brings to the forefront the skills of each collaborator; it is effective in terms of getting the best possible outcome for a project. Often it is a mix of creative and technical abilities that allows for this. It also exposes and aids in the practise of being able to verbally communicate ideas effectively. Ultimately, a story is built and the best materials come from a range of experts, rather than one jack-of-all-trades.

In our reciprocal project with the eastern institution the importance of communication as a means for partnership is amplified. Instead of cross-discipline, this cross-cultural collaboration spans physical distance and gives our fashion students unrivalled international perspective. Whether that perspective evolves from cross-cultural, or cross-discipline collaboration each are powerful in terms of providing students with the confidence they need to work in ‘real world’ situations that require lateral thinking. Problem solving is continually renewing and stimulating creatively, so in effect, more ideas are likely to be generated.’

Margo Barton, the fashion academic mused on the question, what we can expect from such collaborations in the future?

MB: ‘Whether collaborations are cross-discipline, inter-discipline, or other configurations, any collaboration adds immense value to the learners education, the addition of cross cultural viewpoint gives our students an unrivalled international perspective. It is sufficient to say that such educational experiences are essential to the development of global fashion practitioners. It will equip them to not only be visionary designers, but to also be problem solvers, communicators, and lifelong learners.’

We believe that international collaborative educational experiences are critical to the ongoing
professional development of the designers of the future as well as to those of us who aim to give the emerging designers we teach the very best start in their fashion careers. Such is the power of fashion education.

References


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