



**A Latin American  
Decolonial Fashion Option**  
**An evolution of the Fashion landscape through the  
decolonial option in Latin America**

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## Preface

For years, I thought that I simply was, that my construct of self was my own. In that same way, I learned to live with the color of my skin, even though none of the protagonist on tv, or artist in music videos looked like me, I would search for something within them that I could relate with, as if I had a mental connection with the person on the tv that only he and I were privy to. I also learned to manage what I liked in the world around me, some of those things I could show, some I was not supposed to since I learned from a young age that a lot of the things I liked were not “tasteful”. Now, I know that the world is not really divided in three parts, the third world does not exist. I am just another person born in Latin America, even though my experiences may differ from most, there are things that connect us, we are all children of the colonies. Yet, it is our decision, whether we should all live with a colonial mindset, or break out of the chains that hold our creativity, our knowledge, and ourselves. This is my step, to walk along others the road to delinking and breaking away together.

*“Ultramodernisms and their progress, usually shaped by the American template, are fundamentally tied to our favelas and shantytowns. The paradox is that these don’t change, as neither do misery, hunger, poverty, huts, and ruins. But that is where the future passes by. Here is the option of the Third World: an open future or eternal misery. . . . The creative task of humanity begins to move to other latitudes and advances to the widest and most disperse areas of the Third World. The Third World must build its own path to development—one that is decidedly different from the one taken by the world of the rich from the northern hemisphere. The cultural history of the Third World will no longer be a repetition en raccourci of the recent history of the United States, West Germany, France, etc. It must cast from its heart the “developmentalist” mentality that is the bar that supports the colonialist spirit.”*

Mário Pedrosa, *Discurso aos Tupiniquins ou Nambás* (1975)



## **Resumo**

Esta dissertação pretende analisar a Moda através do prisma da opção decolonial formulada pelo sociólogo e analista político peruano Aníbal Quijano, e aprofundada pelo projeto MCD (Modernidade, Colonialidade, Decolonialidade). A Moda e o seu conhecimento serão estudados a partir da estrutura teórica da matriz de colonialidade desenvolvida por Quijano, a fim de compreender a sua posição dentro das sociedades e de seus contextos coloniais, e tentará propor uma descolonização epistêmica da Moda capaz de recondicionar o seu papel ético e político dentro das culturas. Isto permitirá reorganizar as prioridades da moda, que hoje têm a vida e a cultura ao serviço do estabelecimento (académico e político) para, então, ter as instituições ao serviço da vida e da cultura.

Esta descolonização epistêmica, ou decolonialidade da moda, não está focada em encontrar respostas (absolutos), mas sim em propor outras opções que possam responder às necessidades e experiências da inumerável quantidade de culturas que estão interligadas entre si e que devem ser visibilizadas e validadas através da moda. Ao rejeitar as ideais do pensamento binário, o objetivo é mudar a perspectiva da moda, de vertical para horizontal, que em termos de *Ubuntu* pode “afirmar a nossa humanidade reconhecendo a humanidade dos outros, e em base a isso, estabelecer relações humanas respeitadas entre elas.” (Samkage, Samkage, 1980)

Uma nova opção para a Moda significará a sua reconstrução para que seja implementada a favor de uma verdadeira diversidade, reformando o seu lugar nas culturas do mundo.

## **Palavras-chave**

Moda; Colonialidade; Decolonialidade; América Latina.



# Resumen

La presente disertación procura analizar la moda a través del prisma de la opción decolonial formulada por el sociólogo y analista político peruano Aníbal Quijano, y profundizada por el proyecto MCD (Modernidad, Colonialidad, Decolonialidad). La Moda y su saber será analizado a través del marco teórico de la matriz de colonialidad de poder formulada por Quijano, para así, entender la posición de ella dentro de la sociedad y un marco de vida colonial. De esta manera, será preguntado el rol social y cultural de la moda, no con una visión moderno, de donde fue creada y donde se desempeña, pero trasladandola a la perspectiva colonial, proponiendo así una descolonización epistémica de la misma para re-acondicionarla en virtud a su rol ético y político dentro de las culturas. La decolonialidad de la moda se podrá convertir en el camino para reimaginar su lugar en el futuro, desplazando así las nociones de un estándar único de la moda para así permitir su reconstrucción y reenfocado para que sea incluyente a los intereses de las experiencias interculturales. Esto con el objetivo de dar una opción diferente para que la moda invirtiendo sus prioridades que hoy en día colocan la la vida y la cultura a favor de sus instituciones (académicas y económicas), para tener a las instituciones en servicio de la cultura y la vida.

Esta descolonización epistémica, o descolonización de la moda, está enfocada no en encontrar soluciones (lo *absoluto*), sino en proponer una opción en donde la innumerable cantidad de experiencias culturales que estén tejidas entre sí puedan co-existir y ser validadas a través de la moda. Al desechar el binarismo de la razón, la meta será que mudar la visión de la moda, de una vertical a una horizontal, que en términos de ubuntu permite “afirmar nuestra humanidad al reconocer la de los otros, y así, establecer relacion humanas respetuosas entre sí” (Samkange, Samkange. 1980). Esto significa la construcción de una estructura de la moda que permita la coexistencia de diferentes expresiones culturales que contengan diversidad de género, de razas, cuentos e historias, con esto oponerse a la percepción occidental que las ve a todas como iguales, como una sola entidad.

## Palabras claves

Moda; Colonialidad; Decolonialidad; Látino América.





# Abstract

This dissertation analyses Fashion through the prism of the decolonial option as formulated by Peruvian sociologist and political analyst Aníbal Quijano, and further developed by the MCD project (Modernity, Coloniality, Decoloniality). Fashion and its knowledge will be studied through the framework of Quijano's matrix of coloniality theory in order to understand its position in culture as a social response in a colonial environment, and will propose an epistemological decolonization of Fashion that could recondition its political and ethical role in cultures. This will allow Fashion to reorganize its priorities that today have life and culture in service of the establishment (academic and economic) and having the institutions in service of life and culture.

This epistemic decolonization, or de-coloniality of Fashion, is aimed to focus not on the answers (absolutes), but on proposing an option where the plethora of cultural experiences are interwoven with each other can co-exist and be validated through Fashion. By expelling the binary way of thinking, the goal is to shift Fashion's view, from a vertical one to a horizontal, that in *ubuntu* terms may "affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them". (Samkange, Samkange, 1980)

A new option for Fashion means its reconstruction for it to be implemented in pro of diversity, reforming its presence in world cultures.

# Keywords

Fashion; Coloniality; Decoloniality; Latin-America.



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# List of Acronyms

GRP	Gabinete de Relações Públicas
UBI	Universidade da Beira Interior
MCD	Modernity, Colonialiality, Decoloniality

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Contemporary Latin America exists as the product of mixture. The European colonization exported the western world view to the world, but especially to America, as it was the first experience in the construction of a colonial world, a Europe outside of Europe. As coloniality has become a global phenomenon, the westernized perspective of life is considered the norm, yet for it to be this, pre-colonial world views were affected, some were hurt, some were damaged and others even lost.

This dissertation will analyze Fashion as the cultural development of the modern world. Through the lense of coloniality and decoloniality, focusing on Latin-America, and its history, it will explore, through mixed methods, the impact of coloniality on the constructs of the colonial cultures of the region, and what effect it has had in how Fashion is experienced in Latin culture. An examination of colonial history shall be done to understand the European influence in Latin cultural expression, focusing on the constructs of the western world view over the indigenous one as it is one of the colonial dispositions of control and power.

The analysis will be done using the learnings and research of the MCD Project (Modernity, Coloniality, Decoloniality). The project analyses critically the foundations of the contemporary world by scrutinizing coloniality and the historical process that enabled it to become the foundation for modern life. It also proposes different options for living and viewing the world in the contemporary landscape, that differ from the traditionally eurocentric where western thought is already the main and sometimes the only perspective (Mignolo, 2013). Held by the viewpoint of what is denominated as decolonial thought, the dissertation shall focus on exploring other possibilities of what the Fashion cultural experience could be through an epistemic break of the western colonial mindset that will demonstrate other ways of living within Fashion.

By delving into the colonial landscape of the Americas, thorough research of this colonial history is needed. A chronological retelling of what took place during the inception of the American states is key to understand how and why the west influenced the Americas, as it was in the continent where fragmentation of life began with the birth of the *Colonial Matrix of Power* (Quijano, 1989) with which the European colonizers laid the groundwork to exercise their power among the European imperial states, and



their enslaved and exploited African and Indian colonial subjects for posterity by implementing a system that through a theological and patriarchal philosophy managed and controlled four interrelated realms of their colonial subject's life: economy, authority, gender and sexuality, and knowledge and subjectivity (Quijano, 1989). The power over their colonies did not end with each state's independence movements (Mignolo, 2011), as the matrix of power has morphed and adapted to live apart from the empires, and into the western world constructs as the control is the basis for capitalism and neo-liberal constructs of global economies and political relations between countries, where the relation of dominant and dominated persist today.

The Fashion experience (creation, production, consumption) shall be analyzed under the basis of the MCD Project's research and Anibal Quijano's theory of the *Colonial Matrix of Power* (1989) to understand Fashion's place in the world and the possibility of it evolving not only as a western concept but as a truly global one that may place and validate other knowledges<sup>1</sup> over the western one. As Walter Mignolo (2011) writes in the introduction of *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, "The decolonial option requires a different type of thinking (Catherine Walsh theorizes it as an-other-thinking), a non-linear and chronological (but spatial) epistemological break; it requires border epistemology (e.g., epistemic disobedience)".

Fashion plays a key role in the world today, it is a tool for economical control as shown in Southeast Asia and their dependency on the Fashion market for manufacturing and production of textile and Fashion (Berg, Amed, 2020). It is a tool of authority as demonstrated during World War II with Fashion as a signifier for fascist identity (Paulicelli, 2002), it is a tool to control gender and sexuality by determining through it how each gender should be expressed and represented by (Titton, 2019). It is also a tool of knowledge and subjectivity by determining identity and the perception of self through it (Santos, 2020). Because of this, it is imperative, not only to understand how it affects humanity and its culture, but also, how it can be reconfigured in pro of humanity as a whole, and not only for some. This way, a decolonial option for Fashion that strips it away from the colonial matrix of power can be offered.

To finalize, an interview with the Colombian designer, creative director, and founder of the also Colombian brand A New Cross, Agustín Nicolás Rivero, will demonstrate the possibility of new approaches to Fashion that build upon native knowledge, and the reinterpretation of Fashion from a Colombian perspective, that innovates by utilizing

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<sup>1</sup> *Knowledges*, even though an uncountable noun, will be used as plural to indicate a cosmovision that embraces and accepts as valid, the different knowledge(s) that exist in many world views that those non-western/eurocentric have.

Colombian and Latin American clothing culture by interpreting its knowledge of weaving, textures, and the relation to the world, and applying that to Fashion.

### **1.1 General Objectives**

The general objectives of this dissertation are (1) understanding the relation between Fashion as a western construct and the cultures that experience Fashion as part as a direct or indirect western colony, (2) with this it is pretended to contribute with the exploration of Fashion outside of the unique western worldview, by including different Fashion experiences that embrace other cosmovisions, (3) through a tangible experience of a brand that aligns with the decolonial ideology, the decolonial option in Fashion shall be exemplified to understand it as a viable option for other brands.

By showing a new outlook on Fashion, one that amplifies other worldviews, not done through the appropriation and interpretation by western Fashion, but through the acceptance of true border thinking, where non-westerners can use Fashion as a tool that expresses their culture without the need of a western interpretation and validation.

### **1.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this dissertation are aimed into understanding the acute relations between Fashion and coloniality, and building a bridge for everyone to understand the impact of coloniality not only in the past, but also in the present.

- Establish the process that lead to colonization
- Explain the policies that were born from colonization in Latin America.
- Understand how those policies were globalized.
- Study the colonial matrix of power and how it was formed.
- Demonstrate the links between power, race and modern economy, with Fashion.
- Analyze the effects coloniality has within culture and society.
- Propose the decolonial option as a viable option for the future.
- Demonstrate the viability of decolonialism within Fashion.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The methodology used in this dissertation is in its core a library-based dissertation, the research and analysis is based on bibliography that studies coloniality, decoloniality, race, culture and Fashion. For most of the material, Latin American authors and sources were quoted and researched in order to have a decolonial approach towards the research itself.

The research methodology will have an empirical factor. The last chapter of the dissertation is an interview of Agustin Nicolas Rivero, creative director and founder of a brand that aligns with the ideology of the decolonial option and that is based in a country which was a colony, Colombia. Even though it is only one interview due to the niche aspect of the ideology, and will not be possible to offer cross relation and comparisons of data from other sources, it will facilitate the understanding of what was researched in the prior two chapters and comprehend the implications of it when applied to Fashion in order to understand the viability of the theory that was researched in the chapters prior when executed by a brand.

### **1.4 Dissertation Structure**

The dissertation is structured in 5 chapters. The first one will focus on an understanding of the dissertation itself and its objectives. Its main theoretical foundation is based on the findings and analysis of three authors in the field of decoloniality, Anibal Quijano, Walter mignolo and Arturo Escobar. On the aspects of Fashion, a series of studies from BOF and McKinsey, as well as newspaper article, will be used to correlate the findings on decoloniality with present Fashion reality.

The chapters 2 to 5, are designed to allow a step by step understanding of the colonial to decolonial process. Chapter 2, is aimed at understanding the history that led to colonization and who implemented it, as well as setting the foundations to understanding its power since the colonies till today. Chapter 3 will introduce the matrix of colonial power as established by Anibal Quijano, understanding the matrix's parts and its influence in society. Chapter 4 focuses on the decolonial twist of coloniality, and the understanding of the idea of border thinking and transculturality as written by Madina Tlostanova. In chapter 5 an interview with Colombian designer Agustín Nicolas Rivero, creative director of A NEW CROSS will help see a real life example of the decolonial creative process applied to Fashion.

## Chapter 2

### The colonial mindset

This chapter will focus on understanding the steps and actions put into place in order to build what is the contemporary colonial structure of the west over its present and former colonies. It is the colonial mindset that has allowed the disqualification through the modern history of all non-European signifiers, their worldviews, and ultimately of themselves. This disqualification of self, identity, and culture is what forces the inquiry upon western culture as a colonial enterprise upon the non-western world. As the world evolves, each culture travels through its journey of self-affirmation and begins to take part in a globalized cultural conversation.

The rise of peripheral identities and expressions in regards to the west, in popular mainstream culture, show that the non-westerners are not only in what is a moment of self-affirmation but also at a juncture of economical and societal growth, which western liberalism marks the real sign of progress. Yet the struggle is still visible, as those non-westerners, struggle in a historical linguistic paradox, where even though they constitute a global majority, they are forever perceived as the minority in the global westernized landscape. The narrative of them as *minorities* does not only identify the non-westerners as of less amount (the literal meaning), but conveys a much more insidious identifier for them in the west, and it is the label of “the lesser than”.

*“The nobodies: nobody's children, owners of nothing.*

*The nobodies: the no ones, the nobodied,*

...

*Who are not, but could be.*

*Who don't speak languages, but dialects.*

*Who don't have religions, but superstitions.*

*Who don't create art, but handicrafts.*

*Who don't have culture, but folklore.*

*Who are not human beings, but human resources.*

*Who do not have faces, but arms.*

*Who do not have names, but numbers...[ ]”*

Extract of *Los Nadies*, by Eduardo Galeano (1993)

Galeano's powerful poem expresses the feeling and reality, known and unknown, of those who as the poem describes, are nobodies, or in modern times *invisible* (Daniels, 1986), which upon a colonial mindset, are those colonized and dominated. The reader must leave the notions of the marginalized and/or poor as drama or a personal choice (Frank, 2014) (Morse, 2006) (Worstall, 2015) to understand that this relation of dominion is part of the construction of western society as a whole. Fashion does not escape this notion, as the sustainable movement grows within Fashion, it remains to be seen if the desire for sustainability is for the whole planet or the western fraction of it, as those *others* remain invisible, *nobodies* in the western ideas of progress and development.

## **2.1 The rest and the west**

To prevent any confusion while reading this dissertation, it is to be understood that the terms "the west" or "western civilization", will be used to describe and make the reference of the European and eurocentric actions and a particular system of knowledge (Mignolo, Walter. 2011) that is of European origin. This particular knowledge, which is the colonial knowledge, has a distinction of being critiqued by itself (through its process of western knowledge development), and at the same time validated by itself (again through its own knowledge), ignoring other types of knowledge that exist in the world by placing itself in a hierarchical knowledge podium on top of all others. This knowledge system is referred to as the "Western code" (Mignolo, Walter. 2011), which is a knowledge that is in service to himself and not to all humanity as it decides to take into consideration only its own knowledge development to define what is to be understood by him as global knowledge. There are only a few in history who have benefited and continue to benefit from this western code, which in epistemological terms translates to having "only one game in town".

This code has been safeguarded and perpetuated since the Renaissance (Mignolo, 2011) as it is the basis for the evolution of western thought since the coming of the age of science as the preferred western method to decipher the world in the enlightenment. There has been a great deal of knowledge that has been developed using this code since it is the pillar of the configuration of what modern philosophy and the human and natural sciences are today.

it is important to note as well that this “western code” also possesses a western language(s), in which it not only represents himself but also validates him. Albeit theology, which is one of the most important European pieces of knowledge, was birthed in Latin in a pre-enlightenment era, most of the modern knowledge was generated by the imperial languages of Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, and English. With the end of Enlightenment (after the “western code” had sailed through the world encoding other world views) and with the french revolution affecting the socio-political structures of Europe, it was the French language that was used to drive the second modernity.

Following this, and closer to our contemporary era, it was the German language and more recently the English, that was at the forefront for development and maintenance of the knowledge of the code, as well as for maintaining it out of reach from the non-western world (Mignolo, 2011). Just as language and communication are coded in a western code, knowledge by consequence, created from it, is also coded, making the seeking of communal knowledge in all contemporary spaces of life, a search for knowledge that is not western coded, that which is often referred to as of the “others” (Mignolo, 2017) and amplifying them in a pluriverse arena of knowledge. The seeking for other knowledge that may be applied to (instead of simply appropriating them in a westernized form) forces an epistemic break from the exclusively biased western knowledge to the acceptance of others as equal. In this regards, there is a need of what Anibal Quijano states as de-linking (“*desprenderse*”):

“First, the epistemic decolonization, for it to lead the way to a new inter-cultural communication, an exchange of experiences and meanings, as the base for another rationality that may pretend, legitimately, a form of universality. Well, nothing less rational, in the end, as the pretension that a specific cosmovision of a particular ethnicity be imposed as a universal rationality, although that ethnicity be called western Europe. Because that, truly, is to pretend for a provincialism to have the title of universality”.<sup>2</sup> (Quijano, 1992. Pag. 447)

The pursuit of knowledge has to be put in a position where we can critique this western knowledge and its ideas, this is why, the decolonial option isn’t a source to completely

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<sup>2</sup> Original text translated from spanish: “*En primer término, la descolonización epistemológica, para dar paso luego a una nueva comunicación inter-cultural, a un intercambio de experiencias y de significaciones, como la base de otra racionalidad que pueda pretender, con legitimidad, a alguna universalidad. Pues nada menos racional, finalmente, que la pretensión de que la específica cosmovisión de una etnia particular sea impuesta como la racionalidad universal, aunque tal etnia se llama Europa occidental. Porque eso, en verdad, es pretender para un provincianismo el título de universalidad.*”

withdraw from all western knowledge as a whole, but a moment to broaden the epistemic world view by considering new worlds and knowledges in the same plain as the western one, allowing an understanding and interpretation of the world as a whole, instead of viewing through a single perspective, so it must be said that de-westernization is not in any way an anti-West movement and, therefore, it is not aimed to supersede or replace western hegemony with any other, but have it coexist with other cosmovisions.

De-westernization is not a movement of anti-west but self-affirmation. Yet, there is an aspect of discussion within the perception of westernization and modernity. There is a distinction between modernization and de-westernization as Kishore Mahbubani states: "Modernization means that you want to have a comfortable, middle-class existence with all the amenities and attributes that go along with it—clean water, indoor plumbing, electricity, telecommunications, infrastructure, personal safety, rule of law, stable politics and a good education system. As these societies modernize and become more confident, they are rejecting the Western frame of mind and cultural perspectives they have accepted, or been forced to accept, for the past 200 years" (1998). Yet here, westernization appears as a gift given by the west to its subjects, and that is the main problem within modernity and westernization, a comfortable life can not be perceived as the product of westernization (Mignolo, 2011). De-westernization is not against what Malhubani proposes as modern life, but the pursuit of self-affirmation is in part the search for a solution where it is possible to have that level of comfort in a non-colonial economy, that is, how to modernize, in Mahbubani's word, without reproducing coloniality in such a way that not only the middle class enjoys certain basic standards of living, but also the entire planet. There is a naturalization of the idea that electricity, clean water, telecommunication, and so forth are a product of westernized progress and therefore they are inherently and almost exclusively western construct, yet no connection like this exists, furthermore, it is this arbitrary a connection that obscures the fact that this is an ideological project of westernization that has been made to appear part of the natural unfolding through the retelling of history (e.g., modernity). (Mignolo, Walter 2011. p.46 - p.47). The critique of western construct marks a decisive endeavor in the construction of an environment where non-western world views are perceived as valid, just as capitalism, instead of being marked as detrimental to the construct of society. The construction of this new environment is what will enable Fashion to pursue other knowledges in its evolution, instead of being bound by the need to withhold the western needs of creation, production, and consumption to maintain the classical capitalist system it evolved from.

In no way is this a call to arms to end all registers of knowledge that may have been born through western civilization or influence it. Although it may be an easy solution to apply the same colonialist actions to western thought as they have applied to others non-western, it is that exact action that should be avoided. It would also be incongruence to promote any anti-western knowledge principals, even more through a dissertation like this one in which a western construct such as Fashion is analyzed. In opposition to what has been repeated historically in western knowledge, the objective of the analysis done through this dissertation is to take a different route and “interpret the world in all of its amplitude instead of using general theories and universal ideas” (Boaventura de Sousa, 2017).

## **2.2 Fashion as a western-culture construct**

To be clothed has gone from a matter of survival, as a primordial need to protect ourselves in Maslow’s sense of our primordial needs, it has also been used as a tool for identity, not only individual but also communal (Küchler, Miller, 2005). To this extent, when a person is clothed, it represents itself with what it is wearing, clothing becomes the first layer of self in which a person presents itself to others, as Anne Hollande (1975) claims “People seem always actually to know, with a degree of pain that has required the comfort of fairy tales, that when you are dressed in any particular way at all, you are revealed rather than hidden.”

The construct of Fashion, as a concept, has to be acknowledged as a western culture creation. The common western definition of Fashion as an aesthetic expression at a particular time and place, and in a specific context (Kaiser, 2019), fails to include the notion where other worldviews exist in which dressing is not simply an aesthetic action, but where the dress has a meaning within a community and its cosmovision, and where the notion of “particular time” does not acknowledge the fact that for many, dressing and how you look is an atemporal expression.

Sir Edward B. Tylor (1871) defines culture as a “...complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society”. In this context, Fashion is understood as a knowledge expressed by its individuals in a specific time and context within that culture. this definition, is, by all means, a western one, and following with the colonial dominance of knowledge over the dominated and applying this definition to non-western cultures brings a fundamentally false result, and will fail to understand



other cultural expressions of the dress if those expressions are analyzed not through the specific cultures cosmovision, but within Fashion's eurocentric/western idea of epistemological certainty. As such due to the relationship with the context, time knowledge, and cultural identities, the idea of Fashion can not be not universal, and it must be understood that every culture may have a different notion of the relationship with clothes. Allman (2004, p. 2) found this contradiction when applying western academic analysis to the African dress as Fashion:

“[...] two dominant paradigms [about Fashion]: 1) a cultural studies or historical approach to Fashion and 2) an anthropological or ethnographic approach to dress. The former has been especially concerned with Western Fashion as a system (including production and distribution) that has shifted across time and space, and hence is profoundly historical. It considers Fashion to be an explicit manifestation of the rise of capitalism and Western modernity. Ethnographic studies, on the other hand, have been concerned with a dress more broadly [...]. Leading scholars of this approach, like Ruth Barnes and Joanne Eicher, have insisted that Fashion is not a dress system specific to the West and their work has consistently sought to liberate the idea of “Fashion” from the theoretical clutches of Western modernity. [...] Treating Fashion as a marker of civilization, with all its attendant attributes, is the reason why Fashion has been excluded from the repertoires of non-western cultures. Other codes of clothing behavior are relegated to the realm of costume which, as “pre-civilized” behavior, is characterized in opposition to Fashion, an unchanging, fixed by social status, and group-oriented.”

The action of applying a concept globally is a colonial action upon non-western cultures, as it bestows a foreign concept of the totality of knowledge (Quijano, 1999) to others outside of that understanding of that specific group's knowledge. This action immensely applied by the global European colonial campaign that took more than 500 years, in which the eurocentric knowledge is to be perceived as definite and absolute, and enforced on to other non-western cultures by stripping their world view and replacing it with that of the enforcer (Quijano, 1999). By understanding that not every culture or ethnicity in the world identifies as western modernity dictates, and nor is time and space perceived a constant conceptual truth as perceived by the west, it is possible to discern that the western understanding of Fashion should not be considered universal nor cross-cultural. This is the key point for debate understanding the relationship between Fashion and identity within a pluricultural environment in

modernity, and it's the essence of the debate of the western binary (us/them, human/nature) compartmentalization of life (Escobar, 2007) that is innate to the modern western society.

### **2.3 Domination through - knowledge and ideas**

Culture exists through the communal experience of self in relation to its knowledge, environment, context, and expressions, and in the same way, identity is also constructed through the cultural experience of how a community/group lives. The sociologist and humanist thinker, that developed the concept of *coloniality of power*, Anibal Quijano explained in his article *Coloniality and Modernity/ Rationality* (1999) how even though political colonialism has been eliminated, the same paradigm of colonial domination persists concerning western culture over others. This subordination is not only from non-western cultures to the European, in an external relation as if they were competing as individual subjects, but an internal one, where not only the person is colonized, but cultures and their knowledges of life are colonized as well. This internal colonization is a more profound one, that does not end by simply withdrawing or freeing from the colonized environment, but that lives through generations, being the colonization of the imagination, where it is dominated so deep, that the new colonized vision becomes part of the imagination itself.

As Quijano (1999) further explains in the same article that when colonialism began, it was a product of systematic repression. They did not only suppress the subjects belief systems, their ideas, images, symbols, or knowledge that was not beneficial to that of the global colonial domination, but at the same time, to what they found useful they sequestered and appropriated, as was the case with their knowledge distinctively those of mining, agriculture, engineering, and continued to do the same with their products and work. He further explains “The repression fell, above all, over the modes of knowing, of producing knowledge, of producing perspectives, images, and systems of images, symbols, modes of signification, over the resources, patterns, and instruments of formalized and objectivised expression, intellectual or visual.”

This suppression was followed by filling that new void with the knowledge one of the ruler, imposing his patterns of expression and his belief system, destroying the old and imposing new images and ways of life that may reference what the west views as the *supernatural*. This belief system, which includes images and how the supernatural is represented in life served as a way to restrict and impede cultural production of the

dominated, and served as a tool for social and cultural governance, allowing the dominant to control its subject even when the systematic repression desisted.

Within the culture, the realm that directly influences Fashion, regardless of political colonialism formally seizing to exist, there is still a relationship of colonial domination from the European, also called, “Western” culture, and the *others* (Quijano, 2007 [1992]). Anibal Quijano further explores this idea by stating: “It is not only a matter of the subordination of the other cultures to the European, in an external relation; we have also to do with a colonization of the other cultures, albeit in differing intensities and depths. This relationship consists, in the first place, of a colonization of the imagination of the dominated; that is, it acts in the interior of that imagination, in a sense, it is a part of it.”

Once this relation is understood towards the creative realm, it becomes immediately the relation the western world has had in creation, not only by inspiring it, making it a reflection of the western experience, but also stifling it by making every other experience obligated to part take to the western experience just to be part of the creative culture. Even when a creative expression can step out of the western structure, it will remain held by western preconceived ideas of the world because as Quijano explains, even the interior of the imagination is dominated, in that sense, western thought is a part of the colonial imagination. Although as said before, this is not a war against the west, but a moment of self-affirmation, it becomes overwhelming the impact coloniality has over its subjects, in which even this act of self-affirmation is impossible to be acted upon without a colonial idea within it. This is not a valorization of good and bad, nor right or wrong, but rather a statement to understand how within Fashion as a western tool, an act of self-affirmation can exist when the borders of the west and the others connect, and rather a great opportunity for pluriversality within Fashion as the *others* instead of being dominated by western tools, use the tools at hand for their self-expression through their cultural expression.

An interesting part of this process is when the west uses its notion of creation, to use the other non-western cultural experiences through what travels through a thin line between copying and creative inspiration in Fashion. As the west validates and determines what is *proper* to be part of the cultural landscape, it is them who are able to create and be inspired by African culture, gathering influences of the African diasporas, the urban landscape as ghettos, creating what is called street culture and street Fashion (Hoffower, 2019), and using “indigenous” cultures as an influence, without even understanding their cosmovision, but as the colonizer, it decides what is

deemed to be represented upon the eyes of the western culture, and legitimized by the western elite (Dearo, 2014) (Terto, 2017). In this sense, it is the west that may read the *others* non-western cultures, yet when they themselves seek the value of their own culture, it appears, by western eyes, that it does not have any (Santos, 2019).

## **2.4 The Pluriversality of thought**

When referencing the narrow construction of western thought, which closes upon itself by shutting its doors to all non-eurocentric knowledges, it is necessary to reference as well the opposite to that, an option of that that embraces and coexists with others thoughts, that is pluriversality (Mignolo, 2018). In the words of Walter Mignolo of Duke University and the MCD project, “The pluriverse consists of seeing beyond this claim to superiority and sensing the world as pluriversally constituted. Or, if you wish, pluriversality becomes the decolonial way of dealing with forms of knowledge and meaning exceeding the limited regulations of epistemology and hermeneutics. Consequently, pluriversality names the principles and assumptions upon which pluriverses of meaning are constructed”. (2018) This approach to knowledge grows where western knowledge shrinks, instead of applying the theological intent of the catholic God towards knowledge creation of *one over all*. The pluriverse of knowledge, on the other hand, searches for the knowledge upon all, from the Caribbean to South America, from Asia to south and north Africa to bring into the conversation knowledges that exist, and are practiced, but that through the process of coloniality were not validated by academia and culture.

This process of learning through different pluriversal knowledges, allows new solutions to problems but as well, new conversation through the different knowledges, as it is not a construction one against the other, but of building through what has been learned. As Mignolo argues, “there is no reason to believe that the Bible is or should be universal, but the Popol Vuh is not”, and in the same way, there is no reason to think what culture is valid and the other not, because that would be as violent as saying as one experience of life is valid, but the other not. This discussion of right and wrong drives the debate again, to a binarism of the western knowledge which is exactly what knowledge and its creation should steer away from, even more, when establishing creative patterns relevant to the arts and design, the realm of Fashion.

Although the pluriversal thought might be a difficult exercise, as it requires a delinking from the roots of western knowledge, roots we will refer to in the next chapters, it is in practice the best exercise for knowledge creation in whichever realm of work. It should not be confused with the neoliberal practice of globalization, which unites all to be the same under the values of the west, nor is it an acceptance of knowledges that will impose themselves over others, on the contrary pluriversality celebrates the differences by respecting its origins, it is not an act of making mine, but of understanding where other knowledges form and why they are as valid as others.

“Pluriversality as a universal project is aimed not at changing the world (ontology) but at changing the beliefs and the understanding of the world (gnoseology), which would lead to changing our (all) praxis of living in the world. Renouncing the conviction that the world must be conceived as a unified totality (Christian, Liberal, or Marxist, with their respective neos) in order for it to make sense, and viewing the world as an interconnected diversity instead, sets us free to inhabit the pluriverse rather than the universe. And it sets us free to think decolonially about the pluriversality of the world rather than its universality.” (Mignolo, 2018. p. X)

## Chapter 3

### The colonial matrix of power

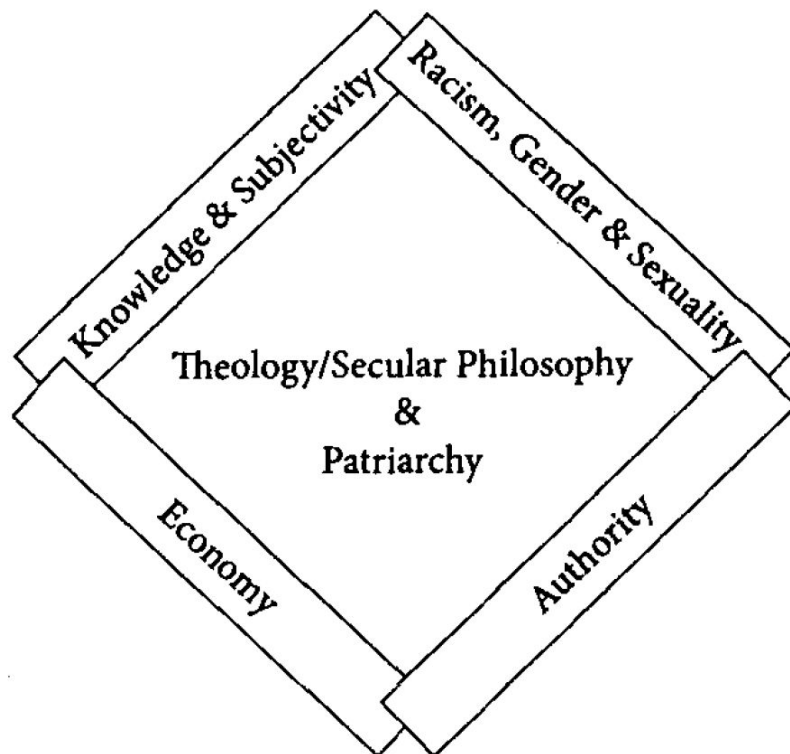
Power through dominance is not put in place as a single instant action, but as a system, one that groups what constitutes a person and subdues him in a systematic approach to control. This process of dominion started when the first boat of Europeans arrived at the now known American continent, willfully by them or not, the importation of European life to a new continent transported a system that developed a new world order that reconfigured reality itself, changing the lives of the natives, owners, and keepers of those lands forever.

What arrived at the Americas to restructure all forms of life and the perspectives on it, was a “European/capitalist/military/christian/patriarchal/white/heterosexual/male” (Mignolo, 2000), to manage such a task, it implemented instantaneously a series of hierarchies upon those colonized. The steps that they took to manage this are explained in the following quote by Walter Mignolo (2000) that is too precise to summarise without losing its essence:

“1, a particular global class formation where a diversity of forms of labor (slavery, semi-serfdom, wage labor, petty-commodity production, etc.) are going to co-exist and be organized by capital as a source of production of surplus value through the selling of commodities for a profit in the world market; 2, an international division of labor of core and periphery where capital organized labor in the periphery around coerced and authoritarian forms (Wallerstein 1974); 3, an inter-state system of politico-military organizations controlled by European males and institutionalized in colonial administrations (Wallerstein 1979); 4, a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that privileges European people over non- European people (Quijano 1993, 2000); 5, a global gender hierarchy that privileges males over females and European patriarchy over other forms of gender relations (Spivak 1988, Enloe 1990); 6, a sexual hierarchy that privileges heterosexuals over homosexuals and lesbians (it is important to remember that most indigenous peoples in the Americas did not consider sexuality among males a pathological behavior and has no homophobic ideology); 7, a spiritual hierarchy that privileges Christians over non-Christian/non- Western spiritualities institutionalized in the globalization of the Christian (Catholic and

later Protestant) church; 8, an epistemic hierarchy that privileges Western knowledge and cosmology over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies, and institutionalized in the global university system (Mignolo 1995, 2000, Quijano 1991). 9, a linguistic hierarchy between European languages and non-European languages that privileges communication and knowledge/theoretical\ production in the former and subalternize the latter as sole producers of folklore or culture but not of knowledge/theory.” (Mignolo 2013. p.70)

Upon refining these aspects of coloniality of power as the dominance of the colonizers over its colonies, Anibal Quijano’s (1989) thesis of the colonial matrix of power shines through as an outline of all factors of dominion in four interrelated domains: the control of the economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labor, control of natural resources); the control of authority (institution, army); the control of gender and sexuality (family, education) and the control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education, and formation of subjectivity).



*Fig. 01 - Schematic visualization of the colonial matrix of power. Mignolo, 2008.*

It is the relation upon these four elements that constitute the life of a person inside society, and precisely because of that, those are the domains of action of the colonial power to govern its subjects' life in totality. As such, the colonial campaign of the 1500s until today would be nothing without the control over its subject's life, as it was not a campaign of simply conquest, it was a campaign to restructure the world to benefit the colonial power itself, constituting a new world order where a unique view of the world was accepted and it was that one that could, in terms of the neo-liberal economy progress, development, growth (Bresser-Pereira, 2013).

The “colonial DNA” as such, to mark what was created through this colonial world, is in almost everything that is created through this structure. Being a colonial system that was implemented globally, this reminiscence of western colonialism is not part of the past, but the architecture for the construction of western society as a whole, from the colonizers to its colonies, from the past to the present. As such, once Fashion is cross-examined within the colonial matrix of power, a series of critiques and different realities surface from perspectives different from that of the western code. It is this epistemological critique, that is done towards the west, that should be done towards Fashion as a western creation, and by doing this, a new form of Fashion, be that a decolonial option for Fashion appears, as a response for the need of Fashion that may respond not only to the western code and its mindset but to a pluriversal view of the world, a Fashion that may validate all cosmovisions that wish to use Fashion as a tool and be validated, instead of Fashion being used to validate and impose the western/eurocentric totality of life on to the non-western *others*.

### **3.1 The creation of a Colonial History**

*“Death doesn't arrive when they grow old, but with forgetfulness”*

Gabriel García Márquez

It appears that throughout western history, some countries are specialized in winning and others in losing. Yet it is through this historical simplification of history itself that it is visible that winner or loser is simply a mark of who is telling the story of what happened. It is often said that history is written by the winner of the battle, although this is true, as we work and study towards understanding and more embracing alternate worldviews than the colonial one, ones that include all of the world experiences, it is necessary to look back in time to see what actions have resulted in the



world we live in today and let society learn and build a future that avoids repeating past mistakes.

The contemporary expression of Fashion as a cultural creation is susceptible to both the western influence over knowledge (primarily as it is a western creation) and that of the culture which creates it or uses it as a form of expression. This process of creation by non-westerns requires an understanding that is not limited to the western immediacy of production, it is sometimes an atemporal cultural manifestation. It becomes as well, for the contemporary youth a mixture of both, as they lived in a state of borders (Escobar, 2013) by being raised in a western colony and bordering with their own cultural heritage, which has only begun to reappear thanks to years an epistemic reevaluation of their own knowledge (bis).

However, the structure that created the systemic social discriminatory and segregational power structure of the codes of race, ethnicity, anthropological, and national are ingrained in those colonized. This eurocentric product of human nomenclature was through the colonial domination assumed as “objective” and “scientific”, helping to naturalize the dominion over non-westerns as a framework of new social relations was implemented (bis) where the west was king and the rest had to follow.

To understand how ingrained colonial thinking is in those who were dominated, we must go to the beginning. There is no way of thinking on how to create a more just and equal future if we don't first analyze and recognize what brought us to this moment in time and made us who we are. In a certain way, because education is part of the matrix of control, we must re-study and rebuild our history. History itself is not a linear process, the historical merits that we've been taught are actually awarded to those who recorded the “historical moment” first. Based on different narratives, we must broaden our perspective and understand that there are several histories, all simultaneous and inter-connected, and not only rely on the one we were taught as children which is the one connected by imperial and colonial powers.

As of this moment in the world, we're doing exactly that, a deconstruction of various social colonial monuments through the reconstruction of history through the eyes of those, not in power. A global history, specifically regarding this project, Latin-American history, that for thousands of years acted invisibly, but that now, as it garners visibility seeks to tell its story and helps us to develop new social constructions with all of humanity and its environment.

It is important to understand that, for this, history is not assumed as a linear process, as in the past, the awards of the historical achievements were given to those who arrived first to tell the story., creating a uni-linear chronology of events (Mignolo, 2013). So to truly have an embracing view of history, it also has to embrace the fact that there are several histories, all simultaneous, interconnected, not only by the western perception but from all of the actors within each historical event. This past assumption of one view is labeled by Castro-Gómez (2013) as the “hubris of the zero point”, where western epistemology created a singular line for history that went hand in hand with the sixteenth-century perception of the all-knowing, definitive idea of God. It was through a theology that the justification for a single point of view for the world was implemented, and by the secularization of this idea, the same perception of all-knowing and definitive was translated to reason and authority, making it last through time in the western perception of the world without the need of a body or place. As Mignolo explains:

“God is everywhere and Reason is immaterial, doesn’t have color, sex, gender and it is beyond any singular memory. It is assumed, however, that the memory that goes back to Greece and back to Rome and the modern six European imperial and capitalist nations of the Atlantic world is the memory of the entire world. For that reason, the ‘hubris of the zero point’ is untouchable. Coloniality of knowledge is precisely the affirmation of the zero points and the success in silencing or relegating other epistemologies to barbarian margins, a primitive past, or a communist or Muslim evil” (Mignolo, 2013. p. 9)

### **3.2 The Creation of Race**

Although colonialism has existed for thousands of years, the type of colonialism exercised in America, specifically in Latin America is unique. The uniqueness of this coloniality of power is in the creation of a new pattern of social domination, one that emerges in this era of conquest, it divided history in two and that is still relevant today, and it’s the concept of race.

The birth and the impact of race upon the world are fundamental to the understanding of any type of analysis done and to be done about dressing through history. Although through this dissertation the spotlight has been put upon Latin American authors to shed light on the analysis from a colonial perspective, it is impossible to ignore that race as a subject of analysis has been compassed by many modern and contemporary

authors in order to comprehend the capitalist and colonial infrastructure of the world today. The relation of class and labor, one of the main focuses of debate regarding the modern marriage of inequality and wealth of the current neoliberal system (Dussel, 2016) would be incomplete without taking into account the first tool of segregation by the social construct of class, race. Regarding Fashion, the analysis deepens as its processes of production as all factory laborers are directly linked to class, gender, and race (Poster, Crain, Cherry. 2016). Fanon (2011) in his text *Racism and Culture*, argues that race is not only an attack of the pigmentation of each being but a more profound attack on the ways of life not of the colonizer.

It is so that race is not only a segregational tool, but also a devaluation of the all that encompasses what a subject is, and further the imprisonment of the subject in a system that has cleansed all trace of his culture, and substituted it from the colonizer's standpoint.

“The setting up of the colonial system does not of itself bring about the death of the native culture. Historic observation reveals, on the contrary, that the aim sought is rather a continued agony than a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture. This culture, once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression. Both present and mummified, it testifies against its members. It defines them in fact without appeal. The cultural mummification leads to a mummification of individual thinking. The apathy so universally noted among colonial peoples is but the logical consequence of this operation. The reproach of inertia constantly directed at "the native" is utterly dishonest. As though it were possible for a man to evolve otherwise than within the framework of a culture that recognizes him and that he decides to assume.” (Fanon, P.34)

It by this system, that it is allowed by the west to disregard and invalidate all expression of culture that is non-western, and that if in turn, they perceive them of value, it is them who will interpret that as inspiration, as if done by the dominated, it will be of no value, as they do not know the value of things in this system (Mignolo, 2013).

This is why in Quijano's matrix of coloniality (1989) one of the four axis of control is the axis of race or racial power. This colonial creation, which is not biological segmentation but a man-made societal segregational form of class structure, determined the starting for coloniality as it was the seed with which the distinction from the European and the others was made. In 1560 and 1561, in Valladolid, Spain, the Valladolid Debate took

place. It brought together, order by the King of Spain Charles V, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and Bartolomé de Las Casas to debate a matter that was creating friction within the colonizing campaign, the matter was simple: Are these creatures (natives) human, semi-human, or something new? Do they have souls or not? Should they have rights or not? As Bartolomé de Las Casas tried to defend the natives from the cruel treatment received by the colonizers, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda was eager to show that they had no right to any kind treatment because of their savage nature. The debate culminated with a conclusion that was backed up by a papal decree that ordained them as human, yes, but pagan, and in that way, to receive a “human” treatment, they must be inserted into Christianity (Quijano, 2015).

What's interesting is that after 5 centuries, this idea of inferiority still persists, so much that it has penetrated the social system, and even as they are admitted as human beings, humans of the lowest category.

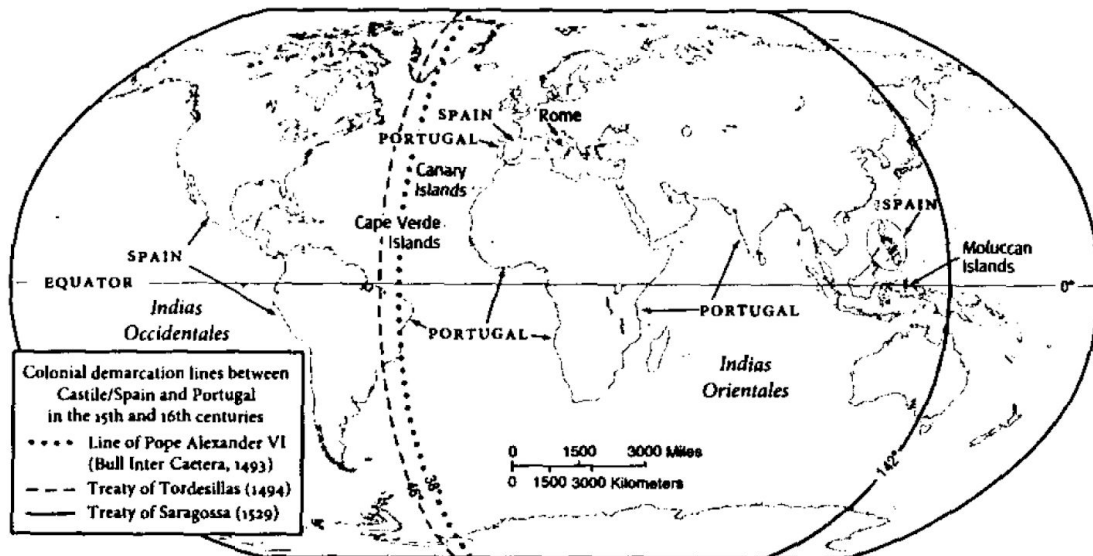
Their identities and knowledge were expropriated as they were submitted into slavery, with this, their identities erased from history. Them, who were once known as Wayuu, Azteca, Inca, Apache, Maya, Muisca, Caribe, and many, many more, after 300 years of domination were known as Indians. This name, that for the west identifies millions, of different ethnicities and histories, doesn't even have a real identity. Accidental Indians, in reference to what historian Robert Finley (2000) named as Accidental Indies in reference to the failed attempt by the west to reach India that by chance, unwillingly made them disembark on the Americas and made all of its continental inhabitants, with all their differences, be compiled as one, with a name that was subjected to them (unknowingly to the colonizers at the time) by mistake. It is this way, that the first glimpses of the idea of a race were created by the west, producing the first of new identities that would fill in the statues of power, the first of these, aside of the European, was the Indian, that has its birth in the Americas. It is this way, that through the process of colonization, a concept that did not exist before the 1500s was created: the concept of race.



*Fig. 02 - Blonde & Brunette Indian & Indian.* Geiger, Anna Bella, 2014.

As Quijano (2015) continues to explain the process that led to the birth of the concept of race in America through the colonization of the Americas, he continues by explaining how the new formation of the Americas, the European conquerors brought their exacerbated ideology that used the concept of God to deliver a notion of vertical-patriarchal order of submission where every woman, is by nature inferior to every man. This mechanism of gender domination, morphed when mixed with the newly formed concept of race, giving birth to a newly acquired level of domination. From that moment on every woman is inferior to every man whose race is not inferior to hers. This changed every social relationship of power that had been created until the moment by the west and made in law in the new western world. This constituted a new

axis of social domination and of social exploitation, within the control of labor and resources, reconfigured the pre-colonial ideas of slavery, small mercantile production, reciprocity, and salary. From this moment on, actions will stop being on a local level, and be reconfigured to a global transatlantic configuration under Iberian control, and afterward constitute itself into a pattern of exploitation of the west over the subsequent colonies.



*Fig. 03 - The Treaties of Tordesillas and Saragossa by simply dividing and appropriating the globe by the Pope's dictate, set the historical foundations of global linear thinking, the pillars of Western civilization, and the imperial march of modernity and coloniality. Mignolo, 2011.*

When analyzing the global avenues of profiteering and social domination, it is clear that those are the same roads of power today. Coloniality constructed a world map which the west navigated to distribute resources and labor at their free will and for their benefit. It is clear when translating the map of the beginning of the colonial campaign to the 21st century that the before exploited, dominated, discriminated, and segregated, are the same that were categorized by the world powers as 'races', 'ethnicities', or 'nations', (Escobar, 2013) and that today form what through neoliberal policies have been baptized as developing countries or third world nations.

### **3.3 A new economy: The commerce of human labor**

With the downfall of the Iberian power in the 18th century and the rise of Western Europe, the continent's economy began to be distributed through the powers, creating what is known in modernity as euro centralization or the eurocentric state. This rise is due to the distribution of the new workforce that was previously controlled by Iberia, and now with the collapse of its powers and its economic deficit due to the growing debts with banks, it is the western countries of the old continent that begin to gain control over the wealth produced by the labor and resources of the colonies. It is here, in Western Europe where the new modernity is born through the necessities of a new rationality that is catapulted by science.

This new ratiocination is created as well from the mercantilization of resources. Long gone are the days where capital was achieved through spice trades, now through the exploitation of these resources, the new bourgeois merchants began a modern coloniality of power that is quite similar to the one present today. Thanks to the exploitation of the earth's resources and human labor, the western commerce of capital expanded globally, giving birth to industrial capitalism.

This is why it is thanks to the American coloniality and through the evolution of the capitalization of resources, both natural and of labor, that the industrial revolution was born. It is through this globalization of capitalism, that the west prepared for global conquest, in search of new human and natural resources that will help them maintain the exchange of European capital.

The colonial presence of the world owes its birth and force to the singular process that produced the continent of America. It bridged the eurocentric mindset and bridged it to modernity, in a global state that has ingrained within it the axis of control of power, allowing those who can utilize it a superior advantage in the system of capitalism. The modern marginalization of workers through the digital/technological revolution lead to a form of idleness for the workforce, where job flexibility brought a precariousness to the labor force, in which the servitude is expanded through an informal economy that allows bigger revenues for big business. Work expertise is being confronted by the devaluation of itself, where the cost of the employee must be lower every day, and the influence of technology higher, so that the devaluation cycle for human labor remains constant.

### **3.4 The stakes of historical trauma in culture identity**

It is clear how this process has directly affected the creative process of colonized cultures, not only in Fashion but in all audiovisual production to this day. This imaginary imposed a way of thought that was often contrary to the colonized one, yet it was impossible to not obey the rules of the ruler. At present times, we may say that this colonizer process has ended, yet we can not assume that the experience of our past does not impact our present, no matter how long it has passed, it seems as if the culture has its own DNA, that matures through what it has lived and what lives.

The modern-day ramifications of this imposed new imaginary can be seen in cultural identity in the indigenous youth. A 2009 research (Wexler, Anna) shows how this process of colonization did not only affect the cultural experience within northern American indigenous communities but also how each member of the community perceived themselves and their culture. The author describes cultural identity as the relation to how a subject experiences, recognizes, and is affected by its own cultural attributes (his beliefs, values, practices, norms, traditions, and heritage) and how these reflect or not in the subject's self. Her research shows a clear connection between the high suicide rates and the experience by Indigenous people of culture loss or historical trauma, described as a combination of acculturative stress, cultural bereavement, genocide, and racism that has been generalized, internalized, and institutionalized (B. Duran, 1998. Gagné, Maire-Anik, 1998). The colonized cultural identity development has created a world where when they see themselves in culture, it is through the western imaginary of the "noble savage" or the "drunk Indian" (O'Neil, DeLeane). These social constructs permeate the culture, and withholds old conventions into our modern-day cultures, maintaining the ideas of colonization, albeit in a distant past, but it shows that it remains powerful in the construction of cultural identity. This unknowing journey of finding their identity or where they come from is not unique to this youth, as this lack of information of our past is common to most of whom are brought up in a colonized country, it becomes a global matter.

#### **3.4.1 Cultural Cringe**

The conflict between identity and colonial domination is not exclusive to Latin America and Africa, nor exclusive only to the notions of the race from within a colonial structure. The identity scar here, due to the colonization campaign transcends the exclusivity of race as it is an issue of the construction of cultural identity in colonized states, displaying that although the race was the backbone for the social construct for



colonized nations of non-western where most of the population was non-white, the power structure of the rest of the matrix of coloniality still influences the system of those colonized states, allowing the colonizer dominion not only to the others non-white but also to the others identified as non-european.

This experience can be understood in the 1950 essay *The Cultural Cringe* (2017) by the author A.A. Phillips, the term 'cultural cringe' became part of Australia's vernacular culture' identifying the negative mindset from Australians towards their country. In the essay, the author examines the perception of inferiority by local (Australian) authors in relation to those from Great Britain, its imperial colonizer. He begins by discussing an event in the ABC radio program, Incognito, in which the disc jockey asked listeners to identify the origin of the performers that were being broadcasted. They paired Australian artists with foreign ones, and at the end of each song, the listener guessed, and if given the wrong answer, a common thread became apparent by the broadcaster 'strange to say, the local lad proves to be no worse than the foreigner.' This reaction is widespread among colonized, where through indoctrination by the colonial system, it is ingrained in their thought process that is foreign is of good quality (products, culture, or ideas), therefore what is local is always inferior. Of course, this perception of the positive foreign validation is exclusive to the colonizer states and not to those colonized. The author explains: "The programme's designer has rightly diagnosed a disease of the Australian mind and is applying a sensible curative treatment. The dismaying circumstance is that such a treatment should be necessary, or even possible; that in any nation, there should be an assumption that the domestic cultural products will be worse than the imported article."

The 'cultural cringe' here is the assumption that anything or anyone marked as 'Australian' is in fact worse, inferior, and less intelligent than the dominator, which is in terms of colonialism, the bar to which all should be measured by.

The Author further explains how this sensation of "cringe" towards their own culture, is in fact, a process of constant comparison where the Australians will nor can not, ever be, as good as the English, because it is their cultural structure (the British) that they are working on. He further elaborates "The Cringe mainly appears in an inability to escape needless comparisons. The Australian reader, more or less consciously, hedges and hesitates, asking himself 'Yes, but what would a cultivated Englishman think of this?' No writer can communicate Confidently to a reader with the 'Yes, but' habit; and this particular demand is curiously crippling to critical judgment. Confronted by Furphy, we grow uncertain. We fail to recognize the extraordinarily original structure of

his novel because we are wondering whether perhaps an Englishman might not find it too complex and self-conscious. No one worries about the structural deficiencies of Moby Dick. We do not fully savor the meaty individualism of Furphy's style because we are wondering whether perhaps his egotistic verbosity is not too Australianly crude; but we accept the egotistic verbosity of Borrow as part of his quality."

This sense of value, in which what is done locally may be good, but never as good as what is foreign, is a link to many modern societies. As colonialism evolves in the shape of a neo-colonial structure, maintaining its old frame and matrix of colonial power, outside of the so-called colonial politics, more and more the sense of comparison to what is more popular is present.

A similar phenomenon occurs in Mexico and is reflected in its Fashion (WGSN, 2019). Malinchism (Spanish: "malinchismo") is a social and cultural inferiority complex perceived by Mexicans, that just like Australia's cultural cringe, it is not possible for them as Mexicans to create as well as the superior cultures, therefore, whatever is created there will simply be inferior or vulgar in the eyes of the spectator.

The term malinchism comes from the Mexican myth *La Malinche*, which depicts a female slave that was gifted to the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés to later marry him and aid the Spaniards in their conquest campaign through what is known today as Mexico (Brooks, 2019). Although like most colonial history, the veracity of the story is being contested due to the unknowing of the origin as true, or propaganda for the natives to trust the Europeans (Martínez, 2020), the colloquial story says that La Malinche aided him as both a local guide and a translator in the region. The analogy translates to cultural identity as it represents who prefers the destruction of its own in favor of becoming subject to a foreign power, much like those that deny (through the will of their own or social norms) their own culture in favor of that of the oppressor.



Fig. 04 - *La Malinche*. Diego Rivera (1940)

As western binary values fail to encompass the inclusive needs of contemporary society, cultures are increasingly reassessing their own cultural heritage, growing in confidence, unearthing their pre-colonial cultural history, this is as Luiz Arruda, head of WGSN Mindset Latin "an act of survival and resistance to maintain our essence and our roots."

### **3.5 The need for an epistemological critique**

*“ . . . Our struggle comes from afar, from the same instance that the Spanish hordes invaded the Confederation of Amer-Indian Peoples. Our struggle is against all European vestiges . . . Roman Law, the Napoleonic Code, French democracy, Marxism-Leninism, all that maintains us in dependence, in mental colonialism, in blindness without finding the light.”* (Reinaga, 1970, as cited in Walsh, 2013. p. 80)

The western epistemology that validates itself, has to be in a sense broken in the pursuit for a pluriversal one where it's not one idea over the others in the vertical structure of hierarchy, but one that coexists with other types of knowledges Horizontally. As

Roberto Mangabeira Unger describes in *Knowledge and Politics* (1975): “Thus, the house of reason in which I was working proved to be a prisonhouse of paradox whose rooms did not connect and whose passageways led nowhere... The premises of this vision [the unified vision of a liberal system of ideas] of the world are few; they are tied together, and they are as powerful in their hold over the mind as they are unacknowledged and forgotten. They took their classic form in the seventeenth century. For reasons that will become clear, I resolved to call them the liberal doctrine, even though the area they include is both broader and narrower than the one occupied by what we now ordinarily take for liberalism. This system of idea is indeed the guard that watches of the prison house.” (Mangabeira, 1985). This means that the desired system of knowledges should be one that does not live to evolve from itself and the very ideas that produced it, but one that may learn from others and be critiqued in the same way. This option to break this western system is in pro of validating the knowledge from other cosmovisions that are not western, and will also allow breaking out of the prison of self-validating ideas that is the colonial knowledge.

Parting ways with euro centrality brings forth a plurality of knowledge, this is an opening of the doors of the macrostructure of knowledges by eliminating the epistemic racism of western rationality rules within the construction of knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2008) of the abnegation of knowledges from non-western origins that convert knowledge in a geo-political tool of dominance as it is he who governs knowledge creation the same who decides what is valid to be considered as knowledge.

*Coloniality of knowledge* decided as well, that it was the written word, as an intellectual production of the west, the only medium to convey knowledge, establishing then, a racial hierarchy in western production of knowledge and its validation (Quijano, 2000), as by doing so, it undermines all types of knowledge that comes from oral history and by communal processes of teaching/learning. The conservation of this construct has built a status quo where for the past 500 years, the indigenes and black people are considered by the dominant society as “incapable of serious ‘intellectual’ thinking” , building in this the racialized character of critical thought (Walsh, 2013). This logic sets aside non-western knowledge not because of its content, but due to the medium within that knowledge lives in.

As Catherine Walsh elaborates in *Shifting The Geopolitics Of Critical Knowledge*, the judgement that leads to the segregation and separationist thought fails to acknowledge a simple fact, critical thought existed before it was written. The failure to understand the different processes of knowledge ignores the histories of the indigenes and

Afro-descendants peoples in a racialized attempt of thought uniformity (bis). The homogeneity of thought is impossible, as the logic of thought differs to each culture and their experiences, and for many, knowledge does not come from books but from where the west has almost never gone to to learn, as Manuel Quintín Lame says “nature educated me under its shadows . . . she taught me to think; . . . pensar el pensar to think thought . . .” (Quintín Lame, 2004 as cited in Walsh, 2013).

There is a different way of learning, and a different knowledge, in that way, an epistemic reconsideration of the western perspective of logic (Walsh, 2013) that reconditions the knowledge framework of the eurocentric as the Nasa intellectual Manuel Quintín Lame asserts:

“It is not true that only those who have studied 15 or 20 years and have learned to think are the ones that have the vocation for thought, even if they have climbed from the Valley to the Mountain. I was born and raised in the Mountain, and from the Mountain I descended to the Valley to write this work . . . The Indian Quintín Lame was able to interpret the thought of the ant and of the various insects that nature cultivates. The thought of the smallest ant is the same as that of the condor when it was finishing to dress in the cave; it is the same as that of the offspring of the tiger, it is the same as that of the son of man. The ant to unwrap its wings and leave its nest does not follow the path of the others, instead it climbs up on the sand and flaps its wings, infinitely challenging because it feels itself to be big and powerful. But in crossing the path it is attacked by its enemy, and it is in this same way, that the error of man is assailed.” (Quintín Lame, 2004 as cited in Walsh, 2013. p. 83)

There is in a way a conversation that can take place within knowledges, a sort of learning from each, just as humans learn from one another, in which there is no need for a relation of superiority for neither to teach or to learn, the conversation becomes a debate and a struggle when it is the liberty and freedom of learning that is put in doubt due to it not withholding to the constrictions of western thought. It is here that these eurocentric colonial patterns and theories can and should be critiqued, as quoted by Essteban Ticona in Walsh’s (2013) article: “The indigenous, afro and poor mestizo America is an example of this feeling, because after more than 500 years, it continues to think with ‘its own head’, trying to crystallize a ‘pensamiento propio’ a thought of one’s own- that definitely helps our liberation”. (p. 84)

As Walsh focuses in the many Andine communities knowledge, there is also by empirical consequence, the same active processes of thought around the world, not only the west, it would naive or dishonest to think that it is only the west that has been able to create a system of valid thought, and to go even further to think that it is only their knowledge that should be taken into account for the world building of the future. The decolonial epistemic delinking from the west is relevant precisely when it is understood that its construction is based on racial hierarchies of the 'modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system', and at the same time, the tools with which it continues to build the world, are made in its image and likeness. As Fashion reaches almost 200 years, it may be a moment for it to reanalyze itself and its institutions in order to reevaluate its knowledge and its ability to create. There is no longer space for unrespectful interpretations of other cultures (Dearo, 2014) and knowledges because of the perception of knowledge hierarchy, it is on the contrary a moment for representation and creation from those knowledges that were not that of the white european male that for centuries have been unrepresented, disrespected and disregarded as the lesser than.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The start of something new, the decolonial option in Fashion**

As sustainability becomes an on-trend term for Fashion brands today, it is important to analyze how this term relates when thinking about modern Fashion as not only a term for clothing but also for all of the relations of it with humanity, Fashion, style, production, consumption, textiles, and beauty regimes in which a group is drawn to (Tulloch, 2010, p. 279). In a way, we are inserted in a form of peripheral capitalism, in the sense that the new form of colonialism is not direct, it's in a sense a stealth form of compliance to a system that acts by obeying and responding to economic needs by shaping society's activities around it. To prevent the adoption of sustainability to simply greenwash brands. The idea of sustainability has to be implemented to all aspects of humanity, in a sense, each element of the colonial matrix of power (economy, authority, gender/sexuality, and subjectivity/knowledge) inspected through the concept of sustainability not only for the west but for the non-western others as well.

After understanding what made the storm of colonialism, the moment comes for Fashion to take a stand into withdrawing from the matrix of power, and shedding light to its own potential as an expression of all instead of only a tool for the elite.

#### **4.1 Decolonizing the matrix of power in Fashion**

The influence of sustainable culture to modern life marks a paradox with the colonial structure. Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability Officer of the Kering Group, wrote the following: "In 2019, we have seen a radical shift in attention towards sustainability at large, and the climate crisis in particular. The diagnosis is now clear for everyone: we need to accelerate the pace of change and work together." (Fashion Revolution, 2020) Yet an interesting question comes up when reading this: how can sustainability exist when coloniality both as a concept and a lived reality that affects the life those non-western others persists? Even though colonialism ended with the independence movements around the world, its model continues, and the matrix of control is still present in a form of what some authors call neocolonialism (Jean-Paul Sartre 1956). The core of the colonial model was based on constructs that would assign a relation of

dominant and dominated, first based on race and gender, and evolving into class and elites, designing the societal structures for the populations, arranging them hierarchically in ranks, places, and roles within a social structure of power (Quijano 2000), and assigning them labels of identification not as individuals, but social identities, first: white, “mestizos”, “indios”, “negros”, “mulatos” (Mignolo, 2010), and more recently by sexual orientation: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, or by social status: immigrant, native. These social identities serve to efficiently eliminate all sense of identity of self beyond their societal label (bis).

The very notion of a sustainable world requires a decolonial action upon the idea of everyone. As it is clear now, both sociologically and economically, if we do not change our relationship with nature and each other, the planet will no longer sustain us (Dussel, 2020). The role in this decoloniality of our ways affects directly Fashion, as its own process of production, relation to economic product consumption, resource management for the same production within labor and natural resources, etc., goes hand in hand with the western project of economical coloniality, referred to by many as neocolonialism (Sartre, 1956) or as Friedrich von Hayek neoliberalism (Harvey 2019).

It is in the very construction concept of coloniality that decolonial thought lives (Mignolo, 2013) , as one could not be fulfilled without the presence of the other. As the relations within coloniality and neoliberalism are displayed in relation of Fashion, the same process is shown for that of decoloniality and Fashion. As Walter Mignolo (2013, p), explains:

“Thinking de-colonially means, precisely, to delink from thinking “disciplinarily” (e.g., sociologically, economically, anthropologically, artistically, etc.). In that regard, thinking de-colonially and the de-colonial option are not “new interpretive tools” but an-other thinking grounded in border epistemology rather than in Greek philosophy (Mignolo 2000, 313- 338). Such detachment (that Mignolo explores here as “de-linking”) shall be understood as one aspect of a decolonial energy, a force that permeates all the disciplines as well as common sense guiding global struggles not just “against capitalism” but toward the making of a world no longer ruled by the colonial matrix of power (Lander 2002). It is not an interdisciplinary tool but, rather, a trans-disciplinary horizon in which de-coloniality of knowledge and de-colonial knowledge places life (in general) first and institutions at the service of the regeneration of life. (p. 11)



Although Fashion is in no way the cause for colonialism or neocolonialism, it is (as seen through this dissertation) a child of the system that implemented colonialism, and as such, for it to live within a truly sustainable habitat. Fashion should step implement a system that does not put the institutions first, but have the institutions work for all of humanity, applying a system that allows the life around its core (humanity, Fashion, style, production, consumption, textiles, and beauty regimes) to have an ethically sustainable life.

This new approach to Fashion might deliver a positive outcome economically, as there is a stronger consumer awareness on the ethical background of Fashion, as the consultancy firm McKinsey & Company (2019) found that online searches for “sustainable Fashion” tripled between 2016 and 2019, and Business of Fashion stated that in 2019: “transparency has become an important issue further upstream in the supply chain, with consumers increasingly concerned about issues including fair labor, sustainable resourcing, and the environment. Consumers want to support brands that are doing good in the world, with 66% willing to pay more for sustainable goods. Some 42% of millennials say they want to know what goes into products and how they are made before they buy, compared with 37% of Gen Z.”

## **4.2 Creating in the borders**

There is another component of knowledge and analysis of culture which is decisive to the colonial matrix of power in the control and governance of the subjectivities, and it is that of the hegemony of aesthetics as theory of art. It was through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment when a hegemonic conception and theory of aesthetics originated and from the Enlightenment onward was used to judge and analyze all subjects that could be expressed (Mignolo, 2013). “There is a long history of imperial looting of ‘aesthetic’ objects from the colonized world, as well as Western artists ‘borrowing’ from the colonial world (e.g. Picasso, Gauguin, etc.). But what about writers and artists who dwell in the borders of the imperial/colonial differences?” (Mignolo, 2013. p. 7)

Mignolo’s question suscitates the biggest difference between persisting on the colonial ideal or going beyond it by learning from what is outside of the colonial world. a new aesthetic, on that is created through transculturality (Tlostanova, 2013). The aesthetic here, marks a similar phenomenon as that of the *pensamiento fronterizo* (border thinking) of Saldívar (2013), in which he explains the knowledge development for a new

cultural reality for the migrant workers in the United States. The similarities in creation come from the act of creation not from one side or the other, but from dwelling in the borders. The same way a new cultural representation that acts as a decolonial catalyst for the US Latino/a and South Asian in terms of self affirmation and the creation of a strong identity creation can grow from the *pensamiento fronterizo* (Saldívar, 2013), a new aesthetic can be creating by working, learning and living in those trans-cultural borders (Tlostanova, 2013). The decoloniality option in the realm of creativity is especially powerful for Fashion, as it in its core strives for an ethical and just relation between cultures by withdrawing from the colonial matrix of power axis (Quijano, 1989), it also empowers the idea of creativity in the same way, by not persisting with the colonial relation of domination from one culture to another, it also asks from that act of creation, an understanding of the other to fulfil that ethical promise. As Fashion matures with each year, it becomes a necessity for it to reconfigure itself for a new era for the market and its new customers.

## Chapter 5

### **An interview with Agustín Nicolás Rivero of A NEW CROSS. A different way of doing Fashion in Colombia.**

In this chapter of the dissertation, the research material shall be interpreted and correlated with the infield experience of the designer Agustín Nicolás Rivero of the brand A NEW CROSS through a freeflow semi- structured interview.

As discussed in the past chapters, decoloniality embarks on a road not of destruction but of creation. The fundamental change in rationality, the *de-linking* that Anibal Quijano (1989) bases his argument on for decolonial thinking, manages to set our thought in a horizontal plain of ways of knowing where the act of learning coincides with the act of creation, as it allows the creator to have an active conversation with other ways of knowing that are also validated, and that in regard to Latin America, allow the creation through its own historical ways of knowing, that were priorly disregarded, to truly create from within the culture.

The process of creation, affects Fashion as it increases the options of learning and allows that knowledge to be implemented in a realm that is of western creation, and that has been heavily sequestered within its dogmas in the past. It is a testimony of the times, as the generational break looks for other types of products, and in order to be associated with a brand it also expects from it a different type of behaviour towards society. In that sense, it is not only the decoloniality of knowledge and culture that relates to Fashion, but also that of race, gender, and authority, as more and more, brands are able to learn from the experiences of the decolonization from these matrix of power, and create from a newly drawn perspective of any race, any acknowledgement of gender or lack thereof, and with fair production and labor/pay relation.

A NEW CROSS is an example of such a brand. Born in Colombia 12 years ago, as Agustín Nicolás Rivero says, “the brand began as an exercise in recontextualization of textile”. A NEW CROSS is a brand that is present in the premium segment of Fashion. With a minimalist yet complex style due to the construction of the garments, the brand

is showcased in shops around the world next to designers like Rick Owens, Vetements, Balenciaga, to name a few. For A NEW CROSS Fashion is more about the concept than the garment, as a result, in some instances instead of having Fashion shows, they have staged performance art exhibitions where the clothing became a tool to convey conceptual problems in Colombia such as forced migration, eradication of land, invisible cultures and ethnicities, among others.

Agustín Nicolás Rivero: “clothing, when worn, becomes the smallest architecture one can inhabit, these architectures that safeguard us do not only protect us by containing our body (and our memory), but also become a communication channel, becoming a first layer through which we expose to our environment a large part of who we are, giving clues about how we perceive and relate to the texture of the territory we live in.”

That action of communication becomes the main focus for A NEW CROSS, as this act is by nature a political act, as the simple act of being clothed is as strong a political statement, just as the act of not wearing clothes could be. This action is shown by many indigenous ethnicities that in pre through post colonial times have opted for another relationship with clothing and their bodies, which is in itself a decision and a political act.

The political act of clothing marks by nature, a decolonial thought of Fashion within the brand. The journey of decolonial thought that this dissertation embarked on, rallies on the point of decoloniality as an option, one that could or could not be taken, as in the interview and analysis of A NEW CROSS, that option is exemplified not as academic rhetoric, but as an action that is being executed today.

Agustín Nicolás Rivero: “Putting clothes on and going out is in itself a political act, and depending on how we direct this action, its result becomes as politically charged as it would be to go naked to work or wherever we please (an action that should not be scandalous in our times). So, using textiles as a means to generate reflections both in the wearer and in the observer. This is the main reason for betting on a project that beyond questioning the boundaries of gender and the redefining of identity in our society, it seeks to contribute to the repair of the social fabric through the support, visibility and vindication of artisan work and its trades.”

As seen in the subchapter 4.1 *Creating in the borders*, one of the challenges and opportunities within creation in a decolonial framework is that of working within the borders. (Mignolo, 2013. Tlostanova, 2013) The concepts of *transculturality* and *pensamiento fronterizo* in Fashion are demonstrated in A NEW CROSS. By showcasing artisan techniques that are done by the artisans, and the garment building that is specific to the segment of the brand, a new aesthetic appears. A new creative solution that allows the story of these techniques to shine through the more minimalist construction, amplifying the voice and the history of where those techniques come from.

Agustín Nicolás Rivero: Aesthetically, I combine minimalism, a large number of ethnic elements from different places and regions that I collect through my travels, in which I carry out an investigation of silhouettes, techniques and textiles of the cultures with which I interact.

Upon entering the territory, I have the opportunity to learn and work on projects together with artisans from different communities, where we establish conversations to co-create and reach unexpected conclusions both aesthetically and conceptually.

I like to put elements, materials and techniques from different geographies to dialogue in the same piece, as a metaphor for the increasingly evident instability of borders. While we make from the collective by the hands that were involved in the process of making each garment, a call to weave in community regardless of the distance.

Since the beginning of the project, I have been concerned with creating a 'brand universe' where I constantly search to understand different techniques and plasticities so that this aesthetic universe is as complete and coherent as possible. Beyond clothing, I always wonder what a sculpture, a space, a performance, or a utilitarian object from A NEW CROSS would be like.



Fig. 05 - *A NEW CROSS*



Fig. 06 - *A NEW CROSS*

The decolonial action, is in itself, a political action. By *delinking* (Quijano, 1989) with the status quo of Fashion, A NEW CROSS makes a decision that in itself is political, as Ai Wei Wei (2020) said: "An artist must be an activist". When combined with a concept that also questions how society deals with itself, and tries to offer new realities that may help to overcome certain problems, the artistic nature of the brand comes afloat, by not simply making clothing, but having the clothing have something to say.

Agustín Nicolás Rivero: In 2018 I presented my latest project called "everything I did not knit." Which was not presented as a collection, but rather as an open project that through co-creative textile research and experimentation with artisans from different points, continues to generate new pieces whenever time permits.

The central axis of the project was a performance that took place at the Faenza Theater in Bogotá, in which the audience that attended, upon entering the venue, was faced with a line of motionless bodies lying down, that were individually covered in their totality by a white sheet. Later these sheets were pulled by means of threads anchored from the ceiling of the theater, in order to allow the model its embodiment and movement; they stood up and walked across the stage while the sheets remained like ghosts floating in the air.

With this performance I wanted to generate reflections around the implications of using the fragility of the textile to cover a body (or a reality). Are we protecting ourselves? or are we protecting the vulnerability of the covered item? In order to later reflect on the second action: what are the implications behind uncovering or discovering the element? In this case we uncover it to find not something that scares us but something beautiful, but something beautiful that makes us think about the stories, ways of knowing and people that we have not been able to and will not be able to know, as a result of the void left by the normalization of the violence and, consequently, indifference to six decades of armed conflict in Colombia.

At the end of the day we are threads of the territory that contains us. But if there is something nice about the textile, it is that even if it breaks worn and expired by use, it can always be darned and repaired.



The scars that remain from this repair are traces that, although they become the echo of an absence, are necessary to reconcile the present with the memory of the past, and thus be able to unlearn to write a new learning.



Fig. 07 - *A NEW CROSS*



Fig. o8 - *A NEW CROSS*



Fig. 09 - *A NEW CROSS*

The brand's concept of an ethical brand coincides with the materials they use. Following the idea that good clothing is not determined by seasons, A NEW CROSS looks to use the best materials not only to constrain its presence in the premium category, but also for the garments to live as long as possible, and give the clients the best experience with the fibers that form the garments.

Agustín Nicolás Rivero: I am in love with handlooms and natural fibers. Currently A NEW CROSS has two lines pA mainline where we develop fabrics for garments from scratch through textile experimentation on the loom, in this we use yarns mainly from alpaca, wool, linen, cotton, silk among others.

And our ready-to-wear line of lightweight architectures to live at home, which seeks comfort, fluidity and movement through linens, cottons, silks and soon hemp-based textiles.

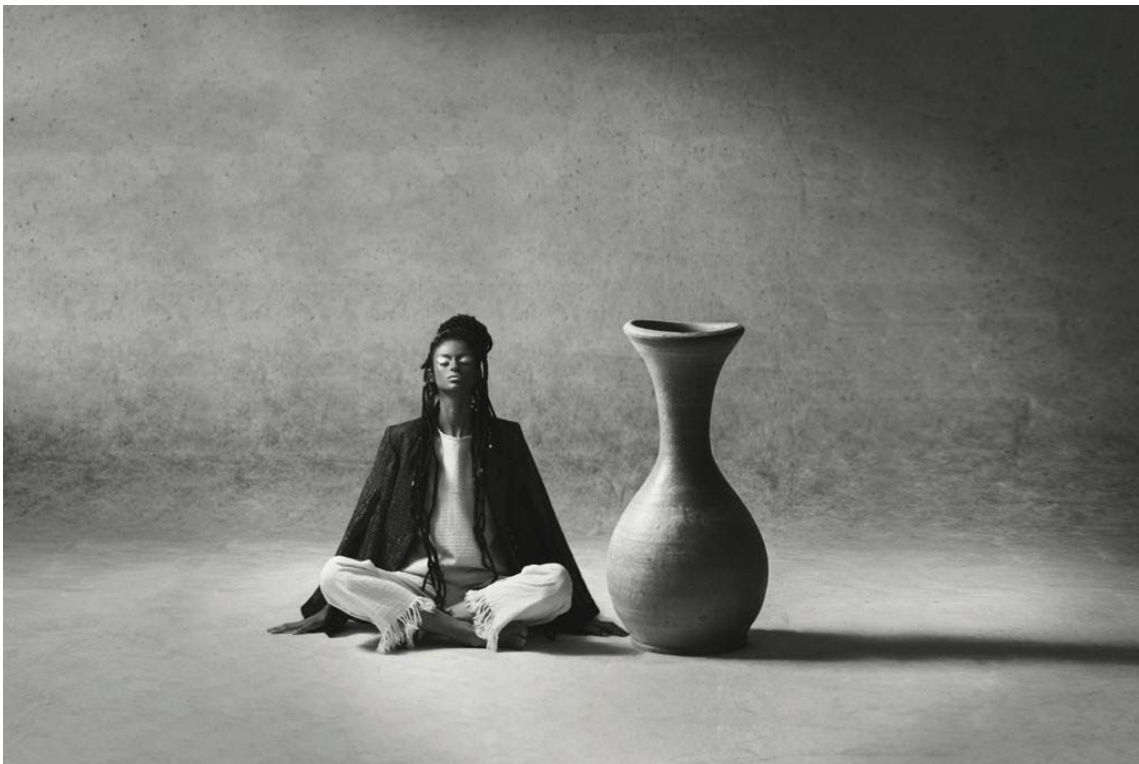


Fig. 10 - A NEW CROSS



Fig. 11 - A NEW CROSS



Fig. 12 - *A NEW CROSS*

A NEW CROSS' market and clientele have grown steadily through the years, as brand awareness grows, more and more customers look for their products having formed a relationship with the brand and what their message. Ranging from stores in France, Japan, and the United States, just to name a few. In online stores such as SUUS and

Farfet. A NEW CROSS is truly crossing boundaries for Colombian and Latin American brands, decolonizing the ideas of what can be expected from the region.

Agustín Nicolás Rivero: Mainly people who have a sensitivity, respect and admiration for artisanship. Those who understand the rigor behind the trade and the hands that developed the garments that they will later wear.

This sensitivity allows them to connect with the reflections that I raise through textile. I believe that my work is well done when a piece that comes out of my workshop generates more questions than answers in the wearer and the observer.

I am interested in my clients being conscientious consumers of responsible consumption and that they give good use and care to the pieces they purchase.

The Spanish designer and artist Miguel Adrover once said that "the most eco-friendly garment is the one that is not manufactured", I think this phrase resonated a lot with me when faced with this moment in which the health circumstance forces us to be at home and allows us to gather to make a self-assessment of how we can be a lesser burden on the planet.

I feel that if it is still necessary for us to dress, we should be more aware and selective when buying, to really use the clothes that accompany us throughout our lives.





Fig. 13 - *A NEW CROSS*

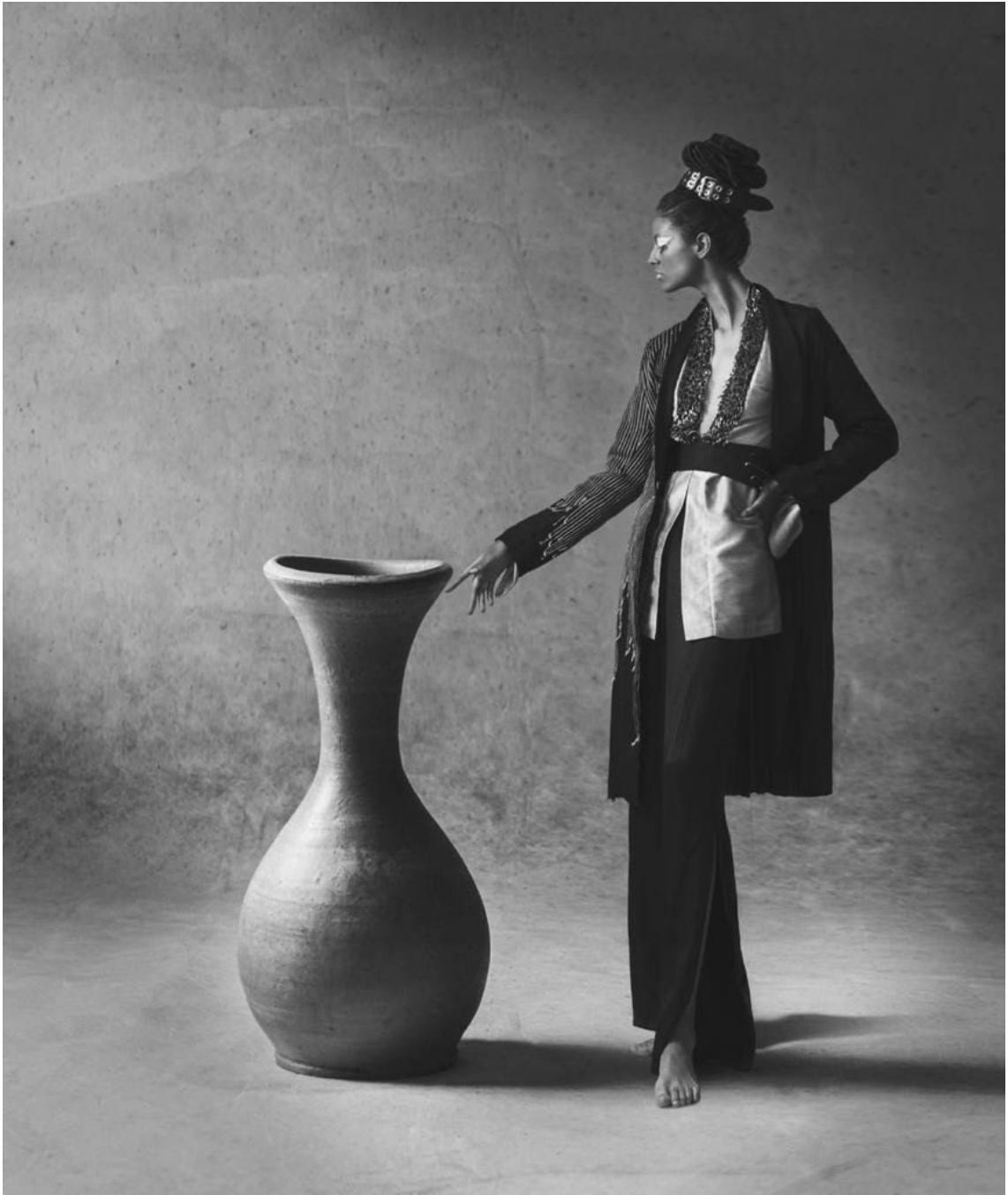


Fig. 14 - *A NEW CROSS*



Fig. 15 - *A NEW CROSS*



Fig. 16 - *A NEW CROSS*



Fig. 17 - *A NEW CROSS*

## Work Analysis

The relevance of this research is explained through it, but it is important to highlight it here as a manner to fully understand how impactful the relation between coloniality/decoloniality can become for Fashion, and it key part of it in the construction of Fashion's future.

One of the major findings is how most of the social constructions that appear to be natural, are exactly constructed by man, and with that, just how it was discussed in *3.1 The Creation Of The Colonial History*, they obey the norms of those who built those parameters, and shaped by their own subjectivity. It is like this that what is perceived as *Fashion standards*, are also man made, and not natural, they are decisions made to fit a certain standards of living within Fashion as a part of a determined culture. As analyzed in the entirety of chapter 2 *The Colonial Mindset*, the analysis brought a link into this aspect of construction through a perspective, as it dealt with how did the colonial campaign of the west built in its colonies, and how it shaped by force the original cosmovision of the colonies, as well as altering their own identity. This in regards to Fashion, can demonstrate why different cultural *Fashions* are perceived as vulgar, strange and different, by outsiders or themselves, as they try to fit in a world that is not theirs, and try to employ imposed alien values when acting culturally.

It is the hope of the author that it was made clear that just as Walter Mignolo and the MCD project states, decolonialism is an option, just like capitalism, communism, anarchism, and others, are options as well. It seems as if the naturalization of the current system has brought a mentality that the present way of life is not necessary, but the way it should be. Yet, in reality, as seen in *2.4 The Pluriversality of thought*, other options exist, and even more, they coexist with the present western way of life. There are other options, and as such, there is an only undeniable concept that is repeated throughout this dissertation, everything changes. This, as simple as it may seem, marks a shift in the absolutist perspective of reason marked by the west, explained in *chapter 2 The Colonial Mindset*, and it is that the binarism of logic should not be applied as absolutes. Of course there has to be a careful approach today, specially in the era of the post truth (McIntyre, 2018) the world seems to be currently living in, it is important to understand and study other perspectives of life, comprehend the other types of cosmovisions to see what drove a certain community to a specific knowledge, and build

new solution as a global community, instead of the imposed nature of the west through the past 500 years.

This hopeful perspective of new worlds of knowledge was the objective of chapter 4 *The start of something new, the decolonial option in Fashion*, as decolonialism is in no way, an attack on that west, as it may seem. It is understandable to perceive it like this, but the people are in no way an object of attack, what is questioned and critiqued is the way of life empires built through the years that ended in the present world. Decolonialism is in fact completely positive as it builds bridges for the idea of *the west and the rest* to disappear. The flurry of creativity for Fashion is unimaginable, as it allows imagination to travel without the limits of the self imposed western limits of race, gender and prudery, and build a model of Fashion that is inclusive to every world perspective. Allowing the freedom of living to be reflected in Fashion.

The other perspectives is exactly the reason for chapter 5 *An interview with Agustín Nicolás Rivero of A NEW CROSS. A different way of doing Fashion in Colombia*. The construction of Fashion reflected the western world it was created in, making predominantly european, and not letting other perspectives shine through it, but when this changes, brands like A NEW CROSS can live. It is in the moment when as seen in *4.2 Creating in borders*, new options emerge when restrictions of boundaries are erased, and a fusion of perspectives is put in place.

Although much more study is needed, more niche oriented research for each case of colonialistic paradigm and its relation to Fashion, the research becomes a first step into the exploration of new worlds, and the creation of what could be new knowledge.

## Conclusions And Future Consideration

The studies from a decolonial standpoint become incredibly important for the future of Fashion, and of culture. As society's cultural expression grows, it seems as if its' memory shrinks, as many processes have become invisible as the demand for immediacy grows as a result of technological innovation. It seems fitting for this process to withhold certain practices that will allow the growth to occur in an ethical and just way, this is why societal mistakes need to be solved not by focusing on the economy and the minority in control, but on truly searching for an advancement for all of humankind.

The studies on decoloniality, specially by W. Mignolo and A. Quijano, express a popular need to amplify the voices from those who were not heard in the past. The option of learning other ways of knowing, and truly having a pluriversal mentality, shows that there are few limitations when creating something that can be truly remarkable when talking about Fashion.

As such, the decolonial option does not offer direct solutions, as it is not a manifesto, it does not focus on the *what to do* but on the *why and how things happened*. The difference from this analysis brings with it a problem when applying a rationale that is so different from the status quo that may be disregarded not only because of its *alien nature* from western society, but also because finding a solution seems to be one of the greatest aspects of any western rationale.

Its application also garners negative aspects that might be visible to the western audience, which the authors also reflect on, and it is *disregarding* the politics that might bring viable options for the future of society, because they might be influenced by authors from China, the Soviet Union, or any type of communist and socialist ideology.

The final aspect, which seems true importante is the social and emotional aspect. The decolonial option is for everyone, not only for those who were colonized. The option allows the dilinking not of western society as a population group, but of the practices it has imposed for their political and economical empowerment. The decolonial option asks for delinking, but for that to occur, the subject has to want to delink, and for that to happen, an acknowledgement of the colonial powers has to occur first. It will be impossible to grow and realize the change needed to implement decolonial ideals if it



becomes a struggle of the west vs. the rest, yet it has to be acknowledged as well the difficulty of critiquing a society that believes has done nothing wrong.

Regarding Fashion, and every creative outlet, decoloniality may broaden the range of creative options as never before. By asking for respect when being influenced, to not blindly use an inspiration disregarding the origins history, it will offer Fashion a two things that in the research it seems it needs today, the first, a real sustainable option in regards to the environment and culture, and the second, new possibilities to satisfy the increasing interest for Fashion.

On the downside, there is no real solution for the production of Fashion, and the reliance it has on the disposable aspects of fast Fashion, as the neoliberal system that is in place asks for brands to be constantly offering product to grow their gains, it seems that the problem will need a much more profound analysis of societal patterns of buying and bigger research of the production line of Fashion to understand what can be done differently without it being so expensive that it becomes not viable.

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