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Pluriversal Fashions: Towards an Anti-Racist Fashion Design Pedagogy

Thesis

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Pluriversal Fashions: Towards an Anti-Racist Fashion Design Pedagogy

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Abstract

This thesis explores ways of devising an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy. The research comprises a two-stage investigation: Part 1, a scoping study of undergraduate fashion design education in the UK and a case study analysing how racialised and gendered differences are currently represented in undergraduate fashion design students' sketchbook research; Part 2, four case studies analysing counter-hegemonic fashion design classes to explore the possibility of an anti-racist fashion design process in fashion design education. The findings from the sketchbook analysis (Part 1) showed how a dominant two-step design tactic is employed in the fashion design process to construct racist and sexist representations by decontextualising and then recontextualising differences. This tactic was shown to reproduce asymmetric power relations built upon racist and colonial logic that reinforces white normativity. These findings were then used to reconceptualise pluralistic fashion concepts in four different pedagogical settings (Part 2) by centring my positionality as fashion design educator who is a woman of colour.

Overall, this thesis argues for incorporating decolonial feminist-informed fashion design processes into higher education to counter racism in fashion by centring heterogeneous concepts of fashion based on counter-hegemonic, non-universalist and non-linear systems of fashion knowledge, foregrounding embodied knowledge and differences. The research contributes to knowledge in fashion design pedagogy in three ways: it presents new empirical evidence to demonstrate how key design tactics privilege white normativity in the fashion design process; it tests alternative decolonial feminist pedagogical approaches to counter the coloniality of fashion design, and it provides a new framework for a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy and praxis in fashion design education.

Publications related to this PhD research

Ahmed,T. (2022) 'What is an education in fashion? Reflecting on the coloniality of design techniques in the fashion design educational process'. *International Journal of Fashion Studies*. [Forthcoming]

Ahmed,T. (2022) 'Decolonizing the mannequin'. In B. Barry and D. Christel (eds). *Fashion education: the systemic revolution*. Bristol: Intellect. [Forthcoming]

Ahmed,T. (2021) 'Towards a decolonial feminist fashion design reading list'. *Art Libraries Journal*, 47(1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/alj.2021.26

Ahmed, Tanveer (2022), 'Are fashion sketchbooks racist?'. *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*, 9 (3): 367-381 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc_00055_1

Ahmed,T. (2021) 'Anti-racist design: a decolonial feminist approach to fashion'. In Paim,N. and Mareis,C (eds). *Design struggles: intersecting histories, pedagogies and perspectives.* Amsterdam: Valiz.

Ahmed,T (2019) 'Anti-Fashion: using the sari to decolonise fashion', in Laranjo, F. (ed.) *Modes of criticism 4 – radical pedagogy* (*Onomatopee* 145.2). Eindhoven: Onomatopee, pp. 32-51.

Ahmed,T. (2018) '"All about Love": How would bell hooks teach fashion design?', In DRS, Design Research Society 2018, University of Limerick, 25-28 June. DOI: 10.21606/dma.2018.665

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This thesis owes its inception to my parents, born in colonial era India, especially to my mum who once took me as a child to The Indian collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to question how museum labelling presents contested Indian objects as 'donations'. You have both been seriously unwell during the last three months leading to my submission. Writing between hospital visits has not been easy (even when you were both on the same ward!) but without you this PhD would never have come to fruition. My biggest thanks are for my children Omar and Nuri, who have few memories of a mum who was not studying and now you are both teenagers! Yes, an essay can take this long, sorry! I am so proud of how you question your Eurocentric curriculum in school and you both give me hope for the future. Finally, I could not have completed this thesis without the love of my partner and fellow troublemaker Nick Mahony, whose patience, criticality, and generosity have kept me going. For your endless interest in my project, picking me up when I've been down and infinite kindness in too many ways to say, I am eternally grateful.

Terms

Black, Asian and minority ethnic B.A.M.E – This thesis uses this term to acknowledge the constituent groups (rather than 'BAME')[1]

Womxn - This term has been used since the 1970s as an inclusive conception of women to describe a variety of people identifying as female, including, for example, intersex and transgender groups.

Acronyms

HEI – Higher Education Institution

Glossary of Anti-Fashion Terms

Goth: a subcultural movement in which members wear black clothing and heavy black make-up.

Hijab: the cloth used to cover the neck, chest, head and hair worn by some Muslim women.

Jumble sale: a sale of assorted second-hand articles, usually held to raise money for charity.

Lunghi: a rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the waist and worn mostly by men, but also by women, across the Indian subcontinent and Far East Asia.

Pallu: the loose end of a sari which is draped over the shoulders in various styles and often used for different practical tasks.

Sari: a garment originating from South Asia that consists of an unstitched length of fabric draped around the body, traditionally worn by women but also by third gender communities.

Sarong: a length of fabric wrapped around the waist, worn in South-east Asia and many other parts of the Global South.

Vintage: describes clothing that originates from a previous era of history.

Ihram: a Muslim state of being ready for pilgrimage to Mecca, which requires the wearing of untied and unstitched cloth with no knots.

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[1] See Malik, A. et al. (2022) *BAME: A report on the use of the term and response to it.* Birmingham: Birmingham City University. Available at: https://bcuassets.blob.core.windows.net/docs/csu2021325-lhc-report-bbchighres231121-1-132828299798280213.pdf

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Introduction

Since I first began teaching fashion design, countless students, many of them Black and people of colour, have told me that they already know how to cut patterns, having been taught to do so from a young age in their communities. I understand what they mean because I have also been taught similar things at home: I know how to measure with my handspan, how to copy a pattern from another garment, cut straight into cloth without a paper pattern and utilise rectangular pattern shapes to avoid an unnecessary waste of fabric. Many students want to use each other's bodies to drape fabric and make garments to wear themselves. While such an approach is encouraged in the community evening classes in dressmaking that I also teach, in undergraduate fashion design the emphasis is to work on the mannequin. My response to students' requests to use each other's bodies is to refer them to the curriculum and the fashion industry, where standard body sizing and size UK 8 or 10 mannequins are used; although this answer leaves me uncomfortable, because this approach erases different forms of fashion knowledge, resulting in a false division leading to hierarchical sets of fashion practices.

My family has taught me how to dress using different values from those associated with the way it was taught to me in different educational contexts in the UK. My parents, relatives and South Asian Indian Muslim community members taught me that dress and clothing signify religious and cultural values. Therefore, my home life was always defined through adherence to rules about what can and cannot be worn. Since immigrating to the UK, my mother has continued to wear Indian forms of clothing and has always worn a sari and hijab without assimilating Western clothing styles, even in the workplace. This contrasts with my father, who had already assimilated the norms of Western clothing from the time of colonial rule in India.

Growing up in London, I developed a taste for multiple styles of fashion and clothing, influenced by Goth styles alongside South Asian styles. Trips to areas in London with a significant South Asian community, such as Southall and Wembley, to see the Indian clothing and fashion shops were as frequent as visiting jumble sales and vintage shops in London's Camden Market. Growing up in a Muslim family would also involve visits to the mosque and to extended family in the Middle East and India, both of which required wearing a hijab or a dupatta. So when I first began studying fashion as a teenager, I was aware that these formative experiences helped me to think about and approach fashion design in a more pluralistic and culturally diverse way than my predominantly white peer group. Now that I am teaching fashion design, those feelings have not gone away.

Beginning my thesis with this personal, first-hand account is important to set the context and background of my research problem of racism in fashion design education and the two research questions of this thesis. My combined experience of growing up in the UK with both South Asian Indian ethnicity and religion and a fashion design education have shaped my views on, and taste in, fashion. However, prior to this PhD research, my South Asian Indian diaspora racial identity remained separate from my pedagogical praxis and curricular activity in fashion design. This account also offers a rationale for undertaking this thesis after teaching fashion design in the UK for over twenty years: confronting racist stereotypes and tropes produced by students as part of their fashion design process, a Eurocentric fashion canon and universalist resources used in undergraduate fashion design curriculum.

Drawing inspiration from decolonial feminist pedagogy which has helped me to re-imagine an alternative fashion design pedagogical process that values emotions, positionality and ways-of-being (De Jong et. al. 2019), my reflections above illustrate the dissonance between an ontologically informed understanding of fashion in contrast to the universalist values underpinning hegemonic fashion design education that lies at the root of this PhD thesis.

This thesis begins with the hypothesis that there is a need to devise alternative pluralistic approaches to teaching fashion because the fashion design process reproduces racism. However, this research has not been straightforward; undertaken part time over eight years, this PhD began when there was limited interest in the topic of racism in fashion. In the context of the decline in the research into race and ethnicity in relation to higher education in the UK in the last two decades (Pilkington 2018), it has come as no surprise to me that my early academic presentations between 2014 and 2016 were often met with disbelief, indignation and resistance in the academic fashion and design community.[2] However, it was after 2015, as the Black Lives Matter[3] and the Rhodes Must Fall[4] campaigns grew, alongside a renewed interest in issues of racism in society and the mainstreaming of the decolonising education movement, that calls to decolonise fashion design began to grow. [5]

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[2] I had presented my research at three academic conferences in the UK during 2014-2016 and questions had been raised about the validity of my research from white academics, and whether I was being too subjective.
[3] Black Lives Matter is a campaign group that began in 2013 in response to the US police killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012. The movement has become global and has grown to become a phrase and a hashtag that is used to highlight racism against Black people.
[4] Rhodes Must Fall was a protest movement begun in 2015 that campaigned to remove the statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town and another at Oxford University.
[5] See for example The Research Collective for Decoloniality and Fashion. Online at: https://rcdfashion.wordpress.com

These shifts have been noted in the literature on fashion: for example, in the second edition of *The Fashioned Body* by sociologist Joanne Entwistle, published in 2015, the author concedes that 'the original analysis perhaps over-played the argument that the issue of identity and dress is a particularly western phenomenon. That has to be corrected here.' (Entwistle 2015 [2000], p.4).

Instead, Entwistle's revised definition of fashion calls for 'social factors such as class, gender and race to be considered critically as part of the fashion system.' (ibid, p.4), however, there were no significant additions to the main body of text explaining what this means for fashion studies. Similarly, in the key fashion text *Thinking Through Fashion*, the editors state their book's limitations[6]:

> By virtue of focusing on Western thinkers whose thought has been clearly central to thinking about Western modernity and the fashion that grew out of it, much of this book is devoted to Western fashion. […] We welcome follow-up books that would shed light on systems of thoughts and fashion not framed by those of Western modernity (Rocamora and Smelik 2016, p.7).

Both Entwistle's and Rocamora and Smelik's recognition of the limitations of fashion are significant to this thesis for two important reasons. First, they highlight the pace of change within fashion studies while I was researching this PhD; second, and more significantly, both point to a wider discourse in fashion that a dominant Western-led perception of fashion has dominated for too long and now requires revision.

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[6] To address these concerns, I have been asked to contribute a chapter on bell hooks and fashion to the next edition of the book for 2024.

However, Entwistle's revision reflects a key challenge in movements to decolonise, as well as the research problem of this thesis: what might an alternative version of fashion design encompass?

Aims and Objectives of Study

The overall aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how studying representations of race and ethnicity in the fashion design process can illuminate the colonial and racist logic of fashion design and fashion design education. This thesis argues for the generation of an alternative anti-racist and culturally diverse fashion design process to counter the reproduction of racist hierarchies that stereotype, appropriate and exclude marginalised forms of fashion knowledge in fashion design education.

This thesis comprises two research questions and objectives:

- *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the UK?* The objective of Research Question 1 is to investigate how racial hierarchies and colonial logic are employed through design tactics in the fashion design process in fashion design education.

- *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* The focus of Research Question 2 and the second objective is to explore and test pedagogical strategies to devise an alternative decolonial feminism-informed fashion design pedagogy.

This PhD thesis addresses each of these objectives by exploring how fashion design education – in terms of both the curriculum and undergraduate fashion design students' designs – work to reproduce various racist stereotypes and tropes *and* experiment with alternative decolonial feminism-informed pedagogical approaches.

Contribution of Research

The goal of this PhD research is to contribute research to and expand the undeveloped field of fashion design education. This research offers an alternative counter-hegemonic fashion paradigm in fashion design education in HEIs by furthering understanding about how race and ethnicity are constructed in fashion design processes; it engages with alternative approaches to fashion design practice that can be applied in educational contexts in order to take forward decolonial approaches and challenge racial inequalities. These pedagogical approaches will support educators and students to reflect on and develop more culturally attuned and transformative forms of fashion design practice.

The literature review will demonstrate how existing academic research on fashion design education is currently overlooked as a site of importance because it is under-researched and under-theorised. In recent years, only a few studies in the academic literature on fashion have focused on how, through design processes, race and ethnicity are constructed and represented in fashion design practices (see, for example, Cheang, 2013; Bonadio 2014; Gaugele and Titton 2019). These gaps in the current literature need to be addressed, for several reasons. First, the way design activities in fashion design education (students' work and the curriculum) go about representing non-Western racial groups in fashion is a challenge (Puwar and Bhatia 2003; Kondo 1997; Geczy 2013). Second, this research considers the role that education systems continue to play in reproducing racial

inequality, in the context of the curriculum and teaching methods (Gillborn 2008; Gabriel 2013). Finally, the practice-based element of this research project provides a new framework for pluriversal fashion design pedagogies which shows that it is possible to intervene and disrupt hegemonic thinking in fashion design education in order to achieve the aims of equality in education (Freire 2014 [1968] hooks 1994; 2001; Giroux 2005).

Definitions

This thesis addresses the role of racism in fashion design education and therefore draws on the following key words throughout the thesis, which are further defined here.

Race and Ethnicity

Although the contexts of both these terms are discussed in Chapter 1, how they are used throughout this thesis should be noted. Ethnicity has been defined as a 'process of group identification', while race has increasingly become subsumed into this category, resulting in both terms often being used interchangeably (Bhavnani, Mirza and Meetoo 2005, p.13). However, as constructs, these terms have shifting social and cultural meanings (Spencer 2014). In terms of research in education, an increasing number of studies call for a greater need to distinguish between racial and ethnic categories to provide more nuanced and thoughtful, local narratives about student outcomes, experiences, and backgrounds (Harper 2012; Chang, et). Therefore, in this thesis, race and ethnicity are used together to expand upon and discuss the context of racial and political identity.

Curriculum

While there are many contested views about what constitutes a curriculum, a dominant authoritarian curriculum and system of power dominates mainstream education, especially in HEIs.[7] To counter such concepts, this thesis follows feminist discourse, which take a broader view that posits student learning as complex and social with the curriculum being everything that is part of the learning process, both planned and unplanned (see Arvin, et al 2013). This view of the curriculum attends to the diverse processes and dimensions of knowing and views the curriculum as framing education, and thus permits liberatory praxis to counter the problems of boundaried concepts of the curriculum based on containment and enclosure.

Anti-racism

Chapter 1 discusses the concept of racism in detail. However, the concept of anti-racism is given less attention because this thesis adopts this term from an activist position rooted in action against racism. As someone who defines themself as a longstanding anti-racist activist,[8] this thesis sets out to both identify and oppose racism through the process of anti-racism following the work of anti-racist activist and historian Ibram. X. Kendi, who defines racism and anti-racism as follows:

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[7] See Giroux (2012;2014)
[8] At the time of writing this thesis I continue as a committee member of the campaign group Stand up to Racism, Barnet since 2015; and, served as the Equalities Officer representative for the University and College Union (UCU) at The Royal College of Art between 2017 and 2021.

> '**RACIST:** One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea. **ANTIRACIST:** One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.' (Kendi 2019, p. 12)

Thus, the process of working against racism and the actions of racism shapes how anti-racism is defined throughout this thesis.

Chapter Summaries

This thesis comprises six chapters, summarised in the following sections.

Chapter 1

This chapter presents a literature review to frame the research problem of racism in fashion design education and how to devise a culturally diverse fashion design pedagogy. The review of the history and context of fashion design education identifies knowledge gaps in studies on fashion design education and the representations of race in the fashion design process. To address these gaps, this chapter brings together literature from the fields of fashion design *with* decolonial literature, critical race theory, critical pedagogy and decolonial feminist thinking to propose how they could be applied in fashion design education to help re-imagine and re-conceive fashion design processes and pedagogy as more heterogeneous and 'pluriversal'.

Chapter 2

This chapter unpacks the shifts in my research design and methodology and is structured in three parts to reflect the three research phases undertaken by discussing how my identification as a woman of colour researcher has been central to *this entire* research process. Beginning with positivist conceptualisations of knowledge and research methodology, Phase 1 used the research methods of content analysis and visual discourse analysis in which my voice and identity were viewed as separate from my research process. Based on the limitations of this approach, Phase 2 then explains my decision to move towards a more subjective researcher position by adopting a pedagogical action research (PedAr) methodology. Here I discuss my pedagogical research approach, which employed autoethnography in two case studies. The final phase discusses the research methods used for two further case studies in which my role as researcher was no longer separate from my pedagogical interventions and used a research method involving militant ethnography. Ethical considerations, data collection and limitations of the research methods are detailed here.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents the first empirical investigation of the thesis into the context of the research problem of racism in fashion design education. Responding to the lack of studies on undergraduate fashion design in the UK, the chapter begins by presenting a scoping study of the sector to offer a metanarrative of fashion design education and identify how racist and colonial logic shapes curricular content. This is followed by a pilot study and a case study analysing undergraduate fashion design students' sketchbooks to demonstrate how racist and colonial logic shape certain art and design techniques employed in the

fashion design process. The chapter discusses the pivotal role of gatekeepers in facilitating access to data and the process of whiteness in the research process.

Chapter 4

This chapter responds to the findings from Chapter 3 and introduces two case studies that use a PedAR research method. Each case study presents a different fashion class that explores the possibilities for an anti-racist fashion design process in fashion design education, rooted in decolonial and Black and women of colour feminist theory. The first class was devised using Global South resources to create a more contextualised, situated and relational fashion design process that draws on my experiences as a fashion design educator who is a woman of colour. The second class centred students' lived experiences to generate intersectional forms of fashion designing with the aim of exposing universalist, normative standards embedded in fashion resources in fashion design education. The limitations of the findings show the need for further experimentation to address the role of institution in maintaining the Eurocentric fashion design canon itself.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents a further cycle of anti-racist pedagogical experimentation by introducing two case studies of classes taught in alternative classroom settings. Both case studies aimed to create a more dialogical pedagogical process: the first case study presents a class that addresses the Eurocentric fashion canon in library books and the second case study presents an unplanned reading group co-facilitated with students. The chapter concludes by discussing the spatial and relational interconnectedness of the pedagogical strategies presented in the case studies and argues for the value of creating alternative

heterogenous spaces to critique hegemonic design and more fully recognise the relationship between the curriculum and the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) in relation to the university.

Chapter 6

The final chapter presents a discussion that brings together the findings from the empirical studies to answer the two research questions of my thesis. In this chapter I argue that key design tactics operate to reproduce racism in fashion design education and that this insight can help educators to devise an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy. In this chapter a framework for devising an anti-racist design pedagogy emerges from my findings which makes the case for and contributes to the longer-term project of de-linking from the coloniality of design in HEIs. The chapter concludes with my reflections on the limitations of the research undertaken in this thesis and further discussion of a future agenda for research on racism in fashion design education and an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy.

CHAPTER 1: Racism in Fashion Design Education: Problem and Context

The chapter presents a literature review to address the context and problem of this thesis: racism in fashion design education and strategies for devising an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy. This literature identifies significant gaps in studies that discuss *how* race is represented in fashion design education and *how* to apply an intersectional approach to teach anti-racist forms of fashion design. To address this gap, this chapter brings together literature from the fields of fashion design *with* decolonial literatures, critical race theories, critical pedagogies and decolonial feminist thinking.

Fashion Design Education

Critical Pedagogies

Fashion and Racism

GAPS:

Research Question One: What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the U.K?

Research Question One: What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?

Decolonial Feminism

Decolonising Education

Decolonial Literatures

FIGURE 1. 1 LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1. Fashion Design Education

Locating literature on the topic of racism in fashion design education has not been straightforward, despite the vast size of the fashion design education sector[9] in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK, and the significant role fashion design education plays in the creation of fashion design paradigms. In terms of numbers, each year more courses are launched in HEIs due to the popularity of fashion design as a subject of study (Amed and Mellery-Pratt 2017), reflecting the highly competitive nature of the sector[10] (Mensitieri 2020, p.234-5), in which students are taught to act as catalysts for future fashion cultures.

This proximity between fashion education and the wider fashion industry is explicitly embedded in many curricula in HEIs: for example, through industry-led briefs, student internships and sponsored scholarships,[11] as well as lectures and workshops by visiting fashion designers.[12] This results in high numbers of fashion graduates gaining employment across the fashion industry, as most jobs in the industry require a minimum of an undergraduate fashion design qualification (Hodges and Karpova 2009). In addition, many fashion lecturers in the UK have been taught in the UK fashion system and turn to teaching after gaining fashion industry experience, further embedding the interdependency between education and fashion cultures (McRobbie 1998; Mensitieri ibid).

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[9] See Business of Fashion (BOF) 'The Best Fashion Schools in the World' ranked according to creativity and business (BOF Team, 2019), online: https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-analysis/the-best-fashion-schools-in-the-world-in-2019/

[10] See 'UK Fashion Courses', online: www.study-in-the-uk.com/popularcourses/fashion

[11] See for example, LVMH (Moet Hennessey Louis Vuitton) Scholarships for BA Fashion at Central Saint Martins, online: https://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/fees-and-funding/scholarships-search/lvmh-scholarships-ba-fashion

[12] See for example, guest past visiting lecturer late Virgil Abloh, The Royal College of Art, online: https://www.rca.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/virgil-abloh-join-royal-college-art-visiting-professor/

However, research and publishing that explores the relationship between the social and cultural contexts of fashion design education remains scarce in the literature on fashion (Kent 2018) and its expansion is long overdue. Instead, most academic research undertaken in the field of fashion design pedagogy is focused on technical fashion skills such as mood boards, sketchbooks and drawings (Gillham and McGilp, 2002; Cassidy 2011) or topics related to the role of creativity in pedagogical methods (Dirix 2013; Verschueren 2013). These topics of study are also reflected in the following journals: *International Journal of Fashion Design*, *Technology and Education*; *International Journal of Fashion Studies*; *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, *Clothing; Textiles Research Journal*; and, *Fashion Theory and Textiles.* Although there have been special editions of these journals dedicated to the intersection of fashion and social issues, to date I have found none that focus specifically on issues of socio-cultural difference, including race and gender in fashion design education.

This narrow approach contrasts with what cultural studies scholar Angela McRobbie found in her seminal study of fashion design education in the late 1990s (McRobbie 1998). In this study McRobbie posed the question: 'what is an education in fashion?' (McRobbie 1998, p. 43) during interviews with forty fashion designers and educators to examine the different types of fashion design courses offered at that time in the UK. Although this assessment is over twenty years old, it continues to hold significant relevance for my thesis because McRobbie's findings show that a *conceptual fashion approach,* characterised by a focus on originality, experimentation, freedom and innovation through 'aesthetic intensity' (ibid, p. 48) is the dominant paradigm in fashion design education. *Conceptual fashion* is seen to offer a space for experimental fashion design associated with liberal values of freedom and openness, whereas on the other hand these characteristics and attributes can,

in fact, act as 'a form of constraint and regulation' given the prescriptive and uniform elements of the aesthetic experimentation it advocates and fashion's continued links to more exclusive fashion markets (McRobbie 1998, p. 52).

Consequently, McRobbie shows how *conceptual fashion* dominates fashion design courses in the UK and is the style that most fashion students aspire to. The elevation of aesthetic qualities that is prevalent in fashion design education means that *conceptual fashion* has become more aligned with the fine art tradition (McRobbie 1998) and has become increasingly disconnected from both the production and craft elements of fashion, such as sewing, in many HEIs (Kingston 2008). This might explain how *conceptual fashion* is also built on numerous contradictions and tensions, given that this is an approach that claims to reject the more functionalist, rationalist, and industrial traditions of fashion that can be seen, for example, in commercial high-street fashion, while simultaneously claiming to prepare students to work at the elite and luxury end of the fashion industry.

Where studies do exist on fashion design education that relate to wider socio-cultural factors, the dominant focus tends to relate to sustainable fashion design education and the environment (Fletcher and Tham 2015;2019; Bak-Andersen 2021) or the historical contexts of fashion educational institutions (Blackman and Davies 2021), but these fields of enquiry tend to be disconnected from wider socio-cultural issues. Therefore, if topics of racial difference and identity politics tend to get overlooked in fashion design education, how might an approach that is interested in socio-cultural factors, including the role of race and racism in fashion (Hoskins 2014), be taught?

These absences in the literatures are puzzling, given the role that education plays in both reproducing and challenging racial bias, as many academics have argued, and that

exists in the well-developed literature on the role of racism in education more broadly (hooks 1994; Trifonas 2003; Gillborn 2007; Mirza and Arday 2018; Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly 2021) in addition to long-established journals that look at race and education, such as *Race, Ethnicity and Education,* that began in 1998, and *Whiteness and Education,* in 2015. Growing student-led activist initiatives in the UK, including 'Why is my Curriculum White?'[13], 'Rhodes Must Fall'[14] and 'Why isn't my Professor Black?'[15] to name a few, have also been useful in highlighting key areas and absences in research on education, primarily in relation to the absence of not only people of colour, women and indigenous groups in terms of staff recruitment, student retention and progression but also diverse forms of knowledge in curriculum and pedagogy in HEIs (Tate and Bagguley 2017).

Furthermore, it is significant how the limited research on socio-cultural factors in fashion design pedagogy contrasts with the more established fields of art pedagogy and art history pedagogy that have, for some time, paid attention to the role that socio-cultural factors, especially race, plays in schools, museums and gallery education, as well as HEIs (Araeen 2001; Doy 2003; Dash 2010; Hatton, 2015; Theuri 2016; Richards 2017; Gaztambide-Fernández et al 2018; Trowell 2020). In contrast, the related field of design pedagogy has few studies on design and race (see Tunstall 2020), however, gender in design has been explored more extensively in design history (Buckley 1986; 2020; Attfield and Kirkham 1995; Attfield 2003), design education (Mazé 2019) architecture (Petrescu 2007;

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[13] See online: https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/why-is-my-curriculum-white-decolonising-the-academy [5.8.21]

[14] See online: http://jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/salon-volume-9/RMF_Combined.pdf. Accessed [12.10.21]

[15] See online: http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/isnt-professor-black-reflection/ Accessed [1.2.21]

Schalk et al 2017) and design studies (Forlano et al 2016) to show how oppressive systems of sexism and patriarchy have impacted on design discourses.

Another factor that relates to this lack of research into the socio-cultural contexts of fashion education is role of the university or art school, where fashion design education takes place. Of relevance to this thesis are debates that emerge from the intersection of education and race that argue that higher education pedagogy cannot be disconnected from its institutional settings and histories, especially the recognition of the origins of HEIs which were embedded in the legacies of colonial forms of knowledge-making (Dei 2016; Bhambra et al 2018, p.5; Gopal 2021, p.9), and reproduce notions of colonial schooling (Thiong'o 2012). Indeed, numerous studies argue that all university education should be seen as characterised by colonial structures (Mohanty 2003; Alvares and Faruqi 2012; de Sousa Santos 2012;2018; Bell et al 2020; Shilliam 2021), and further, that all university education has been built upon centuries of ongoing 'elitism, pain, exclusion, coloniality and Eurocentric thinking' (Cupples and Grosfoguel 2019, p. 3). Such serious charges might help to explain why the literature addressing social inequality in the context of fashion design education is absent compared to its discussion in other art and design disciplines; however, to delve deeper into why fashion pedagogies appear underdeveloped also requires the situating of fashion design in the wider context of HEIs and other art and design disciplines.

1.2. The History of Fashion Design Education in the UK

In comparison to other art and design disciplines, fashion design was established later in HEIs in the UK; for example, both graphic design and product design became established as subjects for study in art and design schools in the UK during the post-war

period. Although fashion design education emerged from a craft-based curriculum of dressmaking and needlework during the 1880s and 1890s (McRobbie 1998, p. 21), it took time for fashion to be treated in the same way as other art and design disciplines; when The Royal College of Art, London gained university status in 1967 and awarded degrees to all disciplines, fashion was the last subject to warrant a degree (Ironside 1973; O'Byrne 2009). Since 1972 more UK HEIs began to award degrees in fashion; for example, the London College of Fashion in the UK introduced a degree course in fashion called the BA (Hons) in Clothing in 1989. Therefore, fashion design's more recent place within higher education is less stable than other design disciplines in the HE sector.

The way in which fashion design evolved in education alongside other design disciplines might also have contributed to its less established status in HEIs. All the dominant forms of design education in the UK, including fashion design, have been informed by the principles of the Bauhaus and European Constructivism in the 1950s (Shreev, Bailey and Drew 2004); the ongoing legacy of the Bauhaus tradition to hierarchise and gender design (Ray 2001; Schultz. et al. 2018) is influential in this thesis. Bauhaus principles encourage a design process which privileges student-led experimentation, an approach that has been hugely influential in mainstream contemporary design education curricula in the UK and globally: the principles of the Bauhaus 'preliminary course' (Klaus et. al 2019) remains the template for foundation courses in art and design schools in the UK, with its emphasis on technique, materials and processes.

However, the Bauhaus approach has also been critiqued for the ways in which its curriculum and structure were conceived through masculinist ideas; this resulted in technique-driven functionalist experimentation, relegating female artists to the study of

'craft' subjects such as weaving (see Albers et al 2017 [1965]), and men to painting, despite the Bauhaus' proclaimed support for gender equality (Baumhoff 2001). Furthermore, recent work in queer studies has also claimed that the Bauhaus ignored the contributions that lesbian, gay and transgender artists made in exploring gender differences (Otto 2020). Subsequent accusations have argued that the Bauhaus movement was shaped by racist ideology (Chin 2017), in its advocation of the appropriation of non-European sources by designers.[16]

Design theorist Ahmed Ansari picks up on these themes related to the historical hierarchies that structure art and design education, and its relationship with contemporary debates on decoloniality in design. Ansari elaborates on the hierarchical division between craft and design which was popularised in the 1960s by the first Design Methods movement,[17] resulting in a problematic binary division, meaning

> that Western designers plan and 'design' while non-Western civilizations merely imitate and produce 'craft'. 'Craft' then takes the place of curiosity and novelty in Western design education and acts as the counterpoint to 'true', methodical, problem-solving-oriented practices of design. (Ansari 2017)

Although Ansari omits the role that gender has played in this binary, he nonetheless provides valuable insights into how the logic of hierarchical classification has been applied in design to establish a system based on dominant Western superiority; this helps to explain

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[16] For example, Anni Albers drew inspiration from her collection of pre-Colombian art (Coxon, Fer and Müller–Schareck 2018).

[17] The Design Methods Movement (DMM) The DMM was begun by four people, Bruce Archer, John Chris Jones, Christopher Alexander and Horst Rittel in 1966. See: Langrish, J.Z. (2016) 'The Design Methods Movement: From Optimism to Darwinism' in 2016 Design Research Proceedings, Brighton UK, 2016.

how craft has, over time and different contexts, been gendered as feminine[18] and informed

by patriarchal thinking (Goodall 1983; Buckley 1986; 2020; Wilson 2009; McRobbie 1998;

Flesler et. al 2020).

1.3. The Problem: Representations of Racial Differences in Fashion

This raises the question of how fashion design students reproduce longstanding systemic

racial and ethnic biases as part of their design process. In response to fashion design project

briefs, students typically create visual representations of race and ethnicity through

techniques of collage, photography and drawing as part of the design process, in

sketchbooks, illustrations and mood boards. Analysing the fashion design process in

education, the sociologist Angela McRobbie identified a dominant characteristic in fashion

education, rooted in simplistic, essentialist binary concepts of West/non-West which

enables an 'uncritical plundering and exoticisation of other cultures in search of new fashion

ideas.' (McRobbie 1998, p. 11).

To date I have found no studies that have analysed the visual representations that

fashion students create as part of the fashion design process. However, McRobbie's analysis

points to the need to recognise that representation in fashion design education must be

taken seriously: according to the cultural theorist and race scholar Stuart Hall,

representations are the 'things' that stand in for something else. In other words,

representations yield power to communicate how rich and dynamic meanings can be given

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[18] See *Depatriarchise Design*, a non-profit association based in Switzerland who aim to democratise design education by amplifying the voices of womxn in design. See: https://depatriarchisedesign.com [Accessed 8.4.21]

to 'things' (Hall 2013 [1997], p. 10); this also means representations can be weaponised as part of the creation of complex, ambivalent and contested discourses. For this reason, literature in the field of race identifies the importance of examining representations using empirical data to offer important insights into processes of racialisation (Hallam and Street, 2001; Saha 2018) and race and representation are key sites of examination in the field of cultural studies (Hall 1997) and critical pedagogy (Freire 2017;2021; hooks 1994; McClaren 2000; Trifonas 2003; Giroux 2005; Kincheloe 2008).

A central element of fashion is the representation of the human form, and in almost all fashion media – fashion illustrations, editorial photoshoots, styling, film, social media and advertisements – images of humans or human forms dominate, especially through the medium of photography. To critically analyse how different modes of fashion represents humans, Gillian Dyer's seminal text *Advertising as Communication* (Dyer 1982) is useful, as it argues that photography as a medium depends on signs made by humans and that these signs communicate different systems. Different representations of humans therefore symbolise certain qualities for their audiences: Dyer explains this by classifying human representation in four categories: representations of bodies, representations of manner, representations of activity and props and settings (ibid., 1982).

Following Dyer and critically analysing what human forms do what they do in fashion representations can therefore offer valuable insight into how fashion produces and communicates meanings of race through (fashion) language (Hall 2013). Paying attention to fashion representation can therefore show the complex and often contradictory ways that different languages and lexicons are used to represent – and *mis-represent* – cultures; and, moreover, how these representations make claims to truth in terms of power and

knowledge (Foucault 1989 [1972], p.50-52). If fashion design education is to develop a 'new fashion paradigm' (Niessen 2018, p. 212) and devise a critical visual vocabulary, the dominant codes at work in the process of racialisation in fashion must be questioned and challenged.

Although representation is a contested term (Trifonas 2001), this thesis will use the definition first suggested by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who stresses that 'we give things meanings by how we *represent* them', because this definition refers specifically to the interrelatedness between words and images and how signs are used to construct meaning (Hall 2013 p.xix). Hall's definition is important to this thesis for two key reasons: first, it emphasises the importance of paying attention to visual representations, arguing that the image can be seen as the prevailing sign of late modern culture (Hall 2013); second, the focus of Hall's analytical framework on 'the systems of representation' which can provide a fruitful approach to analysing intersecting and multiple racial, ethnic, sexual and gendered differences in fashion. Hall argues that meanings are socially produced through *sets of practices* (Hall 2013: xxiv) and that,

> 'Representation is a practice, a kind of work', which uses material objects and effects. But the meaning depends not on the material quality of the sign, but on its symbolic function.' (Hall 2013, p. xxiv).

Hall's focus here on symbols is related to the concept of discourse and its production through visual language and discursive practices (Hall 2013,p.45-7). Building on the work of French theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes (1964), Hall shows the interconnectedness of visual signs and cues and the value of placing emphasis on intertextuality. This approach, Hall asserts, can provide significant insights into discursive practices and their contexts by

showing the interrelatedness and interdependence of each element. Following this approach to analyse racial differences in fashion thus entails contextualising historical and cultural specificities. Furthermore, it also requires a recognition of how representations are produced and shaped around cultural relativism (Hall 2013, p. 45) and classificatory ideas that assign cultural values based on binary oppositional difference – self/other, nature/culture, future/past – as fundamental to cultural meaning. To understand more about how cultural and racial difference is represented through binary oppositions also requires an acknowledgement of the deep historical roots of categorising and hierarchising difference through a Cartesian view of the world and how such forms of binary oppositional thinking are related to, and play an influential role in, shaping the design process (Escobar 2017, p. 85), which is discussed in the following section.

Dualist Thinking in Design

Colombian American anthropologist Arturo Escobar argues that *all* dominant design cultures are based on dualist conceptions rooted in binary oppositional thinking that separates ideas of the body from those of the mind, creating distinctions such as man/woman, black/white, nature/culture and so forth; furthermore, dualist thinking determines how design is practised through mechanisms of 'separation, control, and appropriation' (Escobar 2017, p.19).

To understand more about how this thinking is applied in fashion design it is useful to turn to a key binary that shapes the field: gender. Hegemonic gender binaries have long been established in fashion design, given that fashion is 'an embodied practice' and is concerned with how bodies are dressed (Entwistle 2015 [2000], p.1). These longstanding

oppositional binaries have classified sexual differences between men and women as 'natural 'differences, resulting in categories such as menswear and womenswear and the setting of social norms that control who should or should not wear trousers or skirts, for example' (Wilson 1985; Entwistle 2015).

One approach to understanding the roots of dualist thinking in relation to fashion is to explore this concept historically and by making links to how such dominant ideologies emerged in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Decolonial thinkers Anibal Quijano and Maria Lugones have focused on histories of dualist thinking and argue that they originate from the idea that the mind and body are separate, based on Christian thinking that posits the soul in opposition to the body (Quijano 2007; Lugones 2007). According to Puerto Rican sociologist Ramon Grosfoguel, this thinking was later developed in the seventeenth century by French philosopher René Descartes in his seminal phrase 'Cogito ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am) (Descartes 1637)[19] articulated when he proposed that the human being is the central source of knowledge: in doing so he was replacing God as the centre of knowledge (Grosfoguel 2013). This shift towards centring humans as the source of *all* knowledge dominates modern scientific development in the West with forms of 'non-situated, universal, God-eyed view of knowledge', and rejects non-Western knowledges sources as irrational and spiritual (Grosfoguel 2013).

Classification of difference based on this binary oppositional thinking is a key aspect of the role of the body in fashion design and how forms of dress are worn on different racialised, sexualised and gendered bodies. For this reason, understanding how such

[19] For a discussion of the whole of Descartes' Meditations, see Marc Bobro's Descartes' Meditations 1-3 and Descartes' Meditations 4-6 available at: https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2018/08/05/descartes-meditations-4-6/ [Accessed 16.4.21]

differences are applied to bodies is important. Sociologist Stuart Hall's term 'belonging-in-difference' has been developed by fashion theorist Susan Kaiser to explain how dressing the body involves 'some kind of differentiation from other communities' (Kaiser 2014, p.75). The process of designing and mobilising racialised and gendered differences in fashion appears, therefore, to be a significant part of the fashion design process, although this is not a straightforward process. Kaiser notes how 'Part of the struggle for meaning within culture involves the *twin processes of identification and differentiation.* [...] It is often difficult to sort out just what differences are racialized' (Kaiser 2014, p.88)

This twin process again speaks to how binary oppositional thinking underpins design cultures. While Kaiser makes no attempt to differentiate between different types of 'identification' or 'differentiation', it is evident that the process of racialisation is a central element in the way fashion designs are created.

In comparison to other design disciplines, dualist conceptions appear to run much deeper within the foundations of fashion, perhaps because it is a discipline that is conceived around the form of a human body (Entwistle 2015 [2000]), and hegemonic thinking about human bodies has historically been dominated by patriarchal classifications and conceptions (Ahmed 2017; Hendren 2020). This is demonstrated, for example, by two significant characteristics of fashion design; firstly, gender binary perceptions have historically shaped the way that fashion has today become associated with femininity, due to a false dominant gender bias that sees women as more 'naturally' suited to fashion-related activities such as sewing and embroidery (Buckley 1986; Goodall 1990). To challenge these longstanding perceptions that fashion is 'feminine', fashion design has often tried to lose its associations with the female gender by aligning itself more closely with other design disciplines, such as

graphics and product design, because of their emphasis on 'modernity, progress and the importance of technology and industry' (McRobbie 1998, p. 78). Further, the constant drive for experimentation and innovation has arguably contributed to fashion's position at the apex of capitalist and patriarchal forms of design (Buckley 1986). This tension between masculine and feminine and nature and culture plays a significant role both in the way that differences are shaped in fashion design and in how fashion design is defined. Thus, these tensions originate within the foundations of fashion design and permeate the fashion design process, its practice, and how it is produced and sold – and, in context of this thesis, the teaching and learning of fashion, too.

Dualist conceptions that shape fashion design can also explain how persistent and powerful Eurocentric definitions of fashion continue to deploy a West/Rest distinction (Hall 2007). Hall's important term has been applied in fashion (Jansen and Craik 2016; Gaugele and Titton 2019; Cheang et. al 2021) to explain how Western fashion is perceived as modern and non-Western fashion as traditional (Eicher 2001; Neissen 2003; Cheang 2015;) – resulting in a 'fashion/non-fashion dichotomy' (Niessen 2018, p. 212). Continuing challenges to the system of cultural hierarchy that problematically categorises fashion design within narratives of Western bias do, however, suffer from serious limitations because they inadvertently continue to 'preserve' a biased classification system built on geographical difference that separates Western and non-Western fashions. For example, in response to how the 'Big Four' fashion weeks in Milan, Paris, London and New York dominate the fashion media, non-Euromerican fashion platforms have been established, such as African

Fashion Week London[20] and Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto,[21] further entrenching problematic dichotomies.

Ongoing studies in fashion continue to document the process of 'fashion globalisation' (Leshkowich et. al. 2003; Paulicelli and Clark 2008; Geczy and Karaminas 2018; Cheang et. al 2021) and show how different and specific parts of the world also have their own fashions,[22] thus helping to demythologise the idea that fashion is Western but these studies do not fully explain *why* and *how* the Western fashion system operates to maintain the West/Rest binary. Moreover, these existing studies fail to resolve contradictions within globalised fashion narratives, such as how the West/Rest binary can become blurred through complex systems of co-option, cultural appropriation, and the synthesis of Western and indigenous local ideas (Turaga 2016).

Therefore, to answer *why* the Western fashion system operates to maintain the West/Rest distinction involves a much deeper critical examination of how power operates in global fashion systems, and the relationship between power and the creation of cultural hierarchies and divisions. It is only in recent years that literature on this subject by fashion scholars has emerged (see Cheang et.al 2021); however, more of these debates have been situated outside academic fashion literature for much longer and in a wider variety of forms. For example, an increasing number of fashion collectives addressing the hegemonic

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[20] Africa Fashion Week London began in 2011 to combat the lack of African diaspora fashion in London Fashion Week, see: https://www.africafashionweeklondonuk.com/. [Accessed 12.10.19]

[21] Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto presents Indigenous-made fashion runway shows, craft and textiles grounded in Indigenous knowledge, ways of life and storytelling, see: https://ifwtoronto.com/. [Accessed 12.10.19]

[22] See for example fashion from Morocco in Jansen, M.A., (2016). *Moroccan fashion: design, tradition and modernity*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing or from China in Ling, W. and Reinach, S.S.(Eds) (2018) *Fashion in multiple Chinas: Chinese styles in the transglobal landscape*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

heteronormative and standardising values embedded in fashion design, such as the modest

fashion movement;[23] museum and art gallery exhibitions, and campaigns to diversify the

catwalk.[24] Further insights have emerged from studies on fair trade, ethical and

environmental issues in fashion – for example, capitalist systems of fashion design

manufacturing, production and consumption (Hoskins 2014; Hoskins 2022) – and in the

global supply chain with regard to labour and human rights (Lavergne 2015). These topics of

study show how the one-directional flow of power portrayed in dualist thinking does not

fully account for intercultural formations. Locating the ambivalent spaces created outside

the Global North/South binary can therefore offer richer explanations of the representation

of racial differences.

'Othering' in Fashion Design

A key approach to mobilising binary oppositional thinking in the context of fashion design is

the longstanding use of tropes and stereotyping in the fashion design process. Such

practices provide the justification to treat minority groups, such as women, those with

disabilities, LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex,

asexual or ally and other non-heterosexual people), religious groups and those from outside

the West, for example, as inferior, resulting in their subordination and exclusion from

society (Hallam and Street 2000); or seen as a 'a threat [,…] rather than a thinking,

knowledge-producing subject' (Mbembe 2016, p.36).

Racial stereotypes can be seen in many popular fashion books such as *(un) Fashion*

by Tibor and Maira Kalman (Tibor and Kalman, 2000) and *National Geographic Fashion*

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[23] See modest fashion YouTube maker Sebinaah at: https://www.youtube.com/user/sebinaah [Accessed 9.1.22]

[24] See fashion exhibitions including *Body Beautiful: Diversity on the Catwalk,* The National Museum of Scotland

(Newman 2001) that reinforce the idea that fashion does not belong to people from the Global South. Despite Tibor and Kalman's claims that this book 'pokes gentle fun at the elitism of the fashion world', the images presented of, for example, Zulu dancers in South Africa, Kayapo Indians in Brazil and shoes made from cardboard in Africa, in sections titled 'holywear', 'facemasks' and 'tribes', continue to encourage representations built around Global South fashion cultures as traditional and static.

Challenging such racial stereotyping in various cultural forms, practices, histories and knowledge, the field of postcolonialism examines processes of 'Othering' to challenge the asymmetrical relations of power underpinning the dominance of Western traditions of thought (Young 2003). The best-known explanation of this process of 'Othering' is the seminal 1978 book *Orientalism* by literary scholar Edward Said, who argued that forms of 'Othering' patronise and misrepresent other cultures (Said 1995 [1978]). Key to Said's contribution is his observation that Western knowledge is perceived as universal knowledge, built on the European invention of the 'Orient' that separates the non-West as racially and culturally inferior to Europe. This distinction results in ongoing cultural legacies in which Western and European epistemologies are perceived as superior to the cultures, languages and ways of thinking of non-European societies (Lowman and Mayblin 2011).

Hall's theory of representation builds on Said's concept of Orientalism and so offers important ways in which to understand how stereotypes and clichés are built around ideas of 'Other' cultures as primitive, childlike, or feminine in order to justify hegemonic, universalist thinking in fashion. Furthermore, Said asserts that these cultural practices of 'Othering' both essentialise the East, by presenting it as static and underdeveloped, *and* reinforce the idea that the West is more developed and modern. Said defined this process

as 'Othering'. Many fashion scholars have used Said's framework to analyse fashion[25] –

indeed, recent fashion scholarship claims there is an imperative to draw on Said's work and

other postcolonial theory in the context of fashion design as part of the project to decentre

Western dominance in fashion and work towards a more critical global fashion discourse

(Gaugele and Titton 2019).

Further strategies to counter processes of 'Othering' were developed by two key

thinkers on culture and history, based in the Middle East and South Asia: Homi. K. Bhabha

(1994) and Gayatri Spivak (1999). Bhabha's important theories in *The Location of Culture*

(Bhabha 1994) develop the term 'hybridity' and 'mimicry' through the concept of the 'Third

Space of enunciation' (Bhabha 1994, p.37). Bhabha argues that all cultural differences are

constructed through hybrid identities and emerge from in-between and ambivalent spaces,

a 'third space'. This important insight therefore contests colonial conceptions of cultural

differences built on essentialist and hierarchical forms of identity.

Critics, however, question whether 'hybridity' pays sufficient attention to how power

relations operate unequally and reinforce power imbalance (Mohanty 2003; Parry 2006;

Ahmed 2013). This important omission can therefore contribute to abstract, globalised

forms of cultural hybridity that homogenise cultures in celebratory positivist narratives

which further erase cultural differences, delinking them from spatial and temporal, cultural,

historical and geographical contexts (ibid 2013). These approaches risk the adoption of

simplistic notions of colonial oppression in monolithic terms, romanticising the subaltern

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[25] See Puwar,N. and Bhatia, N. (Eds) (2004) *Special issue on Orientalism and Fashion,* Fashion Theory: Volume 7, Issues 3 and 4: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture

subject. In many ways this is the narrative of fashion that is presented in the books *(un)*

Fashion and *National Geographic Fashion,* mentioned above.

Excluded Fashion Narratives

How, then, does fashion manage the challenges of representing racial and cultural

difference, given fashion design's ongoing over-reliance on 'fantasy' scenarios in which

'[f]ashion is removed from any connection with pain or hardship. History (and geography)

appear only as a series of set pieces or panoramic stages into which fashion can dip and

retrieve some themes and ideas.' (McRobbie 1998, p.56).

This dominant fashion design process, described by McRobbie, disconnects ethical and

political discussions from designing and can contribute to a universalist fashion knowledge

system that ignores the power dynamics that play out in historical and geographical

contexts, and the significant role that colonial histories have played in these.

Such omissions have led, for example, to increasingly complex debates around the

issues of cultural appropriation in fashion design. Many discussions have emerged from

social media accusing luxury fashion brands of profiting from marginalised groups through

the misuse of signs and symbols from indigenous communities.[26] While the major fashion

brands respond that such a design process is in fact built upon the notion of cultural

appreciation through the adoption of symbols, signs, artefacts, themes, technologies or

rituals from one culture by members of a different culture, many commentators instead

view this design process as plagiarism, or theft (Garconniere 2010; Pham 2014; Root 2014;

Craik 2015; Kaiser and Green 2020). For these reasons, cultural appropriation is seen as

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[26] See, for example the blog *Native Appropriations* by Dr.Adrienne Keene which discusses stereotypical representations and cultural appropriations of Natives peoples: https://nativeapporpriations.com [Accessed 12.3.2022]

controversial: when members of the cultural or mainstream take from a minority culture this is perceived as both immoral and, in increasingly, as unlawful (Young 2017). While it is beyond the scope of this literature review to discuss cultural appropriation in fashion in depth, what remains vital to acknowledge in this thesis is how the process of appropriation, with its focus on aestheticizing motifs and symbols, results in the downplaying of social and cultural factors in fashion narratives in the design process.

One reason for this neglect is that dominant themes that are found in this review of fashion literature tend towards the celebration and the consequent elevation of the role of the designer,[27] and are limited by narratives about specific garments,[28] or continue to mythologise those cities in which fashion has been developed, such as Paris and New York (Breward and Gilbert 2009; Mell 2011; de la Fressange and Gachet 2019); and in fashion design practice the focus is on technical instructions for sewing (see Fischer 2015), pattern cutting (see Aldrich 2013; 2015) and illustration (see Bryant 2011; Scrace 2018). As a result, discussions become divided between the social conditions of the production and manufacturing processes of fashion (Entwistle 2009; Buckley and Clark 2017; Mensitieri 2020), the materiality of clothing (Kuchler and Miller 2005) and those focused on the design process. This results in a significant absence and an uncritical engagement with the making process in the literature on fashion design; this contrasts to other design disciplines, where there is a stronger focus on production as part of the design process (Rosner 2018).

However, in recent years there have been some advances in exposing the conditions and processes in which fashion is produced, from factory production (Phizacklea 1990;

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[27] For example, see Davies,H. (2008) *100 New Fashion Designers.* London: Laurence King Publishing

[28] For example, see Breward,C. (2016) *The Suit: Form, Function and Style*. London: Reaktion Books

Hoskins 2014; Hoskins 2020; de Castro 2021); fashion education (McRobbie 1998; Kent

2018; Barry 2021) and fashion economies (Entwistle 2009; Tu 2014). By stressing the

importance of the social and cultural conditions and contexts in which fashion is produced,

these studies have given legitimacy to wider debates around the socio-cultural factors of the

fashion design process through platforms and organisations such as *Fashion Act Now*[29] and

Fashion Revolution,[30] that offer a multiplicity of fashion perspectives.

1.4. The Context: Racism in Fashion Design Education

'We face significant challenges in terms of representation, pedagogy, curriculum

reform and student experience. BAME students do not do as well at university

compared with their White counterparts – the latest statistics show a 13%

attainment gap. BAME staff are poorly represented in both senior academic and

university leadership roles: of 19,000 people employed as professors in the UK, only

400 are BAME women. In a typical gathering of 100 professors, 90 would be white

and there would be just two BAME women.' (Amos 2019, p. 1)[31]

While the research aims of this thesis address racism in the fashion design process in

fashion design education, this research is undertaken against the backdrop of significant

racial inequality in the UK HEI sector, which cannot be ignored. Recognising the myriad ways

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[29] *Fashion Act Now* is an activist network working in collaboration with Extinction Rebellion, see
https://www.fashionactnow.org [Accessed 22.6.22]

[30] *Fashion Revolution* are the world's largest fashion activism movement, see:
https://www.fashionrevolution.org [Accessed 22.6.22]

[31] BAME Student Attainment at U.K. Universities #Closing the Gap Report 2017/18, available at:
htttpps://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/bame-student-attainment.pdf

that racism operates in the context of fashion departments in HEIs in the UK, studies have shown that in the undergraduate fashion design interview process, staff who conduct the interviews display racial bias in their questioning (Hodges and Karpova 2009; Burke and McManus 2011); lower class degree attainment in art and design education by Black, Asian and minority ethnic B.A.M.E students (Richards and Finnigan 2015, p.5), and an overwhelming majority of academic staff identifying as white in art and design teaching departments (Richards and Finnigan 2015, p.4).

The Process of Racism

The studies above provide evidence of how racial hierarchy manifests and operates as 'a system of power' (Murji and Solomos 2015, p.16) in fashion education. The roots of racist thinking in fashion are longstanding; for example, recent re-evaluations of early writing in fashion shows how key figures such as Georg Simmel (see, for example, Simmel 1904; McNeil 2015) and Thorstein Veblen (see, for example, Veblen 1899), despite their huge contributions, produced work that was dominated by masculinist thinking (Wilson 1985); and based on colonialist and essentialist ideas about race (Gaugele and Titton 2014). Using hierarchical categorisations of race, Simmel referred to non-Europeans as 'savages or primitive races […] who would be afraid of anything new' (Gaugele and Titton 2014, p.165).

To examine how these mechanics of systemic racism in HEIs and the fashion canon operate, the field of critical race theory (CRT) is especially helpful, as it grew in response to racism in the everyday conditions of Black people in the United States: CRT addresses issues of structural racism, including the practice of racial discrimination. Developing in the legal

field during the 1980s, CRT has been extensively applied as an analytical framework in many fields, such as sociology and law, but especially in education (Morris 2013; Goldberg 1999).

In his seminal book *Racist Culture*, critical race theorist David Goldberg argues that a key characteristic of modernity is how thinking in racial categories has become normalised and naturalised (Goldberg 1999). Thus, for Goldberg, modernity has come to be defined by and through race, in contrast to premodernity, which did not classify human difference based on racial characteristics (ibid 1999). Hierarchical knowledge classification systems linked to Anglo-European hegemony, rooted in the thinking associated with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European Enlightenment, are central to the relationship between race and modernity (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). However, it was during the nineteenth century that racial ideology drew on 'deeper rooted ideas of embodiment' (Dyer 1997, p. 24) to expand the project of European colonial systems which enabled ideas of European racial superiority to be justified through violence towards peoples and their extermination (Escobar 1995; Kennedy 2016). These beliefs were further reinforced and reproduced in the literature, science and philosophy of the period (Bhavnani et.al 2005). This means that as social and cultural meaning shifts, so too does the concept of race, resulting in constant revaluations of what race means to different groups and different historical periods – for example, racialised forms of anti-colonial resistance (Gopal 2019).

Despite the proven invalidity of these hierarchical racialising processes, they have nevertheless led to a dominant belief that race has fixed traits in biological and natural hierarchies (Murji 2006, p.290). Consequently, this legacy of racial categorisation based on differences continues to shape many contemporary understandings of race (Bhopal 2018; Kendi 2019). Further, at the root of racial classification and racist 'norms' lies what Goldberg calls 'the paradoxes of racism': modernity's commitment to liberal values and equality and

pursuit of a society built on racelessness or what is 'non-racist' (Kendi 2019, p. 20).

Problematically, these definitions ignore the root causes of racism by homogenising different races to neutralise the role of discourses of power in racism.

In contrast to this liberal understanding of racism (also see Boulila 2019, p. 124-127) anti-racist activists have raised consciousness of the historical legacies of racism around the concept of anti-racism, that has been defined as 'any idea that suggests the racial groups are equals in all their apparent differences – that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group' (Kendi 2019, p.20).

The project of anti-racism thus acknowledges racial and cultural differences by situating them within a system of racist exclusions and classification in which understanding the role of modernity is crucial (Goldberg 1999 p.6)

Could the ways in which racial difference are represented through a dominant *conceptual-led* fashion design process provide an example of how racist systems are sustained due to the tensions between liberal racism and anti-racism?

This paradox is also addressed in the work of cultural theorist Henry Giroux, who replaces the biological classification systems that define racism with the term 'new racism' to describe how contemporary racism operates as 'largely defined through the privileging of market relations, deregulation, privatization, and consumerism' (Giroux 2006, p.156). This shift is significant, resulting in market-led forms of racism, with culture acting as a key site of the marking of racial difference. Giroux's points about the role of culture as a key mechanism of contemporary racism is evidently important to this study.

Both Goldberg and Giroux argue that the central role that colonialism has played in establishing racist hierarchies is central to an understanding of how race continues to be structured, because

colonial outlooks, interests, dispositions and arrangements set the tone and terms, its frameworks for conceiving and thinking about, the horizons of possibility for engaging and distancing, exploiting and governing, admitting and administering those conceived as racially distinct and different – and, relatedly, for elevating and privileging those deemed racially to belong to the dominant. (Goldberg 2015, p.253)

Understanding the role that colonialism has played – and continues to play – in fashion design and fashion design education is therefore crucial to the analysis of the countless and contradictory ways in which racial differences are represented in fashion design education, but this area of study has been, until very recently, neglected (see Cheang and Suterwalla 2020; Niessen 2020; Barry 2021), in contrast to research on the construction of race and ethnicity undertaken in related fields of art and textiles (Maharaj 1991; Araeen et al. 2005; Jeffries 2013) and in other design disciplines (Eleni and Fry 2016; Abdulla et al 2019).

1.4.1.Fashion and Colonialism

The past few years have, however, seen an increase in the number of academic studies focusing on the relationship between fashion design and colonial history by exploring decolonising fashion narratives (Sircar 2014; de Greef 2020; Jansen 2020; Cheang et.al 2021; Slade and Jansen 2020). Decolonial theory has identified the way that social categories such as race, gender, and sexuality have been conceived through a colonial lens that categorises

the human body within different classifications such as man/woman (Dussell 1993). In the context of fashion, decolonial theories can help to explain the relationship between colonialism and classification systems that embed fashion design in the past *and* the present – for example, through the suppression of indigenous fashions under colonial rule; the global dominance of European fashions, and seeing (Western) fashion designers' work as 'real fashion' and non-Western fashion designers' work as 'traditional' (Jansen 2019).

In particular, a questioning of the dominant Eurocentric narrative of fashion that originated in Europe and is a Western phenomenon (Eicher 2001; Neissen 2003; Cheang 2015; Craik and Jansen 2016) builds on a decolonial theorisation of how a European-led Eurocentric perspective has become dominant since the seventeenth century (Dussel 1993; Quijano 2000). The term 'Eurocentric' gained widespread use during the 1970s to critique programmes initiated by the United Nations (UN) in Africa, describing the way in which European-led, paternalistic, and patriarchal top-down power relations were perpetuated around ideas of progress in development projects (Amin 1989). The UN context is important here because it emphasises the way in which Eurocentrism goes far deeper than European economic and political control, extending to an attitude of superiority in terms of knowledge production (Mignolo 2015; Maldonado-Torres 2007;2011).

Understanding Eurocentrism in terms of power, Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano characterises two crucial features of Eurocentrism: first, that it must be understood in terms of a top-down, single-flow power imbalance, and second that it is an integral element of modernity (Quijano 2007). Eurocentrism and modernity both shape the mechanics of a global Eurocentric capitalist system organised around the coloniality of power and through the two axes that Quijano terms 'the coloniality/modernity' framework (Quijano 2000). The joining of two concepts – modernity and coloniality – in one framework relates to how both

concepts are connected to European histories of colonialism, the production of knowledge and processes of classifying (Bhambra 2017). Most importantly. modernity is underpinned by systems of colonial classification and domination in terms of race. Quijano states that

> Coloniality of power was conceived together with America and Western Europe, and with the social category of 'race' as the key element of the social classification of colonized and colonizers. Unlike in any other previous experience of colonialism, the old ideas of superiority of the dominant, and the inferiority of dominated under European colonialism were mutated in a relationship of biologically and structurally superior and inferior. (Quijano 2007, p. 171)

This thesis is underpinned by the paradigm of 'coloniality/modernity' because it stresses the importance of understanding racial and cultural differences in terms of inequality, discrimination and exploitation, and the domination of Eurocentric, colonial systems of knowledge and thinking which the rest of the world is expected – or compelled – to adopt. The 'coloniality/modernity' framework has later been developed by decolonial theorists, most notably by the decolonial scholar Walter Mignolo (2011) and feminist activist and academic Maria Lugones (2007) who argue that the logic of modernity produced European colonialism, and colonial epistemic difference thinking (see Mignolo and Escobar 2013).

While the classification of race is key to understanding the 'coloniality/modernity' framework, a number of decolonial scholars have also stressed the connection between the global hierarchies of gender *with* race within the project of coloniality: for example sociologist Ramon Grosfoguel uses the conjoined term 'epistemic racism/sexism' to describe how it is not just women who are seen as inferior to Western white men: Black women are

treated as subordinated under white women – gender and ethnicity must therefore be seen together (Grosfoguel 2016).

However, in this review it has been Black and women of colour feminists who have presented the strongest arguments to highlight how narrow binary categories of patriarchal and heterosexual systems of oppression draw attention away from how non-white colonised women and their production of knowledge have been marginalised. Elaborating further, Lugones argues that gender should play a more central role in discussions about coloniality and proposes the concept of the 'coloniality of gender' to offer a way to understand how multiple oppressions have, since colonial times, worked across race, class, gender and sexuality; and further, Lugones offers the 'modern/colonial gender system' framework to analyse the intersections of gender, race and power in the construction of knowledge (Lugones 2010, p. 388). Lugones interrogates hierarchies within gender and race and claims that non-white women have been perceived as being without gender in comparison to white women, resulting in the exclusion of non-white women from discussions about gender, class and heterosexuality in feminist discussions. This exclusion has resulted in non-white women's bodies, knowledge and histories being considered as inferior to those of white women, and further, being a site of control and exploitation.

The relationship between Eurocentrism and modernity has been further examined in the context of design (Fry, Dilnot and Stewart 2015; Ansari 2017; Escobar 2017; Fry 2017; Schultz et al 2018). Arturo Escobar argues that all hegemonic design practices are connected to Eurocentrism and modernity – what he calls Euro-modernity – explaining design in terms of an interrelated hegemonic system characterised as 'capitalist, rationalistic, liberal, secular, heteropatriarchal, white' (Escobar 2020, p. 69). Steeped in ideas of progress and innovation, thinking associated with the concept of modernity thus continues to prevail in

and dominate design theory, practice and history, producing problematic racial, sexual and gender narratives based on Eurocentric superiority (Ansari 2017; Escobar 2017; Constanza-Chock 2019).

So, in what ways might the 'modern/colonial gender system' paradigm contribute to the way fashion design defines, shapes and classifies racial differences? It is useful here to highlight how Mignolo applies his analysis to Eurocentric aesthetics to explain how it works to 'seduce' and universalise Western-led ideas about art by 'establishing norms of the beautiful and the sublime, of what art is and what it is not, what shall be included and what shall be excluded, what shall be awarded and what shall be ignored' (Mignolo 2011, p.19).

Here Mignolo argues that Eurocentric thinking produces – and reproduces – standardised ideas about art, and – pertinent to fashion design – clearly shows how Eurocentric design practices work as a universalising project; in this case both to *shape* design and to show *how* design is understood (Fry and Kalantidou 2014). Most importantly, this idea of Eurocentric norms driving the content of art discourse is co-constituted by the non-European, meaning that the Eurocentric 'progressive' art standard cannot exist without a corresponding 'passive' non-European concept of art. Such questions of inclusion and exclusion are central to the discussion of what fashion design is.

Absences and *Epistemicide*

In this context, Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos's concept of 'abyssal thinking' contributes key thinking to debates on why some knowledges are excluded (de Sousa Santos 2007; 2014), critical in the context of education, in which epistemological distinctions between scientific and non-scientific bodies of knowledge based on true/false distinctions continues to be structured along abyssal divisions. The 'abyssal line' explains an

invisible divide between metropolitan and colonial societies which renders the colonised

world as 'invisible and utterly irrelevant' and nullifies the knowledge of these geographies

(de Sousa Santos 2014, p.71). De Sousa Santos explains that abyssal thinking

> Consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the
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> foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through
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> radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of 'this side of the
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> line' and the realm of "the other side of the line." (de Sousa Santos 2014, p.118).

The effects of this division, Santos argues, create a system of 'modern subhumanity' in

which those who live outside of metropolitan societies[32] are considered as nonhuman, or

subhuman, and non-existent (de Sousa Santos 2014). According to de Sousa Santos, this

failure to acknowledge the abyssal line, despite the end of historical colonialism, is the most

fundamental problem confronting society at the beginning of the twenty-first century (de

Sousa Santos 2014). This significant claim is important for several reasons and is key to

understanding what is taught, and what is not taught, in fashion design curricula in HEIs.

Thus, on the one hand dominant knowledge exists that is founded on scientific

universal claims constructed around forms of rational thinking and based on measurable

evidence; on the other, there is the dismissal of other forms of knowledge, those seen as

'magical or idolatrous', 'popular, lay, plebeian, peasant or indigenous' or as 'beliefs,

opinions, intuitions, and subjective understandings' (de Sousa Santos 2014, p. 119-122). This

rejection of subaltern epistemologies – or what de Sousa Santos calls 'subaltern

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[32] De Sousa Santos describes the metropolitan as beyond geographical global north/south binaries and instead focused on those global metropoles.

cosmopolitanism' (de Sousa Santos 2014, p. 125) – means that varied and diverse forms of knowledge are excluded and thus silenced. Arguing that the way universalist thinking denies and erases local differences, de Sousa Santos theorises the term 'sociology of absences' (de Sousa Santos 2014, p. 157) to address two significant characteristics of absence that enable it to flourish: first, the silences around certain forms of knowledge; and second, the process which enables those silences to be created and maintained. The sociology of absence argues for an understanding of global and cultural differences to be based around non-universal local differences, what de Sousa Santos terms 'insurgent cosmopolitanism' (de Sousa Santos 2016, p. 397). In the context of this thesis, the 'sociology of absences' can be used to identify how racism in fashion design operates, and de Sousa Santos' theory of 'insurgent cosmopolitanism' potentially offers tools to extend and pluralise fashion design.

Most importantly, it is through these 'absences' that a second phase is triggered, a 'murder of knowledge' (de Sousa Santos (2014); Grosfoguel (2013). De Sousa Santos coins the term 'epistemicide' to describe this process through which Western thinking is forcefully imposed upon communities and in doing so systematically destroys indigenous or community-led knowledge. The continued rise of modern Western thinking and epistemicide requires what de Sousa Santos calls 'postabyssal' thinking; counter-knowledge that emerges from the global south, 'an epistemology of the south' (de Sousa Santos 2014).

Yet, returning to recent developments in fashion theory and practice focused on decolonising narratives, little emphasis has been placed on the relationship between racial hierarchies, epistemicide and the shaping of racist paradigms; indeed, these fashion writings are notable for the absence of the term 'racism'. While this is puzzling, the feminist academic Sara Ahmed offers some explanation through her extensive writing about the complexities involved in raising issues of racism and the significant silence on racism within

academia, where the term 'diversity' is far more acceptable (Ahmed 2012). Instead, Ahmed

turns to the academic field of critical whiteness studies (Frankenburg 1993; Dyer 1997;

Wekker 2016) to explain the role of whiteness as a neutral force in society, describing

whiteness as 'the very "what" that coheres as a world' (Ahmed 2004, p. 150). Questions

therefore need to be asked about the normalising strategies used to create racial

hierarchies in fashion: however, most academic work in the field of fashion has examined

non-white racial discourse and so overlooked the power of whiteness to work as a

naturalising discourse. Additionally, to date there is very little academic literature pertaining

to the role of whiteness, white supremacy and white normativity in other design

disciplines.[33]

Whiteness in Fashion

Although some fashion scholars have highlighted how ideologies of whiteness work to

present a white discourse as natural and universal in fashion (Kondo 1997; Sharma and

Sharma 2003; Pham 2015; Haehnel 2019)[34], this is still an undeveloped field, in contrast to

the work of fashion bloggers and social commentators (see Pham 2019). Turning to

literature addressing how whiteness is produced and reproduced through affect, space,

institutions, and processes (Ware and Back 2002; Byrne 2006; Garner 2007; Clarke and

Garner 2010), the dominant narratives argue that whiteness is less about skin colour and

more about achieving an 'objective' view of reality through avoidance and denial. This view

is underscored by an unwillingness to acknowledge racism, the avoidance of identifying with

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[33] See 'Decentering Whiteness in Design History Resources' (2021) at
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KiW2ULDFeIm_OuvwhM2lygxwhoNddrEFk5tYI9zbldw/edit#heading=h
.bdvzjs4d2yfv [Accessed 20.9.20]
[34] Also see the Fashion and Race database set up by Kimberley Jenkins: https://fashionandrace.org [Accessed
3.8.22}

a racial experience or group and the minimising of the importance of racist legacies (Frankenberg, 1993; Fine et al 1997; Clarke and Garner 2010; DiAngelo 2011;2019).

This denial is clearly evidenced in the academic literature on fashion design, in which the universal normativity which enables white female bodies to dominate, and the ubiquity of whiteness, is rarely discussed (Sharma and Sharma 2003). According to several authors, this dominance of white bodies is highly relevant to fashion design education, as it can embed and exaggerate cultural differences between white and non-white bodies (Hoskins 2014) and this can result in whiteness being exclusively linked to 'Euromodernity' (Kaiser 2013). The 'invisibility' of whiteness as a racial category has been explored by sociologist Richard Dyer in his seminal book *White*, which questions how racial whiteness achieves the position of 'ordinariness' in Western media (Dyer 1997). Dyer points to the unique characteristics of white racial constructions:

> There is specificity to white representation, but it does not reside in a set of stereotypes so much as in narrative structural positions, rhetorical tropes and habits of perception. The same is true of all representation – the taxonomic study of stereotypes was only ever an initial step in the study of non-white representation. However, stereotyping – complex and contradictory though it is [...] - does characterise the representation of subordinated social groups and is one of the means by which they are categorised and kept in their place, whereas white people in white culture are given the illusion of their own infinite variety. (Dyer 1997, p.12).

Dyer's framework here offers key insights for how race is represented in fashion: for example, how white female bodies have been placed in unquestioned positions of authority in fashion design processes – for example, in advertising and fashion illustration.

So, what might some of the wider implications of the unquestioned dominance of whiteness in fashion be? White cultural superiority and forms of racial inequality that alienate and oppress those who are often already subject to forms of exclusion (Spencer 2014) point to a process of unease and tension around privilege, echoing the concept of 'white fragility', a term coined by educationalist Robin DiAngelo to describe the discomfort experienced by white people in acknowledging their role in the process of racism (DiAngelo 2011; 2019). DiAngelo explores the contradictory nature of 'white fragility' that simultaneously denies whiteness as a racial category while racialising non-white groups (DiAngelo 2011).

This denial of whiteness and the tension associated with it might contribute to how heteronormative ideas about fashion continue to reproduce racist classification; In particular the role that white feminism might play in normalising Eurocentrism has been discussed at length by Black and women of colour feminists (see hooks 2000; Gabriel and Tate 2017; Boulila 2019; Emejulu and Sabande 2019; Zakaria 2021) and decolonial literature. Decolonial feminist scholar Maria Lugones uses the term 'White feminist theory' to describe how many white feminists use a feminist framework to analyse how patriarchy operates within gender and sexuality but by so doing often exclude any analysis of race, ignoring the fact that whiteness is a racial category (Lugones 2010).

This was apparent in undertaking this literature review, evidenced by the difficulty of finding writing that examines the racialised *and* gendered process of design in fashion or

literature that identifies the universalising mechanics of whiteness as a normative and silencing strategy in processes of racialisation. Drawing further on the work of decolonial thinkers could help to expose how such silences have been maintained through the ongoing legacies of colonialism.

1.4.2.De-linking from the 'Coloniality of Design'

Recent examinations of design's relationship with colonialism (Willis 2016; Ansari 2017; Escobar 2017;2020; Fry 2017; 2021; Constanza-Chock 2018; Schultz et al. 2018; Abdulla 2018; Tunstall 2019) include the concept 'coloniality of design', coined by postcolonial theorist Marina Tlostanova, to explain how colonial structures continue to remain entrenched within design practices and theory (Tlostanova 2017).

Tlostanova's work echoes recent moves towards a 'decolonial turn' as a way to address racism (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). The 'decolonial turn' is a complex concept and, depending on the context, can have multiple meanings. In the context of this thesis, the 'decolonial turn' helps to explore 'the larger task of the very decolonisation of knowledge, power, and being, including institutions such as the university' (Maldonado-Torres 2011, 1).

To expose the role of coloniality in design can help design educators generate ideas to strategise against the racialised and gendered dimensions of power prevalent in design theory and practice; moreover, analysing the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) can help to reveal the links between Western bias and societal inequity in the processes of design (Sloane 2019). Tlostanova draws on the concept of 'modernity/coloniality', (Quijano 1993), to explain how power is based upon patriarchal and hierarchical systems governed

through Eurocentric global power, and argues that coloniality must be viewed – rather than overlooked- as the root cause of unethical design practices:

> Coloniality of design is a control and disciplining of our perception and interpretation of the world, of other human and nonhuman beings and things according to certain legitimized principles. It is a set of specific ontological, epistemic and axiological notions imposed forcefully onto the whole world, including its peripheral and semiperipheral spaces in which alternative versions of life, social structures, environmental models or aesthetic principles have been invariably dismissed. (Tlostanova 2017, p.53)

Here Tlostanova identifes both the longstanding roots of Western bias in design and their extensive influence. Taking Tlostanova's claim further, it is possible to see the complexities of any attempt to challenge coloniality in design, given the extent to which it is entrenched throughout society, as well as in the design education system and in those who teach design.

One significant challenge to colonial thinking in design has emerged from a public statement in 2016 from the Decolonising Design group to the wider design community – theorists, practitioners and educators – to urgently confront the role of design within systems of oppression caused by design's relationship with 'modernity and its ideologies, regimes, and institutions reiterating, producing and exerting continued colonial power upon the lives of oppressed, marginalized, and subaltern peoples in both the "developed" and "developing" world.' (Abdulla et al. 2019). This important perspective, recognising the pervasive role that coloniality in design plays, led to the Decolonising Design group's invitation to edit a special issue of the journal *Design and Culture* that focused on

decolonising design (Schultz et. al 2018). So, given these contexts, in what ways could fashion design work to de-link from coloniality?

1.4.3.Anti-Fashion(s)

One approach to challenging the concept of 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) in fashion would be to build on the longstanding history of challenges to the exclusionary concepts of hegemonic capitalist and patriarchal fashions – for example, fashion subcultures (Polhemus and Proctor 1978; Davis 1994; Kawamura 2013); feminist fashion (Parkins and Dever 2020; Rabinovitch-Fox 2021); socialist fashion (Stern 2003; Stitziel 2005; Hoskins 2014), and modest fashion (Tarlo 2013; Tarlo and Moors 2013; Lewis 2015), drawing in particular on the counter-cultural term 'anti-fashion' – or adapted versions such as *(Un)Fashion* (Kalman and Kalman 2000) or *Against Fashion* (Stern 2003).

In the context of debates around Western and non-Western fashion, Ted Polhemus and Linda Proctor's 1978 model of anti-fashion (Polhemus and Proctor 1978) offers rich potential for strategising against exclusionary definitions of fashion in this thesis. Polhemus and Proctor define anti-fashion as *all* forms of fashion that have been dismissed as outside the hegemonic capitalist fashion system: this includes *both* Western and non-Western styles of fashion. In the context of racism in fashion, this re-conception disrupts the West/non-West dichotomy to destabilise the hegemonic fashion discourse; moreover, anti-fashion can provide 'provocative and exciting 'fashion ideas, based around notions of 'un-, counter, contra and nonfashion' (Mendes 2004, p.35).

Although a simplistic dichotomy between fashion and anti-fashion discourses can further embed problematic binary classifications of fashion, and further neglects the power

relations in fashion systems, anti-fashion discourses can nevertheless present a useful

starting point from which to engage with a more culturally inclusive fashion design process,

one that contrasts to the way the majority of strategies aim to revise the existing context of

fashion, which tends to focus on labour conditions and material concerns (Niessen 2020).

Indeed, longstanding critiques of fashion's exclusivity that have drawn on notions of anti-

fashion have mostly applied the term to Marxist critiques of fashion that relate to the

ethical issues related to fashion production (Hoskins 2014; Leslie 2018), ecological critiques

around the unsustainability of fashion (Fletcher and Tham 2019; Niessen 2020) and feminist

critiques of the problematic gendered concepts of fashion (Wilson 1985; Buckley 1986;

Entwistle 2015 [2000]).

How could the concept of anti-fashion be used more creatively in the fashion design

process? One approach could be to further embed counter-hegemonic fashion resources in

fashion curricula, such as subcultural fashion blogs;[35] critically curated fashion exhibitions;[36]

alternative fashions rooted in local and indigenous practices;[37] decentring the Global North

by centring labels based in the Global South using local artisanal and vernacular practices,[38]

and showcasing the work from fashion weeks in cities outside the dominant northern

European/Anglo-American centres of Milan, Paris, London and New York, known as the 'Big

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[35] See, for example, *Singh Street Style* by UK based Pardeep Singh Bahra who started his blog documenting fashion from the Sikh community; Bryanboy from the Philippines who explores (LGBT+) dress from a Asian perspective and modest fashion *Tokio* by Dina Torkia part of the trend of 'hijabi bloggers'.

[36] See, for example, *Trading Styles* (2013) at Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt, Germany where four international fashion labels were asked to create an exchange between global street style and prototype ideas for new fashion collections by responding to the museum's ethnographic collection; or *Items: Is Fashion Modern?* (2018) at The Museum of Modern Art (New York, US) which shows 101 fashion items, such as the sari and motorbike jacket to show the interconnectedness between different fashion cultures.

[37] See, for example, Indigenous Māori Fashion Apparel Board (IMFAB) at: https://www.miromoda.co.nz/about [Accessed 12.4.22]

[38] See for example, Ituen Basi, a contemporary Nigerian designer drawing on Nigerian heritage; BYyellowtail Collective which is a platform for Native American, First Nations and Indigenous peoples designed fashions.

Four'.[39] In all these contexts the boundaries between how fashion is – and is not – defined becomes further challenged and blurred, creating alternative spaces for re-conceptualising fashion.

In my experience as a fashion educator, such examples continue to be marginalised in UK fashion curricula; however, there has been a shift in the United States towards a re-evaluation of previously marginalised Black and African American designers and design practices (see Berry et. al 2022) with the teaching of African garment construction and pattern-making strategies at Parsons School of Design, New York (Biondi 2020), and fashion exhibitions centring Black fashion designers.[40]

Anti-fashion has also inspired a new and more inclusive concept of fashion by fashion academic Sandra Niessen, who has developed the term 'fashionalization', a term first coined by Ted Polhemus and Linda Proctor in 1978 (Niessen 2003, p. 253) which could be deployed as an expansive starting point for developing an alternative fashion design process that both resists *and* offers alternatives to hegemonic fashion discourses. Polhemus and Proctor describe fashionalization as the process by which *all* non-mainstream fashions – or anti-fashion – become appropriated by dominant, conventional fashion discourses

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[39] See, for example: Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto: IFWTO presents Indigenous-made fashion runway shows, craft and textiles grounded in Indigenous knowledge, ways of life and storytelling: https://ifwtoronto.com/; Lagos Plus size fashion week which has been held since 2017, Lagos fashion week in Nigeria holds a catwalk show that celebrates plus-size women: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-africa-41195530/plus-size-fashion-week-held-in-lagos; Africa Fashion Week London: https://www.africafashionweeklondonuk.com/; S'uraw Atayal Fashion Show: This fashion show promotes indigenous clothing initiatives of Taiwan's indigenous peoples by fusing fashion and heritage: https://international.thenewslens.com/article/82847. Other prominent fashion weeks take place in Sao Paulo, Mumbai, Beirut, Dubai, Taipei, Shanghai, New Delhi, Sibiu, Jakarta, Jordan, and Borneo amongst many others.

[40] *Black Fashion Designers, Fashion & Textile History Gallery,* Fashion Institute of Technology, New York City, US, December 6, 2016 – May 16, 2017 curated by Ariele Elia, assistant curator of Costume and Textiles, and Elizabeth Way, curatorial assistant, The Museum at FIT and *Fashion and Race: Deconstructing Ideas, Reconstructing Identities,* Arnold and Sheila Aronson Galleries at the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center, Parsons School of Design, October 27 - November 11, 2018 curated by Kimberly. M. Jenkins.

(Polhemus and Proctor 1978, p.17). In the process of fashionalization there are no West/non-West boundaries because *all* fashions that are relegated to being non-mainstream – from non-Western to punk and working-class fashions – become co-joined as one group.

Adapting the term fashionalization, Niessen argues that shifting the dominant conceptual binary of West/non-West in fashion design to fashion/anti-fashion opens up space to examine 'the relations of power that operate between fashion and *anti-fashion'* to develop a fashion narrative that includes a wider range of counter-hegemonic fashion voices – 'a process of fashion in which *anti-fashion* is produced and reintegrated (fashionalized)' (Niessen 2003, p.263). Niessen suggests that '[a] definition of fashion that acknowledges the relationship between fashion and anti-fashion as a universal key to understanding clothing dynamics would be truer to the facts of fashion production.' (Niessen 2003, p.263)

In the context of fashion design education, fashionalization provides an alternative starting point for the fashion design process, and a much broader definition of fashion that shows a 'mutually generative' relationship between fashion and anti-fashion in which to challenge the binary thinking that renders non-Western fashion systems in opposition to those of the West.

1.4.4.Intersectional Fashion(s)

So, what might a more expansive approach to fashion design education which embeds anti-fashion and the process of fashionalization encompass? Calls for a more inclusive understanding of fashion have, until recently, mainly focused on two areas of enquiry: what fashion *is*, by questioning the identity and the body, primarily from the fields of material studies related to issues of consumption (see Miller 1995; Miller and Kuchler 2005); and

second, addressing modes of representation from the field of cultural studies (see du Gay 1997).

Problematically, these discussions have often been framed around what Black feminist legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw calls 'single-axis' analysis, meaning that race, class and gender are seen as mutually exclusive and isolated issues (Crenshaw 1989; Collins and Bilge 2016). This challenged the way the inherent racism of the single-axis approach disempowers by neglecting the multiple ways that marginalised groups experience race, class and gender together and has been addressed by many Black and women of colour campaigners and authors (Truth 2019 [1850]; Smith 1983; Shakur 1988; hooks 2014). To address these concerns, Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectionality', used originally in legal and Black feminist contexts, to present an alternative analytical framework that argues that subject positions are always interrelated (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 2018).

Intersectionality exposes how a dominant feature of many of the critiques of Eurocentric fashion continue to provide 'single-axis' perspectives that separate and isolate socio-cultural issues. For example, on the issue of race, this review located examples such as *Black Style* (Tulloch 2004) and *African Fashion* (Pool 2016) which focus exclusively on issues related to fashion and race; or on gender, the chapter 'Feminism and Fashion' in the seminal *Adorned in Dreams* (Wilson 1985). Furthermore, a significant part of the fashion literature on Western womenswear design reflects dominant fashion discourses that focus exclusively on white bodies and are authored by white women (see, for example Cally, 2012; Cumming 2016; Granata 2017). Consequently, this significant absence of more heterogenous conceptualisations of fashion appear to be pivotal to how hegemonic Eurocentric conceptions of fashion are maintained and reproduced.

To build intersectional fashions, new alliances could instead be built between anti-fashion design and other counter-hegemonic design strategies that attempt to resist and challenge design biases, especially ontologically led approaches to design which also call into question the centrality of the human in design and emphasise how it has been a product of modernity (Willis 2006; Fry 2017). Design theorist Anne-Marie Willis, who has written extensively on ontologically led design (Willis 2006; 2012; 2017;2020) argues that humans are central to any design process – indeed it is a fundamental human action – 'while we, as humans, design our world, our world acts back on us and designs us.' (Willis 2006, p.70).

This thesis argues that for fashion design educators to shift beyond the superficial process of designing garments around a heteronormative body, there needs to be a stronger critical engagement on a deeper level with what *all* design is to question the relationship between what it is to be a human and how that relates to multiple life-forms and the planet. Rooted in non-dualist ideas about what it means to be human, an ontology-oriented approach to fashion design might therefore support investigations into fashion design which run counter to exclusively Western-focused universalist ideas about the human body: instead, they could be shaped by questions that include

- who is the 'human' form that is being dressed?

- which 'humans' are included and/or excluded in the classroom?

- which living forms are harmed in fashion design education?

Such an approach could enable a re-thinking of the body, or being, in fashion: whose body do fashion students design on and for which wearer? It would also re-centre questions around counter-hegemonic design strategies that attempt to resist and challenge design

bias. These strategies are not new – for example, disability rights within design and the fields of 'inclusive design' (Hendren 2020) and 'universal design' (UD) (Steinfeld and Maisel 2012; Holmes 202) and the concept of 'value-sensitive design' (VSD) (Friedman and Niessenbaum 1996). While there are differences in these three approaches, they share a core belief in design inclusivity and the need to 'design for everybody' (Constanza-Chock 2019, p. 53).

At the same time, the process of fashionalization could look to the long tradition of feminist analysis and theory that foregrounds the ways that gender bias structures the fields of science and technology, including design. These debates, led by eco-feminists (Silliman and King 1999) and Marxist feminists (see Carpenter and Mojab, 2017), have contributed to the field of 'feminist technoscience' (Harding 1986; Haraway 1988; Davis 2006; Stengers and Despret 2021) and 'feminist design' (Buckley 1986; Schalk, Kristiansson & Mazé, 2017; Flesler et al 2020; Ober 2021). While these feminist contributions are beyond the scope of this literature review, feminist technoscience studies are pertinent to it, given their focus on human and non-human beings such as the cyborg (Haraway 1988), the human-animal discourse (Aaltola 2009; Garry and McHugh 2014) and the post-human (Hayles 2005; Mahon 2017), which have significantly contributed to how various disciplines address individualism, universalism and objectivism: for example, since the 1990s anthropology has rethought human existence and ways of being (Stengers 2003; Latour 2013). These questions shift the focus from a disembodied universalist conception of human beings to one of a lived, embodied experience by questioning what it means to be human, and have driven alternative fields of design to challenge patriarchy and body ableism, and gender, sexuality and class bias.

However, in reviewing the literature in design it is evident that more work needs to be done to expose how 'racist logics and assumptions are built into design' (Benjamin 2019, p. 13). Recent discussions on decoloniality and design have tended to overlook contributions by Black women and women of colour; the recent book *Design in Crisis* (Fry and Nocek 2021) is notable for its omission of Black and women of colour feminist design perspectives,[41] and most of the authors are male and/or white.[42]

Addressing the absence of the voices of Black women and women of colour in his influential work *Designs for the Pluriverse* (Escobar 2017), Escobar pays special attention to the contribution of Black and Latina feminists – and other women of colour feminists[43] – emphasising how their everyday experiences embody ways of 'tackling depatriarchialization and decolonization simultaneously', strategising against forms of racialised and gendered oppression (Escobar 2020, p. 91). Black and women of colour feminists can therefore provide alternative re-conceptions of a politics of difference framed around radical social justice that strives towards more open-ended values, including faith (Johnson 2017; Mirza 2018), respect (Tunstall 2019), love (hooks 2000; Sowinske and Jamal 2017; White 2020), healing (Ahmed 2017) and care (Rizvi 2017). Identifying as a woman of colour, I find this body of literature especially resonant.

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[41] For examples of decolonial feminist design literatures see: Akama (2017); Ece Canli (2017); De.O. Martins (2019); Abdulla (2018).

[42] *Design in Crisis* (2021) has ten chapters and six are by white male authors, one is by a non-white male authors and three are by female authors. Black or Brown female authors are not represented in the book.

[43] While Escobar cites examples from these two groups his overall discussion points to the wider contribution of women of colour decolonial feminisms.

1.4.5. *Pluriversal* Design(s)

Arturo Escobar's adoption of the Zapatista term 'pluriverse' in design contexts as a way to destabilise and move beyond the extraction- and production-oriented objectives that dominate design, aims to expand the notion of design to include those who have been historically oppressed and excluded from hegemonic design paradigms, characterised as a way '*to imagine possibility differently*' (Escobar's italics) (Escobar 2020, p. X). Despite the contradictory application of design in contexts where it has itself contributed to social injustice, Escobar nonetheless sees the potential for design to create alternatives: 'the contemporary world can be considered a massive design failure, certainly the result of particular design decisions: is it a matter of designing our way out?' (Escobar 2017, p.45).

Escobar's emphasis on locating methods, strategies and resources to think beyond universalist ways of thinking contrasts with the writing of many decolonial scholars who have found it difficult to move beyond critiquing colonialism (McLeod et al 2020). To mitigate this, Escobar, and others (Abdulla 2018; Noel 2020) see the potential of applying 'pluriversal' ways of thinking 'to offer new and different ways to make sense and explain diverse (social) worlds' (Reiter 2018, p.8). The Zapatistas argue that 'one-world thinking' is destructive and there is a need to recognise the multiplicity of different 'worlds', many of which, such as folklore, storytelling and indigenous knowledge, have been erased by scientific and capitalist thinking.

While Escobar's innovation has demonstrated the value of bringing pluralist narratives into design, the Zapatista notion of pluriversal politics has a much longer history in decolonial studies (Mbembe 2016; De la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Reiter 2018). For example, decolonial scholar Walter Mignolo has been using the term pluriversality since the

1990s (Mignolo 1995; Mignolo 2012) to describe the process of transformative decolonial projects that set out to expand knowledge and offer alternatives with a focus on praxis as central to pluriversalism, that he characterises as 'convivial, dialogical, or plurilogical' (Mignolo 2018, p.Xii). An increasing number of authors are beginning to demonstrate the value of the pluriverse as both an analytical tool and a methodological approach (Escobar 2017;de la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Kothari et.al. 2019), especially in pedagogical contexts (Zembylas 2017; Dawson 2010; McLeod at.al. 2020; Noel 2020).

1.5.Towards a Decolonial Feminist Fashion Pedagogy

The final section of this chapter returns to the context of this thesis, fashion education, to discuss how to de-link it from coloniality and decolonise fashion design pedagogy. Applying decolonial feminist thought is pertinent here on account of its emphasis on the relations between gender, heterosexuality, capitalism *and* racial hierarchies, addressing the limitations of both decolonial studies and feminism (Lugones 2013). Decolonial feminist thinking aims to address the way that knowledge construction is rooted in decolonial theories *and* women of colour feminism. Those engaged in decolonial pedagogical projects aim to deconstruct the connection with ongoing colonial thinking and de-link them from an approach that continues to support hierarchical forms of knowledge which result in the domination of Western forms of knowledge and which exclude and erase knowledge that has emerged from the Global South and beyond (Lugones 2007; Santos 2014; Patel 2015).

Many decolonial feminists have been especially drawn to the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (see, for example, hooks 1994) because of his emphasis on the experience and knowledge of students as part of the education process

(Freire 1970;1972).[44] Freire argues that pedagogical reflexive strategies are essential in the creation of more liberatory and democratic forms of education – what Freire terms the process of 'conscientization' (Friere 1970). Freirean pedagogy is a huge field that is beyond the scope of this study; however, what has been key to decolonial feminist pedagogies has been Freire's insistence that the pedagogical process should expose ways in which social myths dominate education, to produce a critical pedagogy that emphasises the multiplicity of realities.

This theme of education as a process of demystifying social myths is also taken up by feminist authors Sara Carpenter and Shahrzad Mojab, who use a feminist Marxist analysis to argue how the education process has become an 'abstraction': a de-politicised and commodified space, disconnected from human existence and replaced with the neoliberal concepts of competition, marketisation and individualism (Carpenter and Mojab 2017). Carpenter and Mojab's analysis helps to further expose the ways in which the fashion design process – and how fashion design is taught and learnt – are disconnected from a broad range of social realities, such as the people who manufacture clothing through to the different types of beings who wear the clothes, including the abstracted human forms of the mannequin used in fashion design classrooms. Carpenter and Mojab elaborate on this process of abstraction, asserting that the 'challenge for revolutionary feminist educators is the task of contending with the complexity of abstraction in which we live'(Carpenter and Mojab, 2017). Responding to this challenge, Carpenter and Mojab offer two key approaches for critical educators: first, the need to recognise the material conditions in which we live;

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[44] See The Friere Institute: https://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/ [Accessed 9.2.21]

second, to identify the forms of thought that separate us from our social realities and the natural world (Carpenter and Mojab, 2017).

Reflecting on this disconnect between pedagogy and lived experience, feminist scholar Chandra Talpade Mohanty proposes a pedagogical strategy she calls 'the feminist solidarity or comparative studies model', based on locating similarities and differences to develop her key concept of solidarity, described as 'mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities' (Mohanty, 2003, p.7). Translated into the context of fashion design pedagogy, this model could be used to encourage students to collaboratively explore the different cultures and histories in which they are either directly or indirectly involved. This approach could help fashion design educators challenge the uncritical neoliberal educational spaces they now often occupy, disengaged from fashion knowledges outside of the patriarchal, Eurocentric canon, such as everyday clothing worn by ordinary people (Buckley and Clarke 2015).

Such a curricular strategy, according to Mohanty, would need to be 'based on the premise that the local and the global are not defined in terms of physical geography or territory but exist simultaneously and constitute each other. It is then the links between the local and the global that are foregrounded, and these links are conceptual, material, temporal, contextual, and so on.' (Mohanty, 2003, p. 242). Mohanty's relational approach could then be utilised to foster an active awareness in students of how local and global cultures and histories might be more co-creatively interwoven. The goal here would be to create a design process that resists stereotyping, appropriation and racist forms of representation. This pedagogical model, according to Mohanty, 'moves away from the "separate but equal" (or different) perspective to the coimplication/solidarity one' [...]Thus

it suggests organizing syllabi around social and economic processes and histories of various communities of women.' (Mohanty, 2003, p. 242).

Decolonial feminist pedagogical theories could therefore offer resources to re-imagine a new pedagogical process for fashion design that could enable fashion educators and students to understand that fashion operates in a wider socio-political context by re-centring ontological knowledge that values emotions, positionality and the historicity of bodies to expose how patriarchal knowledge dominates through multiple axes of oppression.

So, how might vernacular, everyday forms of fashion (Buckley and Clarke 2017) be meaningfully incorporated into fashion design pedagogies? This literature review has shown that there are many methodologies and practices used in vernacular forms of art and craft, such as improvisation, which have long histories of disrupting design biases (Gaskins 2019, p.258), but when these are used in educational contexts they are too often co-opted into a universalising one, or there can be a tendency to romanticise such contributions from marginalised groups.

Instead, it is useful to turn to the work of decolonial Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai-Smith here. In Tuhiwai-Smith's seminal book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), she argues that

'[a] critical aspect of the struggle for self-determination has involved questions relating to our history as indigenous peoples and a critique of how we, as the Other, have been represented or excluded from various accounts. Every issue has been approached by indigenous peoples with a view to *re*writing and *re*righting our

position in history. Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own

versions. (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999, p. 34)

Tuhiwai-Smith's description of Indigenous people's approach to '*re*writing and *re*righting'

(ibid, 1999) presents a practice-based strategy for challenging hegemonic thinking, focused

on an agenda that addresses historical discriminatory legacies which have excluded 'Other'

narratives. This combination of technique – in this case 'writing' – combined with a social-

justice-oriented agenda opens up possibilities for further exploration in fashion design

pedagogies.

1.5.1.Re-centring all Bodies in Design

Underpinning coloniality was the principle of de-humanisation, in which the highest value

was given to those who embodied a white, Christian, heterosexual, fully abled male body

(Lugones 2010). This scale of value resulted in a project whose legacy is continued today by

maintaining universalist and normative standards, described by Jamaican philosopher Sylvia

Wynter as the 'Man vs. Human' struggle in her seminal paper 'Unsettling the Coloniality of

Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation – An

Argument' (Wynter 2003). Wynter argues that a new definition of 'human' must therefore

be central to any project that aims to disrupt the power relations that maintain coloniality

thinking and argues that 'one cannot 'unsettle' the "coloniality of power" without a

redescription of the human outside the terms of our present descriptive statement of the

human' (Wynter 2006, p.268). To do this, Wynter adapts Quijano's framework of the

coloniality of power (Quijano 1993) to produce a new term, 'Coloniality of Being/

Power/Truth/Freedom' as a challenge to the dominant colonialist representation of the

human form: 'Man' (Wynter 2003). The colonialist concept of Man identified by Wynter

prevails in many dominant fashion design practices, in which the universalist idea of

normative bodies, underpinned by the colonialist paradigm of Man, dominates and

'designers often assume users to be white, male, abled, English-speaking, middle-class US

citizens unless specified otherwise.' (Constanza-Chock 2019, p. 47).

So, what approaches would be most useful to re-orient fashion design away from a

universalist thinking based on this concept of 'Man' towards the re-centring and valuing of

all bodies in the fashion design process? In the words of design theorist Daniela Rosner, the

project to pluralise design involves asking the question: 'What would it take to understand

design as a different kind of project; one that is both activist and investigative, personal and

culturally situated, responsive and responsible?' (Rosner 2018, p. 11)

Crucial to such approaches is a rejection of the Cartesian dualist conceptions underpinning

fashion design and the need for fashion designers, fashion design educators and fashion

design students to be made aware of their *own* bodies and their emotional, situated, and

relational positioning: a more open and plural politics of difference that embraces 'being-in

difference' (Escobar 2020, p.xxviii).

Design theorist Tony Fry highlights two important approaches that could help

encourage a more pluralistic approach to designing; first, a much richer interpretation of

how design tools and equipment are used so that they are utilised in ways that move

beyond their obvious practical applications, instead considering performativity and drawing

on 'a range of senses' including intuition (Fry 1993, p.93); second, he argues for a wider

incorporation of non-objective knowledge:

Dominant Fashion Design Paradigm	Decolonial Feminist Fashion Design
Individual	*Communal*
Isolated	*Relational*
Objective	*Reflexive*
Placeless	*Situated*
Extractive	*Holistic*
Monological	*Dialogical*
Homogeneous	*Heterogeneous*
Disembodied	*Embodied*
Masculinist	*Non-masculinist*
Monocultural	*Pluralist*

TABLE 1. 1COMPARING DOMINANT FASHION DESIGN PARADIGM TO CHARACTERISTICS OF A DECOLONIAL FEMINIST FASHION DESIGN.

'[c]osmologies, symbolic orders (linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural), ritual, beliefs, everyday life, commodities, artifice, kinship, individuation and commonalities all combine in a soup of relational complexity of uncontainable differences that, in total, is beyond observation. Not only does this complexity manifest many ways of being-in-the-world, as worlds are made present in difference, but it also constitutes different forms of being.' (Fry 2017, p.22)

Fry's emphasis on 'being' both recognises and gives space for marginalised ways of thinking; moreover, it provides the potential for centring *all* cultural differences as a basis for

designing. This provides a framework for an intersectional fashion design process that emphasises human beings' reflexivity and subjectivity, helping designers re-think their relationship to both their social locations and their multiple identities in a design context (see Table 1.1), a process supporting an *ontological* design practice and an ontological approach to design, defined as 'a way of characterising the relation between human beings and lifeworlds' (Willis 2006, p.80).

Such an approach, as presented in Table 1.1, underpins the concept of the pluriverse, which acknowledges the entanglements and connections between different ways of being in the world, and, as Escobar argues, is a way to 're-generate people's spaces, their cultures and communities and to reclaim the commons'(Escobar 2017, p. 21): a counter-hegemonic decolonial fashion design pedagogy.

1.6.Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research problem and context being investigated in this thesis: racism in fashion design education in HEIs in the UK. I have drawn on the literature from various academic fields that point to some of the ways that the assumed universality of Western hegemonic thinking shapes undergraduate fashion design through colonial, patriarchal, sexist and racist hierarchies built around race and gender. The chapter discusses ways in which that decolonial theories and decolonial feminist thinking could be applied in fashion design education to re-imagine and re-conceive more heterogeneous and pluriversal ways to teach and learn fashion. I have argued that alternative fashion design pedagogies could draw on longstanding counter-hegemonic fashions through decolonial feminist

pedagogical strategies that foreground emotion, situated fashions and solidarity, as

presented in Table 1.1.

Chapter 2, Research Design and Methodologies will outline how I have undertaken a three-

phase research design to investigate the problem context.

CHAPTER 2: Research Design and Methodology

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reflects on the shifts in perspective and understanding that I experienced as a woman of colour researcher while engaged in this PhD project and presents my research journey in three phases. In Phase One my researcher position, voice and identity were viewed as separate from my research process, in order to ensure objectivity. However, as I journeyed through this past eight years, my relationship to the discipline of fashion and with the academic settings I encountered unravelled: the research process thus became messier and the 'abyssal' divisions (de Sousa Santos 2014) between scientific and non-scientific knowledge became blurred. This chapter attempts to present and unpack this process: the shifts in my research strategy, the conceptual framework, the questions of who or what should be studied and the tools I used for collecting and analysing empirical materials. The sections reflect critiques of objective, linear research processes (Letherby 2003; Smith and Dean 2009; Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2009; Escobar 2011) and my shift towards a research process that was more embodied (hooks 2000; Nind et. al 2016; Ahmed 2017) and decolonial (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999; McKittrick 2014; Patel 2016; Darder 2019).

2.2. Phase 1: Research Question 1

Phase 1 of my research responds to my first research question – *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the UK?* To address the wider context of this question concerning the undergraduate fashion design education sector, I split my research question into two parts, (a) and (b), to organise the project and give it direction and coherence in the timeframe of this PhD study:

(a) to examine what is being taught in HEIs in the undergraduate fashion design education sector in the UK

 (b) to examine how race and ethnicity are represented by students.

Throughout this process my identification as a woman of colour researcher was central to my enquiry. In my twenty years of experience as both a fashion student and an educator, and through my professional networks,[45] I had regularly observed racist representations in the work of fashion design students, but these observations had not been systematically collated or analysed. I reflected on whether my observations might be based on personal biases or have emerged from one-off incidents and recognised that unless I could objectively analyse how other HEIs were teaching fashion, how would I know whether what I had observed was being replicated across the sector? The following sections present my research design by first discussing the contexts of question (a) and (b) before introducing my research approach.

Question 1: Part (a): conceptual framework, data collection and methods

I faced a core concern at the beginning of this research process in 2016 about the perceived validity of my data and whether my colleagues in the field of fashion design would believe or accept my findings without 'hard evidence'. I found I was not alone in this predicament; feminist scholar Okazawa-Rey describes how feminist researchers may fear their findings will be dismissed in the university, asking themselves: 'How can we ascertain the 'facts' unless we have quantitative data drawn from a representative sample? How can we be sure

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[45] I am a member of three fashion networks where I have shared my research: Fashion Research Network, Fashion Multilogue and FACE (Fashion Academics Creating Equality).

or make claims about the situations […] if we don't use "standard evidence"?' (Okazawa-Rey 2009, p.212-213)

I asked myself these same questions, but I observed that my academic colleagues asked them of me too: I was asked an increasing number of similar questions by academic staff during departmental and conference presentations.[46] I began to wonder to what extent it was because my research was around the sensitive, under-researched and novel topic of race and racism in design or whether it was because I was a woman of colour researcher addressing these questions – or both.

Such challenges have been reflected upon by many women of colour academics who have written about their personal experiences as academics in university settings and how their academic research and careers have been undervalued by some of their white male colleagues (Mirza 2018, p. 3; Gabriel and Tate 2017; Ahmed 2017, p. 337). Therefore, I was aware that my embodied role as a woman of colour investigating representations of race in fashion could impact on my thesis and affect the overall validity of the research process (Punch 2013, p.29), and that my findings would be perceived as biased (Puwar 2004; Mirza 2018; Bhopal 2018). This led me to shape my research design through an objective lens with the aim of locating data to answer question (a).

I began this phase of research by reflecting on my prior teaching experiences and current lecturing roles in several HEIs as a fashion design educator,[47] which gave me unique

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[46] I had presented my research at three academic conferences in the UK during 2014-2016 and questions had been raised about the validity of my research from white academics, and whether I was being too subjective.
[47] I first began teaching fashion design in the UK in 2000 and since then have taught fashion design in the further education, adult education and community sector, and at undergraduate and postgraduate level in more than ten different HEIs both in the UK and globally. During this time, I have also worked in the fashion design industry as a printed textile designer and as a photographer.

insights as an 'insider-researcher', someone defined as having insider knowledge of a particular site to be studied and with specialist knowledge about the issues to be investigated (Costley et al. 2010). My literature review had identified a gap in academic research about the fashion design education sector, which meant there was limited knowledge in this field. Therefore, my first step in this research was to gain a broader understanding of fashion design education to gain a meta-narrative of this sector to help answer my research question; however, I was unsure how to gather data from such a huge field. I was especially keen to know what was being taught across the fashion education sector, but contacting different institutions and course leaders was beyond the scope of this study because it would take too much time; further, I doubted whether fashion educators would disclose such material, due to the competitiveness between institutions; in my experience, project briefs were not shared.

Furthermore, there was a challenge in locating a data sample that was representative of the fashion education sector in terms of both regional variations and variations in course and HEI approaches. Therefore, given the scale of the global fashion education sector, I decided to refine my research focus to undergraduate fashion design education in the UK, as this is where my experience and insight lay, but this raised several additional questions: about where these site(s) would be, and to what extent the data set could be representative of undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in HEIs in the UK.

I first began to undertake online research into the sector and look at the websites of different undergraduate fashion design courses in the UK. On examining these

Phase One – Where Data was Collected and Dates of Collection	Data Collected
Course content of first year of study for 110 fashion design undergraduate fashion womenswear courses for the academic year 2017-2018 (undertaken in 2016)	333 undergraduate fashion module descriptions taken from the websites of 55 HEIs in the UK

TABLE 2. 1 PHASE 1 DATA COLLECTED

I was surprised to find access to descriptions of course content and began to see patterns emerge in the course descriptions. Although these descriptions were summaries, I was able to look at a range of HEI websites and collect data from fashion courses and their curricula; significantly, these were courses at institutions at which I had not taught; neither did I know staff or students there. Rather than collect data from a sample of HEIs, which might raise concerns about insider bias and questions about its validity (Murray and Lawrence, 2013, p.18), I decided to collect data from *all* the undergraduate fashion courses in HEIs in the UK for one academic year (2017-2018) to ensure the data was reliable; the data consisted of 333 undergraduate fashion design module descriptions taken from HEI websites; this phase of data collection is described in Table 2.1.

To analyse this large data set and produce 'generalizable conclusions' (Bell and Waters 2018 [1987]. P. 9) about fashion design education, I used an empirically led data approach to ensure data validity and employed an 'inductive' research approach (Bryman 2015, p.8; Kawamura 2014, p. 25), built around an objective research paradigm. This research design posits the researcher as someone who extracts 'data' from a research site and participants, maintaining what has been critiqued as an 'outsider' status in the research process (Fal-Border and Rahman 1991; Tuck 2009). This allowed me to build categories and theories from examining the field of undergraduate fashion design education at first hand, although

this was time consuming. Using a macro-structuralist theoretical perspective (Neuman 2014), was useful to understand how the undergraduate fashion design education sector operates as a *whole* system.

 In collecting this large numerical data set (Bryman 2015, p. 8), I devised my research design strategy as follows, and summarised in Table 2.2:

- I pursued the first part of my research question, *What is being taught in HEIs in the undergraduate fashion design education sector in the UK*?

- I identified relevant data from 55 HEI websites

- I selected course content related to 124 undergraduate fashion courses in the UK within the academic year 2019-2020

- I charted the data (see Table 3.1)

- In total I collated 333 course descriptions (see Figures 3.1-3.2)

To analyse the data, I chose an 'interpretative content analysis' approach, a systematic method in which themes as well as numerical counts are commonly used to interpret textual data to find out '*what* is said' (Seale 2004, p. 368). To undertake the analysis, I first used an 'initial coding' process (Saldana 2016, p.115), also known as 'open-coding' (Charmaz 2014). During this first coding stage, I counted the frequency, dominance and significance of specific words or terms used in this data sample of 333 textual descriptions of undergraduate fashion course content (Rose 2005, p.82). This process enabled me to break the data down into concepts and categories until consistent themes were identified, which

Phase One Research	
Research Strategy	**Aims and Objectives**
Question 1: (a) 'Positivist' approach: A scoping study of module content from the first year of undergraduate fashion design degree courses in the UK using a **two-step coding process (Bryman 2015, p. 398)**	To explore the context of the fashion design education sector in the UK and identify *how* fashion education is taught. The findings were used to inform the gathering of data in Stage 2 to answer Research Question 1 (b): how representations of race and ethnicity are represented by students.

TABLE 2. 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES TO ANSWER RESEARCH QUESTION (A) IN PHASE 1

then helped me to generate three initial codes: *skills*, *historical and cultural context* and *industry*. These three codes relate to the dominant constituent elements of fashion design education, in which the code of skills related to practice-based design making; historical and cultural context is delivered through essay and dissertation writing; and industry links are based on work placements and industry-led project briefs: these codes will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

While these codes were useful, a critique of content analysis is that it is not concerned with *how* the data is communicated (Seale 2004, p. 368) and consequently these initial codes were unable to help me to fully answer question (a); the codes were too broad, and could only tell me what was being taught in fashion design education, not *how* it was being taught.

To address this concern, the next stage of the data analysis process used an axial coding process to delve deeper into the data and examine *how* the undergraduate fashion design education sector in the UK was taught; axial coding is a process that allows the researcher to make connections between main categories and its sub-categories (Saldana 2016, p.244; Boeije 2009, p.108). During the axial coding process, I identified emergent

patterns across the data by creating links between the initial codes (Charmaz 2014). I did this by re- applying the three codes, *skills*, *cultural and historical context* and *industry*, to all the 333 module descriptions provided for the first year of the 110 undergraduate fashion design courses.

After the data was re-coded, I undertook another round of content analysis to identify the most common taught element in fashion design education. Through this iterative analytical process, I began to pinpoint relationships between the categories and concepts to examine *how* fashion was being taught: the findings from the data pointed to the dominant role that visualisation plays in the fashion process. Although this finding was significant, the coding process had resulted in reducing the rich complexity of the data I had obtained and made me question 'whether a "scientific" model of social research can be appropriate to the study of social and cultural objects that are in large part defined by the meanings they hold for social actors' (Seale 2004, p. 368).

 The limitation of this objective and positivist research approach was that the data only partly showed me *how* fashion education was being taught. Consequently, while this finding raised further questions about the role that visualisation in the fashion design process played in representing race and ethnicity, it informed the way I proceeded to locate data for question (b): to examine *how representations of race and ethnicity are constructed by students*. This led me to explore sites in which visualisation played a dominant role in the fashion design process, and I identified fashion sketchbooks as a key research site (see Figure 2.3). The next section discusses the conceptual framework, data collection process and research methods used to analyse fashion students' sketchbooks.

Question 1: Part (b): Conceptual framework, data collection and methods

Following the findings I had generated to question (a), which indicated that fashion visualisation was the most common taught skill in fashion design education, I spent time identifying the different visual activities and elements of the fashion design process in undergraduate fashion design education to help me to locate the activities which would offer me the best scope for research into racism in fashion design education. By separating the different constituent elements of the fashion design process, such as mood boards, fashion illustrations, final garments and so forth, I could assess the frequency and occurrence of these visual design activities in the fashion design process and the extent to which they could help me answer question (b) (see Table 2.3). I next evaluated the interrelatedness of these different visual design activities in more detail to identify which were used most often as part of the fashion design process and so could offer me those that would give me the most informed insights into processes of racialisation in fashion design (see Figure 2.1).

Both analyses showed me the methodological limitations of examining representations of race and ethnicity by focusing on isolated fashion design activities, such as focusing solely on fashion illustrations; this approach might limit the potential insights into the breadth and depth of the fashion design process. The analyses shown in Figure 2.1 did, however, point to one pivotal and influential fashion design activity which appeared to be most linked to other aspects of the fashion design process: the sketchbook. Figure 2.1 shows how sketchbooks incorporate a variety of fashion activities in one key site and contain a range of visual imagery from research sources to fashion illustration. Although these sketchbook

Different design activities/elements in the fashion design process in (Fashion Design Education)	Possible Insights	Limitations	Would this site help me answer research question (b)?
Pattern Blocks/ Cutting methods	Western-centric tradition of garment construction, body standardization	Most institutions use the same blocks and approach to cutting/draping etc.	No
Fashion Design Project Brief	How fashion design is conceived; dominant concepts driving fashion cultures	Focus on fashion educator and their institution's fashion viewpoint.	Yes
Mood boards	Fashion imagery: decision-making process of selecting different inspiration sources to make a fashion story	House style of college	Yes
Fashion Illustrations	Body size, skin tone, racial constructions	Tutor-led styles might limit students' own experimentation	Yes
Sketchbooks	Decision-making process of selecting different inspiration sources	Need a large sample to look for patterns and trends	Yes
Tutorials/Group Critiques	Language used to discuss fashion; dominant terms and ideologies	Certain personalities might dominate discussions; Need for comparison between different institutions?	Yes
Toiles and fitting	Body size and 'norms'	Fashion designing generally works on the basis of sample sizes 10 or 12	No
Fashion History	Eurocentric narratives	Results are often written essays not related to designing	No
Internet Research	Individual ideas about fashion design	Themes may be too broad	No
Magazines	Narratives in fashion photography: e.g. exoticism in locations (Cheang 2013)	Themes may be too broad	Possibly

Assessment	Which fashion designs are most valued; criteria for success	Criteria may be too broad	No
Fabric swatches	What types of textiles are most valued	Decisions may be economic	No
Catwalk shows/static displays	Body size and 'norms'		No
Final garments	Individual ideas about fashion design	Little information about decision-making process	No
Museum Collections/ Exhibitions	Eurocentric narratives	Huge scope to cover	Possibly
Fashion books/library	Eurocentric narratives	Huge scope to cover	Possibly

TABLE 2. 3 EVALUATION OF DIFFERENT RESEARCH SITES IN THE FASHION DESIGN EDUCATION PROCESS
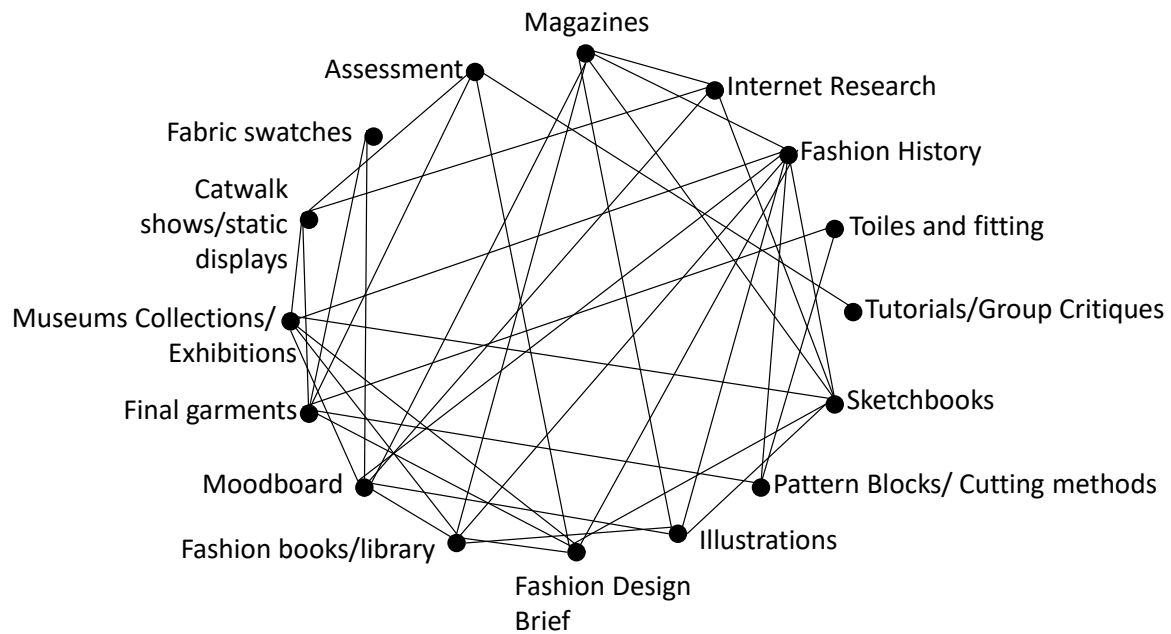
FIGURE 2. 1 *THE FASHION DESIGN PROCESS* IN UNDERGRADUATE FASHION DESIGN EDUCATION

pages contain composite and fragmented images posing challenges to the researcher in terms of their 'expressive content' (Rose 2016, p.67); nonetheless, sketchbooks could offer significant insights into the visualisation processes in fashion design.

Sketchbooks underpin all HE art and design curricula, providing a record of key evidence of the origins and developments of design concepts; they have played a central role in the creative process for hundreds of years.[48] Furthermore, sketchbooks provide evidence of artists' and designers' inner thoughts and inspiration through drawings and text (Brereton, 2012; Klee, 1953; Glimcher and Glimcher, 1996). As a result, sketchbooks have provided a rich source of data for those researching the design process (Mbonu 2014; Messenger, 2016; de Beer, 2018), providing insights into a private space of visual and textual representations in which ideas are explored through 'the generation and manipulation of visual material, which supports the process of ideation and 'incubation' (O'Neill 2013, p.6), reinforcing their important role in the creative process in art and design.[49]

To undertake the pilot study I used visual research methodologies (Rose 2016; Gaimster 2011; Mitchell 2011; Pink 2012; Pauwels and Mannay 2019; Kress and Leeuwen 2020), a field of research commonly used in in art and design pedagogical research (Addison and Burgess 2013). I planned to analyse visual data created by students, also known as a form of 'researcher-discovered' data, (Collins 2019, p. 141) to examine the representation of race and ethnicity. Drawing on Stuart Hall's definition of representation as a practice (Hall

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[48] See *Under Cover: Artist's Sketchbooks*, Fogg Museum, Harvard, 2016

[49] See examples of sketchbooks in The Sketchbook Project, a crowd-funded sketchbook museum and community space; 'Sketchmob' at The Design Museum, London; The Tate Archive, Public Records Catalogue; and The British Library Catalogue; and exhibitions that have included artists' sketchbooks, such as 'Annie Albers', Tate Modern, London, 2019; 'Picasso and Paper', Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2020

2013 [1997], p. xxiv), that was discussed in Chapter 1, whose meaning is dependent on its representational functions, this research phase was underpinned by a *constructionist* theoretical understanding of meaning-making through systems, concepts and signs (Hall 2013 [1997], p. 11). In contrast to a reflective or intentional approach to understanding systems of representation, a *constructionist* approach emphasises that meanings originate in representational systems and signs.

In response to the limitations I found in using an objective approach to answer question (a), here I adopted a more a more reflexive and exploratory position, using an 'interpretivist paradigm' approach, as shown in Table 2.4; this approach posits social research as one possible interpretation amongst many (Bryman 2015, p.11; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2011; Darder 2020). Many feminists support this epistemological position (Letherby 2003; Harding 1986; Reinharz and Davidman 1992; Sharp 2005; Naples 2007) in which culture is seen as 'woven of social relations' (Haraway 2004, p.187) in which the contexts of race, gender, sexuality and class are interrelated. Thus, this entire process was underpinned by an acknowledgement that 'analysing images is not about 'the discovery of their truth' (Rose 2016, p.2).

In contrast to an objective-led research process, I now aimed to generate 'thick descriptions' from my data: this is a form of analysis, developed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, that views cultures as systems of signs (Geertz 1973, p.5) with the aim of 'both describing and interpreting observed social action (or behaviour) within its particular context'. (Ponterotto 2006, p.543)

Phase One Research	
Research Strategy	**Aims and Objectives**
Question 1 (b) 'Interpretivist' Approach: Examining the visual representations of race and gender produced by undergraduate fashion students using a visual discourse analytical approach (Rose 2005, p.63)	To identify *how* racialised and gendered hierarchies operate to construct race and gender in the fashion design process. The findings were used to inform Research Phase Two presented in Chapter Five.

TABLE 2. 4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES TO ANSWER RESEARCH QUESTION (B) IN PHASE 1

To develop thick descriptions also entailed addressing what was not in the data, specifically the 'silences and absences' (Tonkiss 2004, p.379), to understand what contexts had been rendered invisible. This is especially true in a study of race and ethnicity; in his

longstanding and seminal work that examines racial differences, the cultural and social theorist Paul Gilroy stresses the importance of looking at what is both visible in the data *and* what is invisible in relation to the analysis of race (Gilroy 1987, p.58). To begin the process of data collection I collected 30 sketchbooks produced by students specialising in fashion design on an art and design foundation course at College A, where I was working, for a pilot study discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Key to this process was gaining ethical consent from my line manager, the head of department and students. As a member of staff at College A my head of department authorised the pilot study; however, access to a sample of sketchbooks proved difficult because course leaders were, to my surprise, reluctant to give access to my study. Fortunately, one sympathetic non-white fashion design colleague who was interested in a project that was examining racial inequalities in art and design pedagogy agreed to give access to their students' sketchbooks.

My pilot study findings were important because they showed evidence of how racist representations were created using a two-step design tactic in the fashion design process in

which images were decontextualised before being recontextualised. This encouraged me to

seek a bigger sample and collect data from three different HEIs to ensure that my findings

were valid and would enable triangulation (Silverman 2001, p.233-5). I planned to locate the

three sets of sketchbook data from across the UK to address possible regional differences

that might skew the data. I sought to collect data from sketchbooks produced by students

on undergraduate fashion design womenswear programmes, because this is the most

common undergraduate fashion programme in the UK, and my hope was that there would

be a greater pool of students to gather data from.[50]

My first step involved contacting course leaders on undergraduate fashion courses

directly via email. The following criteria guided my selection process for contact:

- practical reasons, such as geographic location

- pre-existing contacts

- introduction to a gatekeeper had been facilitated within my networks

- status of the institution: for example, the level of success of the course[51]

Through this process I identified 22 HEIs and drafted an email with the support of my

supervisory team to send to the course leaders on these undergraduate fashion

programmes across the UK. The email requested permission to look at students'

sketchbooks for my PhD study to analyse the cultural representations that students

constructed as part of their research in the fashion design process. I reminded course

leaders that both students and the HEI would remain anonymous.

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[50] At the time of this phase of research between 2015-2017 there were 57 higher education institutions based in the UK offering a BA (Hons) Fashion Design womenswear

[51] I referred to Business of Fashion Top Global Fashion Schools 2016, see http://www. businessoffashion.com/education/rankings/2016

This research phase took place between 2016 and 2018 during which time the Black Lives Matter movement was gaining increasing attention. I was therefore attuned to the sensitivities surrounding my research topic into racial bias in fashion design education and deliberately omitted the word 'racialised' or 'race' from my letter, instead choosing the term 'cultural differences'. I was concerned that words related to 'race' might be received with caution.

Despite my careful wording, only five HEIs replied to my email and 17 did not reply, despite numerous emails over the course of six months in 2017-18. This lengthy process meant that my research stalled until I was able to find more data, causing a considerable delay to my PhD. Of the five responses, three universities refused access due to ethical reasons, citing the 'private' nature of sketchbooks. These three responses stated:

I'm afraid the students' sketch books are their personal visual journey and we are unable to collaborate on this. Because we ask the students to be honest and thorough and to trust themselves, often the sketch books can be quite sensitive documents. (College 7)

I'm afraid we are prohibited from showing students' work externally during examinations as this breaches our guidelines. (College 14)

Unfortunately, we will not be able to facilitate your research at this time. I realise that this is very disappointing to you but we have had to think of a broad range of considerations. (College 18)

Two HEIs requested that all research requests needed to first submit an ethical clearance form for their own institution. Consequently, I completed two detailed ethical forms for both HEIs; the ethical committee of both gave approval for my study to proceed; however, course leaders still declined my request for involvement.

I was hugely disappointed by the lack of interest and my lack of success in locating data, and deeply baffled and troubled, too. This research phase in 2016 to 2018 was carried out against a backdrop of increasing attention to racist practices in fashion design from the fashion modelling industry,[52] popular press[53] and bloggers,[54] resulting in several fashion education initiatives such as the Fashion and Race database set up by fashion educator Kimberley Jenkins in the United States.

This led me to realise that there appeared to be a reluctance to discuss the topic of representations of race in fashion from course leaders in HEIs, and this made me question how an attempt to grow awareness around racism in fashion might also result in increased sensitivity. The dominant response to my request for data pointed to issues of confidentiality and ethics, although I had noticed that no course leaders had requested more details about the research topic, such as queries about issues of representation of cultural differences, concerns about racial bias or even further interest in the research topic or why I was researching into this area. Further, none of the respondents enquired into my role as a fashion design educator or my biography, which led me to think more critically

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[52] See H. Marriot (2017) 'Row Over Mistreatment of Models Overshadows Paris fashion week', *Guardian* 1 March, www.theguardian.com/fashion/2017/mar/01/row-over-mistreatment-of-models-overshadows-paris-fashion-week Accessed: 19.6.2017

[53] See Legesse,K. (2020) 'Racism is at the Heart of Fast fashion – its Time for Change', Guardian, 11 June, www. theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/11/racism-is-at-the-heart-of-fast-fashion-its-time-for-change. Accessed: 9.9.20

[54] See Wenya Odang's blog (2017): 'Is Fashion racist?': www.wenya odang.wordpress.com/2017/03/13/is-fashion-racist/

about my racial identity in the research process, including my non-European name, and whether this might have resulted in a lack of support.

I even began to question whether having a European name might have had a more positive response from the course leaders, given that I knew of at least one other PhD researcher with a European name who had easily gained access to undergraduate fashion design students' sketchbooks at HEIs for analysis.[55] I further questioned the role of researcher neutrality in the research process: how might the culturally inscribed race of the researcher affect the navigation of the research process in terms of racism (Dennis 2018, p. 192-196), and whether my name influenced research outcomes.[56]

Were these obstacles preventing my request to access the sketchbooks of undergraduate fashion design students an example of what Black and people of colour researchers characterise as 'the micro-institutional practices that maintain endemic patterns of racist exclusion in higher education' (Mirza 2018)? Although I will never be able to fully answer this question, this lack of access forced me to think more critically about what it means to undertake research as a woman of colour in white institutional spaces in relation to my identity as 'an embodied raced and gendered researcher' (Mirza 2018, p.176). The growing body of studies in the field of education undertaken by Black women and women of colour offer important insights and guidance for navigating the research process in educational institutions by emphasising the constantly shifting positions of

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[55] See McGilp (2011)

[56] To test out this hypothesis would have raised serious ethical implications: for example, re-contacting the HEI institutions with a different name and different email but with the same worded research topic; and would not necessarily lead to any conclusive answer. Furthermore, testing out my hypothesis was not the aim here.

researcher and sites of research (Caluya et al. 2011; Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012; Bhopal et al 2016; Battiste, 2014; Shajahan 2015).

The feminist and activist Sara Ahmed explores her fraught relationship as a marginalised women of colour with the academic institutional context and uses the concept of 'walls' as a metaphor to describe different institutional barriers faced by women of colour – for example, the silences around racism and sexism. To move my PhD research forward I recognised the need to further unpack the nature of these 'walls' in my context of fashion design education and my failure to gain access to data. In particular, Ahmed argues for the need to understand and think more deeply about the 'mechanisms' which enable such 'blockages', or 'impasses' (Ahmed 2017, p. 137). I spent time reflecting on the role of fashion design educators: who they are, and what they do, to understand why they might not be ready to have complex conversations about racial bias in the fashion design education process. Significantly, all the course leaders I had approached were white and I reflected on whether I might have secured access if I was able to find someone more sympathetic to my research, perhaps another Black, Asian and minority ethnic B.A.M.E. fashion design educator. This lengthy delay also made me consider other options to locate data on how race is constructed in fashion design education through course or institutional documentation.[57]

However, up to this point I had not spoken to the course leader of fashion, Tutor C, at College C, the institution where I was currently teaching, because in my pursuit of objectivity I had wanted to focus on work produced by students at an HEI at which I did not

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[57] For example, HEI documents relating to fashion design education, such as briefs, government data on HEIs in art and design and pre-existing data on the BAME attainment gap in art and design HEIs.

Phase One – Where Data was Collected and Dates of Collection	Data Collected
Pilot Study, Sketchbook Analysis undertaken in *College A* **in 2016**	**Photographs:** 30 sketchbooks were analysed. 800 photographs of images were taken of the covers and pages.
Email Correspondence between myself and 22 HEIs, 2017-2018	**Email messages -** seven messages were collected.
Sketchbook Analysis undertaken in *College* **C between 2017-2018**	**Photographs:** 70 sketchbooks were analysed. 33 photographs of images were taken of the covers and pages.

TABLE 2. 5 PHASE 1 DATA COLLECTED

teach. Tutor C was, significantly, someone of non-European ethnicity and was supportive of this research project; they agreed to give me access to a cohort of first-year fashion students' sketchbooks, although, due to the academic timetable, it meant that I had to wait until the following term, which meant another delay to my research process (see Table 2.5)

Finally, I was granted access at College C to a group of 70 sketchbooks from first-year undergraduates on fashion womenswear courses and I needed to develop an approach to analysing them. I began to think more about the role of the student and their identity in forming representation of race; however, my initial attempts to interview students proved too time consuming and beyond the scope of this study, given that there were 70 students in this data set.

However, in response to the limitations of a positivist approach that I had employed to answer question (a), my conceptual framework had begun to shift. I reflected more critically on the asymmetric power dynamics between the location of the researcher and the object of research; and how research methodologies in fashion – both quantitative *and* qualitative – remain an underdeveloped area of fashion scholarship, with little literature on

theoretical frameworks and methodological strategies to study fashion (Kawamura 2014).

The limited writing in this area shows a tendency to promote a social sciences approach

using research methods with aims of objectivity and neutrality (Au et al 2004; Flynn and

Foster 2009; Kawamura 2014).

This thinking led me to draw on the seminal text *Visual Methodologies* by

geographer Gillian Rose, which was especially useful because it suggests three key methods

for the interpretation of visual, written and spoken materials: compositional interpretation,

semiotics, and discourse analysis (Rose 2016). A critical visual discourse analytical approach

seemed most suitable to analyse the pages of sketchbooks, as this method is concerned

with the complexities, contradictions, and absences in the 'production of social difference

through visual imagery' (ibid, p.161) and the effects of the claims to truth being made (Gill

2008, p.142; Foucault 1989 [1972], p.50-52). To answer these questions, Rose's model of

critical visual discourse analysis requires researchers to look at data with 'fresh eyes' in

order to identify key themes and concepts (Rose 2016, p.150). This allows the researcher to

analyse both individual images *and* their heterogenous contexts, an apt approach

considering that sketchbook pages are relational composites of image and text. Rose advises

researchers pay attention to the following: 'How are particular words or images given

specific meanings? Are there meaningful clusters of words and images? What association

are established within such clusters? What connections are there between such

clusters?'(ibid, p. 151)

The pilot study consisted of analysing about 800 pages in thirty sketchbooks. I therefore had

to develop a more manageable sampling procedure to focus the study on isolating

representations of race and ethnicity, given the large data set, which was 2,800-3,500

double-sided pages from 70 sketchbooks: the sampling process also needed to take account of the limited timeframe with which I had access to the data (two days) and to ensure that the data was representative (Rose 2016, p.57). The aim here was to focus on *how* the images had been assembled inside the books, something I had not examined during the pilot study.

My strategy comprised of two steps:

- *Step One*: to examine the group of 70 sketchbooks as a whole group.
- *Step Two*: to reduce the sample of sketchbooks to focus on those that present non-western/Anglo-American or non-Eurocentric imagery: this resulted in a reduction to a sample of 12 sketchbooks

Guided by the 'constructionist' approach, I looked for material objects – marks, materials and effects used in each of the sketchbooks (Hall 2013 [1997], p. 11), attending to 'three sites at which the meanings of images are made: the site of production, the site of the image itself, and the site of its audiencing' (Rose, 2016, p. 67). To address each of these points, I made notes about the *technologies* employed by the student to focus on what techniques had been used to apply the images to the sketchbook, the *site of production,* which meant addressing where the image had originated and whether it was a primary or secondary photograph, drawing or text and what kinds of *social and political relations* were being mobilised through the images and text.

As these thick descriptions were generated in both Step One and Step Two, I began the iterative process of classifying and organising these racialised visual representations

Phase One –Research undertaken and dates	Research Method	Data Collected
Course content of first year of study for 110 fashion design undergraduate fashion womenswear courses for the academic year 2017-2018 (undertaken in 2016)	Quantitative study using content analysis using open-coding process: initial coding and axial coding	**333 textual descriptions:** taken **from the websites of 55 HEIs in the** UK.
Pilot Study, Sketchbook Analysis undertaken in College A in 2016	Critical visual discourse analysis (Rose 2005 [2016])	**Photographs:** 30 sketchbooks were analysed: 800 photographs of sketchbook covers and pages. Four photographs were analysed.
Email correspondence between myself and 22 HEIs, 2017-2018	Thematic analysis of emails	**Email messages:** seven messages were collected.
Sketchbook Analysis undertaken in *College C* between 2017-2018	Critical visual discourse analysis (Rose 2005 [2016])	**Photographs:** 70 sketchbooks were analysed: 33 photographs of sketchbook covers and pages. Twenty-two photographs were analysed.

TABLE 2. 6 PHASE 1 RESEARCH DATES, METHOD AND DATA COLLECTED SUMMARISED

into meaningful categories informed by the literature review; and in relation to the

creative techniques employed to answer my research question (b), to understand *how*

representations of race and ethnicity were constructed in undergraduate fashion design

education. While it was time consuming to look through each page to deconstruct how

racialised representations had been constructed, my findings from this sketchbook analysis

revealed how techniques of collage and montage enable a fashion design process in which

problematic and racist representations are constructed, reinforced and reproduced**.**

The limited timeframe of two days I had been given to access the sketchbooks

facilitated a focus on isolating the key elements of relevance for this study by means of this

expansive research method, which potentially allows for perpetual cycles of drilling down

further into the data. Another challenge was grounding the connections empirically to make

'intertextual connections convincingly productive' (Rose 2016, p. 162). A key criticism of

discourse analysis is that it gives little account of the relationship between the context and

the discourse: in my methodology I did not consider the background of the student or the

institution within which the sketchbooks were constructed – College C, for example. To

what extent could this study be replicated, and should it be able to be replicated? While the

findings were significant and pointed to specific examples of how sketchbooks contributed

to the construction of a non-critical space, the impact of white normativity and of a linear

design process, I could not be sure that researcher bias did not contribute to this analysis.

To analyse students' sketchbooks, I met with students prior to both the pilot study

and the subsequent larger study: 30 students at College B and 70 students at College C (in

two separate classes) and gave them Information sheets (Appendix A.1) about my study and

Informed consent forms (Appendix A.2) to take away, consider and sign and return. Tutor C

had informed all staff teaching first year undergraduate fashion that I would be in touch and

to support my access; I contacted course leaders and negotiated a time when I could come

to their classes and speak with the chosen group of first-year undergraduate students,

introduce the project and negotiate informed consent from students which would allow me

to access sketchbooks and record images from them.

To prevent coercion and give students time to consider whether they wanted to take

part in the study, I arranged a follow-up meeting to collect the signed consent forms.

Participants were fully informed at the outset that they could withdraw themselves and

their data from the academic activity at any time, and that there would be no subsequent

pressure to continue.

2.3. Phase 2: Research Question 2

The research in Phase 2 was undertaken in response to my second research question,

> *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion*
>
> *design pedagogy?*

To answer this question, I drew inspiration from anthropologist Arturo Escobar's use of the

term 'pluriversal design' (Escobar 2017), with its aim of revising design discourses to include

those who have been historically oppressed and excluded from hegemonic design

paradigms, discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. However, during the early stages of the

research I was initially unsure *how* to conduct research to answer my second research

question.

While the research process in Phase 1 helped me to recognise that there was a

relationship between my position as a woman of colour researcher within dominant

discourses of whiteness in fashion education, there was a significant limitation to this

finding: it offered little epistemological, ontological or research methodological guidance for

how to situate myself in the research process. Therefore, to start this phase of research and

gain insights into *how* decolonising pedagogies are mobilised within universities (see

Bhambra 2018; Cupples and Grosfoguel 2018; Kwoba et al 2018; Choudry and Vally 2020), I

first collected and analysed a sample of decolonising design pedagogies from HEIs, mainly in

the UK (Schultz et al. 2018)[58] to identify what these decolonising pedagogical examples were

addressing and, more importantly, how they were mobilising decolonial methods in the

context of the HEI sector.

2.3.1. Decolonising Design Education

To explore what pedagogical tactics and strategies were being employed in this sample of

design curricula, identified at the time of writing in 2018,[59] I next applied three conceptual

frameworks for decolonising pedagogies in HEIs to these examples: *positionality*,

relationality and *transitionality* (Icaza and Vázquez 2018). These concepts, authored by

decolonial scholars Rosalba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez, were used because they were

drawn from the seminal *Let's Do Diversity* report (Wekker et. al, 2016) commissioned by the

University of Amsterdam in response to the student occupation of the university in 2015

(Icaza and Vázquez 2018, p.69-72);[60] the report recommends practical ways for decolonising

pedagogies in HEIs based upon positionality, relationality and transitionality as three key

methodological strategies.

First, Icaza and Vázquez propose practices of positionality to 'reveal the geopolitical

location of knowledge' (Icaza and Vázquez 2018, p. 129) and challenge the universal,

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[58] One example was from a US HEI on decolonising fashion education and included in this sample due to the limited examples of decolonial fashion curricula; and another from a German HEI.

[59] 15 examples were from art and design HE curricula: I could only locate three examples of decolonial fashion education – none were focused on practice-based making of fashion garments – at the time of writing this in 2018: the Global Perspectives project at Central Saint Martins, The University of the Arts, London; Decolonising Fashion History, short course, The Royal College of Art, London and Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit, University of Westminster, for which I wrote the sections on Decolonising Fashion Design.

[60] See The Diversity Commission of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) which sets out recommendations for diversifying the student and staff body and knowledges within UvA (Wekker et.al 2016). The process for producing the report was implemented using a participatory methodology that created safe spaces called Diversity Discussion Circles in which students shared their experiences of diversity at UvA. Available online at: https://pure.eur.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/47222315/Diversity-commission-report-2016-Icaza.pdf. [Accessed 12.3.2021]

monocultural, Eurocentric canon of knowledge. The authors argue that positionality should

result in epistemic shifts from 'closed forms of expertise to open forms of expertise' (ibid.,

p.129). Questioning expert forms of knowledge would encourage more diverse

epistemologies to flourish in university classrooms. Secondly, Icaza and Vázquez argue for

the need for pedagogies rooted in relationality that challenge power hierarchies in the

university classroom and encourage 'dynamic forms of interaction' in the spaces within the

university (Icaza and Vázquez 2018, p. 130). This could encourage a more dialogical

classroom space, in which the teacher-student dynamic could be re-imagined or reversed,

leading to more liberatory and democratic forms of learning (Dewey 2012 [1916]; Freire

2017 [1970]; hooks 1994; Giroux 2007; McLaren 2015). Finally, the authors propose

transitionality as a concept in which the university engages in a process of questioning itself,

its histories and its wider relationship with society to move towards creating an institution

that is oriented towards environmental and social justice.

I reviewed the sample of initiatives to decolonise design curricula[61] against Icaza and

Vázquez's three conceptual frameworks of positionality, relationality and transitionality,

(see Table 2.1) and this helped me to identify three emergent decolonising strategies:

- *experimentation with design curricula*: examples include design curricula that

  attempt to explore non-Eurocentric ways of conceiving design

- *creating and building new resources* to share with design educators, such as general

  guides for decolonising art and design education more broadly

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[61] The eighteen examples were all that could be located at the time of writing: all examples are from the Global
North, although it should be noted that this field is constantly expanding and in flux, with new initiatives
emerging frequently.

Decolonising Design Pedagogy Examples		*Pedagogies of Positionality:*	*Pedagogies of Relationality:*	*Pedagogies of Transitionality*
Experimentation with design curricula	*Locally centric design education curriculum* (Abdulla 2018)	X	X	
	Impossible methods (Martins and Oliveira 2018)	X		
	Global perspectives (Blackman 2018)	X	X	
	Decolonising the arts curriculum: perspectives on higher education [fanzine] (Jethnani, Panesar and Patel 2018)	X		X
	Designing 'Other' worlds (Ansari 2019)	X	X	
	Decolonising fashion history (Cheang and Suterwalla 2020)	X	X	
	Poetics of anti-colonial joy [online course] (Prado 2020)	X	X	
Creating and building new resources:	*Shades of noir* (Richardson 2010 - present)	X	X	
	Fashion and Race Database (Jenkins 2017 - present)	X		
	Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit: Art and Design; Fashion Design entries, (University of Westminster 2019)	X		

	Dismantling Design History (Khandwala 2019)	X		
	The Decolonising or Puncturing or de-Westernizing Design Reader Vol (Tejada 2020)	X		
	Unsettling Coloniality: A Critical and Radical Fibre/Textile Bibliography, (Critical Craft Forum 2020)	X		
	Decolonising Reading Lists (UAL, 2020)	X		
Re-imagining institutional spaces	Black Knit Club (Kludje and Koranteng 2017 - present)	X	X	X
	Safe Space Crits, Shades of Noir (Shades of Noir 2018- present	X	X	X
	Decolonising Sessions for BIPOC staff and students; Unsettling session for White staff and students; community sessions for all staff and students (CCA 2020-2021)	X	X	X

TABLE 2. 7 REVIEW OF A SAMPLE OF DECOLONISING DESIGN CURRICULA INITIATIVES, 2018

- *re-thinking institutional spaces*, which showed how different decolonising initiatives

  were focused on re-thinking the spaces inside HEIs by foregrounding race in

  students' creative praxis.

Undertaking this analysis provided invaluable insights into my research process as I began to see the interconnectedness of the curriculum, resources and the institution in the project to decolonise education. This sample evidenced how decolonising educational initiatives appeared most fruitful and productive when they were able to combine all three of Icaza and Vázquez's conceptual frameworks of positionality, relationality and transitionality. In this sample the frames of positionality and relationality appeared to offer the most common approaches to decolonising education, whilst fewer examples addressed the conceptual frame of transitionality and the role of institutional change as part of the project to decolonise education. If Icaza and Vázquez's claim that all three frames are needed to decolonise education, to what extent can these projects claim to decolonise education when they are not fully engaging at an institutional level and with the histories and contexts of HEIs? This made me reflect further on the relationship between devising a culturally diverse fashion design pedagogy and the institutions in which I have been working.

In addition, a key omission in this sample appeared to be evidence of decolonial feminist thinking and its emphasis on the relations between gender with decolonial forms of design and pedagogy; however, without more detailed analysis of these projects, such findings cannot be fully verified. Nevertheless, this observation led me to think more critically about how I might fully engage with gender in decolonial fashion design pedagogy and devising a more culturally diverse fashion design curriculum and resources. I also spent time reflecting on decolonial feminist literature to expand my understanding of how to teach fashion in HEIs using a more relational approach that de-centred my role as an Eurocentric educator.

Question 2: Conceptual framework, data collection and methods

To centre my position more explicitly within the research process was a lengthy process; it took time for me to realise how to adapt my research methods to better reflect my 'voice' as researcher in the research process. Recognising my lack of visibility in the research process in Phase One emphasised a contradiction: the disconnect between my role as researcher and the topic being researched which reinforced problematic power structures to reproduce the concept of 'universal' knowledge in fashion design, the exact issue being addressed in my PhD project. I came to the realisation that in my role as researcher I had been placing myself outside, on the margins of the research process, in contrast to feminist and decolonial research methods in pedagogy, which emphasise centring personal experience in the classroom (Mohanty 2003, p. 202), which is personal, subjective, relational, and embodied (Lorde 2012 [1984]; hooks 1994; Mohanty 2003; Ahmed 2017; Jong et al. 2019; Verges and Bohrer 2021). To experiment with pluriversal forms of fashion design was not only about the curricular content; it also needed to encompass the pedagogical process: 'In fact, the theorization and politicization of experience is imperative if the pedagogical practices are to focus on more than the mere management, systemization, and consumption of disciplinary knowledge' (Mohanty 3003, p. 201)

 I reflected on my personal, professional and structural positions in fashion design education and the landscape of fashion design in HEIs and began to question 'the reasons for my discontent with education' (Verges 2019, p. 93). I noted what I had been excluding from my classrooms that related to my South Asian diaspora fashion experience thus far: my Muslim fashion identity, the fashion styles I grew up with and the varied ways in which my family had dressed. Re-centring my positionality in pedagogy (Icaza and Vázquez 2018), I was

inspired by Latin American decolonial struggles for justice and drawn to 'testimonio', a method of telling a life story to bring about change (DeRocher 2018).

Inspired by this literature and questioning how, until this point, my biographical fashion narrative and identity had remained excluded from my teaching, Phase 2 research design began with my explorations into the possibilities for inserting my gendered and racialised biographical context into fashion design curricula and resources. I first devised two classes, 'Sari Class 1', followed by a second pedagogical cycle, 'Sari Class 2', which was run with a colleague, to explore the possibilities for a Global South-led fashion resource and curriculum as a way to disrupt hegemonic Eurocentric fashion design pedagogy. Another pedagogical cycle was then delivered –, 'All About Love', a class which centred on exposing and offering an alternative to Eurocentric resources built around teaching students to design for someone that they loved. All classes were undertaken in College C in the UK, presented in Chapter 3.

2.3.2. Action Research Methodology in Education (PedAR)

During this process of cyclical pedagogical research, I recognised how my educational research approach to improve fashion design education was aligned with longstanding action research methodologies. There are many forms of action research (see McNiff and Whitehead 2013; Bradbury-Huang 2015; McNiff 2017), typified by the goal of improvement which builds on 'interconnections between the identities of the researcher and the researched' (Noffke 2009, p.19). For this reason, action research has a long history of adoption in educational research (see Buckingham 1926; Dewey 1933), in which teacher-led

educational transformation is characterised as a process of 'dynamic movement, flexibility, interchangeability and reiteration' (Burns 2015, p.188).

Although there is a range of often contested action research models in education,[62] many share a similar reflexive cyclical process of planning, action, observation and reflection (ibid, 2015). Therefore, my decision to use an action research methodology in education had several aims: to apply decolonial feminist thinking in fashion design pedagogies in order to explore alternative curricula and resources to teach these ideas, observe the outcomes and reflect on how such approaches might decolonise the teaching and learning of fashion design and contribute to new theoretical fashion design knowledge.

Action research is a term that has not, to my knowledge, been much in evidence in investigating fashion design pedagogy (see for example Lam et. al 2022), and there is a marked absence of discussion of this methodology in key fashion research texts.[63] In contrast, action research methods have long been established in the field of design education[64] to research into teaching and learning practices in design education and offer new insights into the field of design. In his assessment of the value of action research in design education, design theorist Mike Tovey underscores how 'research problems in design education are real world problems' (Tovey 2015, p.24): this is relevant to my investigation of racism. Combining theory, practice and, in particular, addressing ways of improving classroom practice, action research therefore provided a relevant and appropriate research methodology in my research context of investigating racism in fashion design.

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[62] One study identified over 30 modes of action research in education (Zuber-Skerritt 1990)
[63] For example, no discussion of action research is discussed in fashion research texts (Kawamura 2014; Jenss 2016)
[64] See Tovey,M. (2015, p. 21-27) for a historical account of action research in design education from 1988.

There are many different methods of action research (see Norton 2018), but in the wider context of education, pedagogical action research (PedAR) has a particular focus on improving teaching practice (see Somekh and Noffke 2009; McAteer 2013; Efron and Ravid 2020), and, in particular, addressing issues of social justice in higher education (Gibbs et al. 2017). Practitioner reflexivity, evaluation and investigation underpins and drives the PedAR methodology; however, while the varied literature describes the process, it offers no prescriptive methods for doing this (Coghlan and Brannick 2014).

Nevertheless, PedAR's emphasis on the positionality of the educator has been useful to me, as it echoes similar concerns around positionality articulated by many Black and women of colour feminist scholars who stress that authors always speak from a particular location within the structures of power (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983; Lorde 1984; Collins 1990; hooks 1994; Ahmed 2017).Thus, returning to Black and women of colour feminist literature was helpful to me at this point: I re-examined how these writings were assembled and, more precisely, the role of the first person narrative in de-hierarchising knowledge construction framed around the 'decolonisation of ways of knowing' (hooks 2003, p.3).

I was especially drawn to the work of the feminist and social activist bell hooks, whose writing re-centres the voices, especially those of her female family members, from her working-class roots in rural Kentucky (hooks 1994). In particular, hooks identifies the home as a subversive site of resistance that plays a key, albeit undervalued, role in the politics of Black liberation (see hooks 1991, p. 41-49). Recognising the significant role of *my* home life and daily experiences as a source of fashion knowledge, I re-visited family photographs, Indian clothing and religious attire, reframing them as pedagogical resources to shape an alternative, counter-hegemonic 'anti-fashion' (Polhemus and Proctor 1978;

Davis 1992; Leshkowich et al 2003; Stern 2004; Moors and Tarlo 2013; Hoskins 2014), as discussed in Chapter 1, to include narratives that had thus far been excluded from my fashion teaching.

Indeed, hooks' extensive writing inspired me to bring a stronger autobiographical account of fashion into the classroom. In this way, my aims were to use my personal fashion experiences to connect to wider social, political and cultural fashion systems as a way to devise counter-hegemonic fashion pedagogical strategies. My hope was to contextualise cultural differences using locally specific fashion examples from my own South Asian Indian diaspora community to question the temporal and spatial elements of fashion. This reflects the aims of fashion theorist Joanne Eicher, who argues for the 'need to find out how change has occurred and accept evidence of it, whether from the oral histories of elders that relate to dressing the body or from the writings about dress by travellers to these areas,' (Eicher 2001, p.16). I recognised how my biography as a form of critique of Eurocentrism echoed the method of autoethnography, defined as 'an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness as it connects the personal to the cultural' (Ellis and Ellingson 2000, p. 293).

Further, autoethnography aims to produce alternative and radical forms of knowledge production (Dutta 2018) through modes of self-representation seen as 'artistic and analytical demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experiences' (Jones et. al 2013, p. 1). In this method I identified the possibility of re-centring myself as the postcolonial/ Othered fashion voice (Chawla and Rodrguez, 2018) to counter 'coloniality in design' (Tlostanova 2017). With a longstanding history in feminist research methodology, autoethnography has been increasingly used by decolonial diasporic feminists to generate alternative epistemologies and ontologies as part of the process of

decolonising (Busia, 1993; Osei 2019; Sobande 2018; Ahmed, 2017; Boylorn, 2006; Breeze, and Taylor 2020; hooks 1996; 2000; Verges 2021). Therefore, for Phase 2 of my research, re-centring my subjective voice and using an autoethnographic approach enabled both the pluralising of fashion knowledge and the 'disrupt[ion] [of] norms of research practice and representation' (Jones et al 2013, p. 32).

To do this I centred my biographical fashion voice in two of my classes, Sari Class 1 and Sari Class 2, by using garments belonging to, and worn by, my mother; and in a further class, 'All About Love', in which students centred their own biographies to design for people they loved, instead of designing for a universal and abstract body. The aim of these three classes was to test the potential of using an alternative decolonial feminist fashion design process inspired by the postcolonial and transnational feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty's pedagogical strategy she calls 'The Feminist Solidarity or Comparative Studies Model', described in the literature in Chapter 1 (Mohanty 2003, p. 242).

There are many methods of conducting action research, and I decided that observation and using photography to collect data from the classes I ran would offer me the most rich and meaningful data (see Table 2.8). However, I needed to address the ethical implications of photographing students within an HEI. To mitigate this, I asked students to use their mobile phones to photograph their fashion experimentation throughout the lesson and upload their photographs onto a closed Facebook page set up by their course leader specifically for each student year group only. Until my classes took place, the fashion programme's Facebook page operated mostly as a forum for communication between the course leader and students, with links to relevant resources such as exhibitions and fashion

Phase Two – Research undertaken and dates	Research Method	Data Collected
Sari Class 1, College C: a class taught by me as part of a eight-week module 'Analysis and Strategies of Contemporary Fashion' (see Appendix A.3) with a group of 47 undergraduate fashion design third-year students (43 female students, four male students), 2017	Pedagogical Action Research (PedAR) study employing a decolonial feminist autoethnography methodology	Photographs: 87 images posted onto Facebook from six students (still images, stored as jpeg computer files)
Sari Class 2, College C: a class co-taught by myself and Tutor B from textiles as part of a short module 'Manifesto' (see Appendix A.4) with a group of 55 second-year undergraduate fashion design students (53 female students and two male students), 2017	Pedagogical Action Research (PedAR) study employing a decolonial feminist autoethnography methodology	Photographs: 148 images posted onto Facebook from eleven students (still images, stored as jpeg computer files)
'All About Love' College C: a one-off class co-taught by myself and Tutor B, called 30 female students, four male students)	Pedagogical Action Research (PedAR) study employing a decolonial feminist autoethnography methodology	Photographs: 86 images posted onto Facebook from nine students (still images, stored as jpeg computer files)

TABLE 2. 8 PHASE 2 RESEARCH DATES, METHODS AND DATA COLLECTED

articles. I had, however, noticed an opportunity to use this page as more than a space for resources and to incorporate it as part of the class teaching to enable more transparency and collaborative design making practices in class. The Facebook page was shown in real time on the projection screen in class so that all students could see what each group was posting, thus enabling an open and collective fashion design process within the classroom.

In advance of the Sari Class 1, Sari Class 2, 'All About Love' and the 'Library Class', I followed ethical protocols and sought institutional permission from course leaders to undertake these classes and use them for research purposes. Students were informed in advance with information sheets (Appendix A.5), and I negotiated informed consent (Appendix A.6) for their participation and the reproduction of photographs from the class Facebook page for research purposes, meaning that I would require signatures from both

the photographer and subject for each photograph. Again, participants were fully informed about the process of withdrawal from the study.

Following these three classes, I reflected on the role of fashion resources in the fashion design process and designed one further cycle of PedAR to explore the role of Eurocentric fashion epistemologies through fashion history. This class took place in a library in another art and design HEI in which I was then working, College D. This had been planned as the final study in my research design; however, I also became involved in an example of 'accidental academic activism' (Sobande 2018); both of these are discussed in Chapter 5.

2.4. Phase 3: From action researcher to activist researcher

While the findings from Phase 2 helped to demonstrate the value of an embodied fashion praxis in working towards more multivocal and pluriversal forms of fashion design, it did not fully address the epistemological and theoretical colonial and racist logic underpinning the discipline of fashion, or the participatory role of educator-tutor collaboration. This reflected a pedagogical division between theory/practice and educator/student in design education more broadly; Phase 1 research had identified the significant role that historical and contextual studies played in fashion design education and how they was taught separately to fashion making skills. Re-visiting my second research question, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* I

questioned whether it was possible to achieve cognitive justice (de Sousa Santos 2014) in the fashion design classroom while it remained separate from the theory and history that underpinned the discipline.
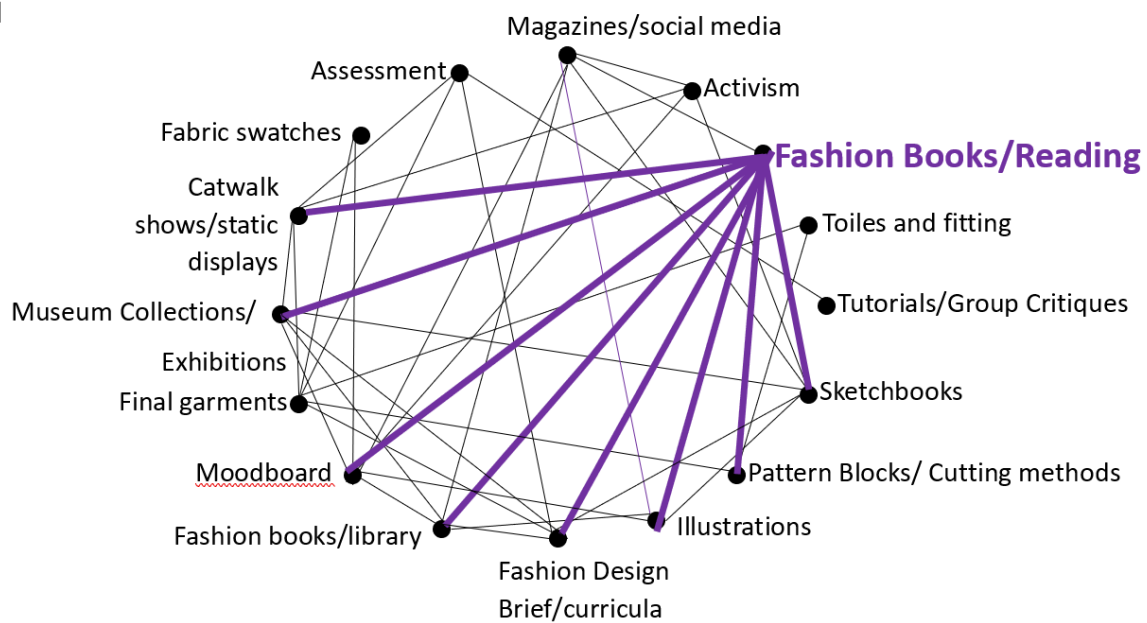
I returned to my assessment of the different activities in the fashion design process (see Figure 2.2) to evaluate the most influential resources and activities and identified the significant role that fashion literatures and histories through books and reading play in the fashion design process. Phase 2 research had not explicitly addressed historical and contextual fashion resources in the fashion design process and I wondered how another cycle of research might be able to do this. In response to these ongoing questions, I devised one further pedagogical intervention, a 'Library Class', to enable students to examine together how colonial logics underpin fashion design epistemologies in fashion design

history, but also to interrogate the role of books as a resource for fashion design, in order to disrupt hierarchies of knowledge production through a process of cognitive justice-oriented praxis, a form of '*re*writing and *re*righting' (Tuhiwai-Smith 2012)

At this point I thought my research design was complete; but against a HEI backdrop of campaigns to 'decolonise the university' (Bhambra et al 2018), I found myself co-organising a Womxn and Non-Binary People of Colour Reading Group (*W/NB POC Reading Group*) with a student collective, described in more detail in Chapter 5. My participation in the group was unplanned, and the decision to research this group was unexpected: it was a form of 'accidental academic activism' (Sobande 2018) that set out to explore the possibilities of emphasising racial justice goals while being positioned in an academic institution. I framed my role in the reading group through activist scholarship (Hale 2008; Pulido 2006; Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2009) as I began to question the hierarchical and extractive research process by which I had been analysing students' work – known as 'armchair research' (Radcliffe-Brown 1951; Ingold 2008) – and then respond to it by devising curricular change informed by this research. Instead, I now recognised the limitations of my PedAR design and focused on more fully immersing myself in the research process with students as a participant-researcher, or 'insider researcher' (Boylorn, 2006; Breeze 2017; Downes et al., 2013) to propose a revised anti-racist activist scholarship methodology as an effective mode of social change aimed at countering racism in fashion design education.

Question 2: Conceptual framework, data collection and methods
Phase 3 set out to answer Research Question 2. There were two key factors that informed my decision about which methodology to adopt: first, the shift towards autoethnography in Phase 2 research, and second, the findings from the 'Library Class'. Both factors pointed to

the role that a hierarchical research process plays in supporting racist hierarchies, which in turn suppress the existence of multiple fashion systems, marginalised fashion voices and plural fashion histories, and the educator/student hierarchies that prevent collaboration. I recognised a parallel between what I was investigating and *how* I was investigating it in my role as researcher; to what extent was I reproducing a power hierarchy between researcher and participant? Indeed, if my aim was to strategise against a Eurocentric bias in the fashion design process, I also had to consider the methodological challenge of addressing the relationship between the epistemological biases in fashion design *and* the research processes undertaken to construct such knowledge (Eicher 2001; Baizerman et al 2008).

Although I found little fashion literature that discussed decolonial thinking in the fashion research process (see Jansen 2020), issues related to re-thinking asymmetric power relationships in fashion praxis have been addressed through discussion on participatory or engaged fashion design practices (Von Busch 2008; 2014; 2022; Williams 2018); fashion activism (Mazzarella et. al 2019; Von Busch 2014; 2022) and decolonising methodologies (Smith 2012 [1999]; Patel 2016; Guenther et al 2017; Kovach 2021). Key to these debates has been Linda Tuhiwai Smith's seminal 1999 book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, which argues that academia must challenge the ways in which Western academic research practices are rooted in the colonial language of universal logic based on histories of scientific racism carried out as part of colonialism (ibid 2012 [1999]). A key tenet of Tuhiwai Smith's work is the call to challenge traditional Western ways of knowing and researching, and the 'decolonisation' of methodologies, to create alternative ways of researching which draw on indigenous, subaltern and marginalised knowledge.

While Smith's work focuses on indigenous communities and calls on the researcher to employ non-extractive research methods and instead research *with* participants, it nevertheless offers insights for *all* researchers whose aims are for more equitable and collaborative research processes that view participants as partners who are actively engaged with the planning and design of the project, from start to finish. At first, I was unsure how to apply Smith's decolonising methodology framework to my research; however, a pivotal moment happened during this research phase when I was selected to attend a PhD workshop with Linda Tuhiwai Smith[65] for postgraduate students, exploring ways to deconstruct Western paradigms of research and knowledge within their own work and teaching practices. The workshop activities asked participants to question the traditional role of the researcher in extractive knowledge approaches based around one-way research process, instead re-orienting our role as researchers towards a more equitable research process. We were asked to first question our own relationship as a colonised individual as part of the research process. A decolonial research process, as we discussed, needed a more critical self-reflexive approach based around self-love, because to understand others required the researcher to value themselves first before re-framing the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participants.

Such discussions helped me to recognise how my participation *alongside* students as part of the Reading Group presented an example of decolonial pedagogy. My role as a researcher had already veered away from traditional pedagogical methodology and had

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[65] *The Sociological Review*, Early Career Researchers' Workshop: Decolonising Methodologies, 17th October 2019

shifted towards a role of 'activist scholarship' (Sudbury and Okazaw-Rey 2009), in which I had begun to blur the boundaries between research and the researched.

Consequently, to locate data I focused on ways to purposely blur the traditional educator/student hierarchy by co-creating data. For example, the data collected for the Library Class was generated by students: I collaborated with students by collating the results of a class research activity, and the second part of the class involved my analysis of the students' re-imagined fashion history book designs, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

However, the data collection process for the Reading Group was more challenging and posed both practical and ethical issues, because it was an unplanned stage of research. These issues related to the ownership of data and the ethics of using co-produced data, the large number of participants, the transient engagement by participants and issues around protecting the participant's anonymity. Following an evaluation of the ethical constraints raised by the collection of data using different methods (see Table 5.2, Chapter 5), I took the decision to use my pre-existing field notes, rather than return to the field of study and conduct interviews or run focus groups, for example.

At the time of writing, Chapter 5, which relates to the Library Class and the Reading Group, discusses the pre-existing and ongoing generation of data related to seven terms of academic study running over three academic years: conversations, email messages, text messages, In the Library Class I had two forms of data produced by students to analyse: first, completed worksheets (see Appendix A.7) and second, book covers of re-imagined unwritten fashion history library books created using collage techniques (see Figures 5.6-5.13, Chapter 5). To analyse the worksheets, I used content analysis to explore how fashion history constructs and maintains silences in the fashion history canon, and to analyse the re-

Phase 3 – Where Data was Collected and Dates of Collection	Data Collected
Library Class, worksheets presenting an audit of a sample of books and re-imagined fashion history book covers created by students in *College D* in 2018	**Worksheets:** 60 fashion history books were analysed as a whole by the group and their results were collated. **Student work:** 12 'new' fashion history books created by students.
W/NB POC Reading Group, weekly term-time group session co-facilitated between myself and a group comprising of five to thirty students, 2018-2019	**Field Notes –** researcher notes from twenty seven entries over one academic year: conversations, email messages, text messages, researcher's field notes, student testimonials, publicity around the group, public engagement events, lesson plans and content, resources, discussions, and locations of the group.

TABLE 2. 9 PHASE 3 DATA COLLECTED

imagined book covers I used visual discourse analysis. Having used a critical visual discourse analysis approach in Phase 2 of the research to analyse the pages of sketchbooks, I found that this method would again be most suitable to analyse the textual processes created by students and identify the key themes, truth claims, complexities and absences created (Rose 2016). My previous concerns in Phase 2 of the research about the disadvantages of this method due to researcher bias was now less evident; I had gained confidence that my analysis could be subjective and indeed, would bring in my position and voice as part of the analysis.

Choosing a methodology for the Reading Group was, in comparison, much more complicated, as this phase of research was unplanned. The audit of a course reading list undertaken by a student of colour – Student X – evidencing that most of the authors presented in their curriculum were in the Global North, showed similarities with the worksheet activity I had given to students in the Library Class. This exchange led to my

subsequent involvement with co-organising a collective focused on weekly term-time sessions to read feminist texts by Black women and women of colour; however, I did not anticipate at the time that this pedagogical intervention would be used for my PhD research.

I later read of many similar examples of researchers who had also 'stumbled' (Pulido 2006) or had accidentally (Sobande 2018) found themselves taking on a more activist-led role in their academic teaching and research position. Defined as scholar-activism (Hale 2008; James and Gordon 2008; Pulido 2008; Draper et al 2020), I later read about similar pedagogical interventions in HEIs which set about transforming the institutional educational landscape (see Mihesuah and Wilson 2004) and which were characterised by a DIY ethic (Downes et al. 2013), which had 'creative, positive social change as their major goal' (Young, et al, 2010, p. 431). More specifically, I acknowledged that my participation gradually adopted the praxis of an 'anti-racist scholar activist' (Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly 2021).

I recognised that the anti-racist scholar-activist approach I was taking had been identified as an example of the practice of militant research methods, defined as 'the place where activism and academia meet. There is a wide range of advocacy research in universities that comments on and about activism without expecting the work to be directly engaged with it. Militant research works in and with the movements it is concerned with.' (Bookchin et al. 2013, p. 6)

My participation in the Reading Group showed how my researcher position had shifted academically so that I now occupied a dual role as both researcher and participant in the research process, and that my role as researcher was no longer separate from the

pedagogical intervention undertaken (the Reading Group) (Colectivo Situaciones 2003; 2005).

My participation in informal/non-formal activist learning in the university (Choudry 2015; Choudry and Vally 2018) through the Reading Group research site raised difficult questions about researcher neutrality now that I was embedded within a Black and women of colour student collective: how I could undertake systematic analysis of this group? Despite the recognition of a participant-researcher's subjectivity in the research process, there are robust and rigorous methods to support the analysis of qualitative data. I looked to the work of other militant researchers for guidance and found that the notes I was keeping documenting my participation in the group were in fact a form of militant ethnography (Wilson 2008; Hale 2008), a research method defined by Russell as 'a combination of thought and action orientated towards understanding and changing collective praxis, identifying and surpassing the limits of our existing selves throughout my "militant research"' (Russell 2015, p.223)

In this way, my position as participant-researcher within the group had become a tool for researching the reading group, evidenced through my writing of weekly ethnographic field notes. These notes were always written as soon as possible after the reading group sessions, based on the quick notes I would make throughout the sessions. Although it would have been useful for me to have taken photographs or video recording of the session, I felt this would have been too obtrusive and altered how participants would have contributed. My notes aimed to capture as much as possible from the session and included detailed descriptions and reflections on the sessions (Chiseri Strater and Sunstein, 1997). My descriptions included the setting, activities, the people who took part, the

meanings of what was observed from the perspective of the participants, a record of exact quotes or close approximations of comments that related directly to the observation activity and my role in the group for that session; my reflections were subjective and emphasised my impressions, instincts, insights and speculation about what I was observing, including unanswered questions that later arose from reflecting on the observation data as well as ideas for future action.

I analysed these ethnographic field notes, that consisted of 27 different entries – three terms of one academic year, 2018-19 – to create and elaborate on analytical themes to develop a thematic narrative (Emerson et al. 2007, p. 202). This iterative process required me to move back and forth between specific field-note incidents to build a more focused and precise analysis through reflexive analysis and practice. Key to this method was the need to incorporate multiple voices and perspectives from participants in the group. One way to do this included the selection of 'evocative excerpts' that have analytic significance to build nuances within a theme; this was done by visually marking my field notes – known as 'excerpt strategy' (ibid, p. 211), which consisted of four steps: creating an 'analytic point' to focus attention, 'orienting information' to illustrate what happened, using an 'excerpt' to explore and develop ideas and making an 'analytic commentary' to describe each individual entry (ibid, p. 211). Finally, all the names and potential markers of identification of the participants were removed, creating anonymity, when writing up Chapter 5.

2.5. Ethics

There were several ethical tensions that arose during this PhD study because it involved working with human participants. Following the guidelines set by the Human Research Ethics Council (HREC) at The Open University, and from attending postgraduate training sessions, I was able to consider the complexity both before, during and, most critically, after

the classes were finished; this was especially important in an eight-year study project. My research design undertook careful consideration of the voluntary informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and protection from harm during each phase, as well as seeking formal ethical approval from my institutional HREC. This involved a series of email exchanges between myself and the HREC at The Open University prior to each research phase, as well as detailed discussions with my supervisory team.

However, there were specific ethical issues related to my choice of PedAR because it is a research method that is itself framed explicitly as an ethical endeavour and that goes beyond obtaining ethical approval, in which action researchers see ethical codes as socio-cultural constructs which can themselves be challenged (Norton 2018). This meant that during the PedAR research process I had to rethink ethical issues as the research design changed and re-examine the evolving ethical considerations.

An example of this was my lack of access to sketchbooks, described in Section 2.2. During my research I noticed a pattern in how the refusals of my requests to access students' sketchbooks were made, and as a consequence sought ethical permission to include these responses as anonymised data in my thesis. At first the HREC were unsure whether this could be permitted and initially refused; however, after several discussions the HREC made the decision to agree that I could do this and that this was an important part of my thesis. Although this process of lengthy email exchanges was time consuming, it showed me the need to question the ethical decision-making process as part of my PedAr.

As part of this questioning, I noticed that no students in any my classes ever objected to my research, and this made me question the power relations in the research process and whether students had the confidence to either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study. Overall, my perception was that students were excited to participate in a study and

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this in fact reinforced ideas about institutional prestige due to the status given to research in HEIs.

In contrast, within the W/NB POC Reading Group there were tensions over my role as participant-researcher in relation to conventional data collection methods, ethical and moral decisions and modes of research dissemination, which resulted in another lengthy process of contacting the HREC department at The Open University, as this was an unplanned stage of research. From the outset, all the student participants in the W/NB POC Reading Group knew that I was both a lecturer at College D and a PhD student at The Open University. As I became aware that I wanted include the reading group as part of my PhD study, I was at first wary about how I would inform the students: would they, for example, feel as if I was trying to benefit academically from their suffering as a result of the institute ignoring their calls to challenge a Eurocentric curriculum? Was there a risk that my role might be perceived as more institutional than amicable?

After the W/NB POC Reading Group had been established for three months, I came to the decision that I wanted to include this group as part of my PhD research as the Reading Group case study, which is discussed in Chapter 5. I first spoke casually to Student X, a prominent and vocal member of the group, about my plan, to gauge what their response might be. To my surprise, Student X was excited about my decision and saw that this would help to further amplify the group's institutional profile in College D. I had not anticipated this response and was hugely relived that it was not negative. I then informed the group at our next meeting about my plans and asked for their feedback and permission to do this. On the first occasion I stayed behind after the session had finished and gave students time to raise any concerns, and also encouraged them to email me if they had objections. While I received no negative responses, either in person or via email, I wondered

if this might be the result of the power that my academic role held – I personally taught some of the group – and the extent to which students might feel nervous about challenging me, although by this stage I had built a strong rapport within the group and trust had been established.

Another consideration I had to take into account was that as a result of the sometimes transient nature of the group I began each weekly session by informing students about both my academic and researcher roles and my aim to use this group as a case study for my PhD. Any new students were given Information Sheets (Appendix A.8) and informed consent forms (Appendix A.9) and allowed time to consider whether they wanted to take part in the study; I would send follow-up emails to collect the signed consent forms. Participants were fully informed at the outset that they could withdraw themselves and their data from the academic activity at any time and there would be no subsequent pressure to continue.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how my identification as a woman of colour researcher has been central to *this entire* research process, raising questions about my identity in the research process and aims of neutrality in traditional research methodologies. To answer Question 1 (a) in Phase 1 of the research, my identity influenced my choice of a positivist research paradigm to address concerns about data validity and researcher bias: the investigating of representations of race and ethnicity to examine the metanarrative of the undergraduate fashion design education sector in the UK seemed to me to require 'hard' data. At this stage I was attempting to keep my identity separate from the research process in order to

maintain objectivity; however, this failed when I was unsuccessful in accessing students' sketchbooks for data in the 22 HEIs in the UK that I contacted. Reflecting more critically on my identity next led to a more subjective researcher role to position myself in the research process by adopting an autoethnographic research methodology. During this period, while working at College D, a further iteration of research happened in Phase 3 to engage students more actively in the PedAr research process, the Library Class, and a final unplanned phase of research, the Reading Group (W/NB POC Reading Group), helped me to more fully recognise that any project to decolonise fashion design education must be underpinned by a research paradigm that reflects the epistemological biases in fashion design *and* the research processes undertaken to construct such knowledges.

CHAPTER 3: Fashion Design Education Today

This thesis comprises three phases of empirical research, presented in Chapters 3-5, as described in Chapter 2.
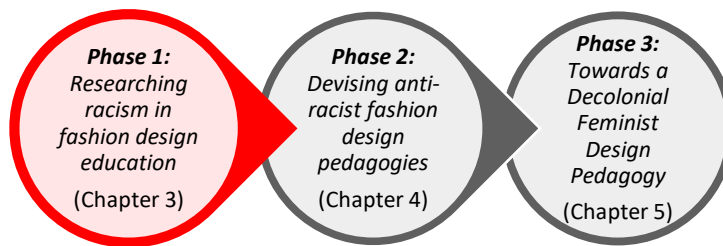
This chapter presents Phase 1 of the research, which responds to the first research question of this thesis:

Research Question One: *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the UK?*

To answer this question, this chapter is structured in two stages. The first stage presents an analysis of the curricular content of undergraduate fashion design courses in the UK and the second stage of empirical research analysed the visual representations of race and gender in sketchbooks produced by undergraduate fashion students. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the limitations of the study, and how this first phase of research informs the next cycle of research, presented in Chapter 4, which aims to devise culturally inclusive and anti-racist fashion design pedagogies.

3.1. Introduction

The literature review in Chapter 1 established that racism can operate through fashion design and fashion design education; however, it also established the lack of literature on *how* racism operates in fashion design curricula. To explore this gap, I was initially overwhelmed by the scale of the fashion design education sector and the choices of methodology with which to analyse how the logics of colonialism and racism operate in this sector. Therefore, this chapter not only discusses my empirical findings; it also provides an account of the methodological challenges I faced to explore the underdeveloped field of fashion design education and race.

3.2. Background: Fashion Design Education in the UK

To date, and to my knowledge, there has been no comprehensive review of the fashion design education sector in the UK. Mapping this sector was necessary for this thesis for two reasons: first, to gain an understanding of the 'mega level' (Simmons 2016), or the bigger picture of the field of undergraduate fashion study; and second, to identify what data might offer the best insights for an examination of how Othering processes operate through representations of race and gender in the undergraduate fashion design sector. In addition, this phase of research explored ways to test out methodologies to investigate this field of study, given that it has not been done to date.

To map the fashion design education sector was not straightforward. The size of the HE sector has itself increased in recent years, especially in the UK, and in particular since 2015, when the UK Government ended controls on student recruitment numbers in higher education (Packham 2019). The HE fashion design context in the UK is therefore complex:

the majority of institutions are public HEIs, although a small number are private institutions, and all offer a range of qualifications in a wide range of fashion subject specialisms.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the scoping study, pilot study and case study presented in this chapter is to investigate how systemic racism operates, shapes, and underpins representations of race and ethnicity in fashion design education. For this reason, the research aims set out to first gain an overview of the dominant pedagogical paradigms in the undergraduate fashion design sector. The objectives for this first phase of research are to examine undergraduate fashion design module content in the UK. I then analyse representations of race and gender produced by fashion design students, based on the literature discussed in Chapter 1. The results inform the second phase of empirical research, which aims to devise and test culturally diverse pedagogical frameworks and approaches in fashion design education, discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Methods

As discussed in Chapter 3, I divided my research question in two: (a) to examine *what* is being taught in HEIs in the undergraduate fashion design education sector in the UK, and (b), to examine *how* representations of race and ethnicity are represented by students. Step One of this first phase of empirical research showed the limitations of a positivist research approach because the data did not show me how fashion education was constructing specific forms of multiple and intersecting racialised and gendered differences and what meanings these were constructing. Therefore, for Stage Two of this research I have adopted a more reflexive and exploratory approach throughout the research process, using an

interpretivist paradigm approach (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2011; Darder 2019). The following research methods are employed in this chapter (see Table 3.1):

- Stage One: A qualitative content analysis (coding) of the curricula of the module content of first year undergraduate fashion design courses at 55 HEIs in the U.K.

- Stage Two: A pilot study, followed by a case study analysing (using visual discourse analysis) a data set of 70 sketchbooks.

The pilot study I undertook was to test the process of data collection and visual discourse analysis. The following sections will discuss in more detail the methods applied in both stages of research.

3.3. Stage One: Module Content in Undergraduate Fashion Design Education, 2019-2020

This first section presents a qualitative content analysis of the module content of first year undergraduate fashion design courses at 55 HEIs in the UK with the aim of investigating *how* colonial logics might shape what is taught to undergraduate fashion design students. **I** researched during the academic year 2019-20, when there were 124 undergraduate fashion design courses offered in 55 HEIs in the U.K.[66] However, to contact each of these HEIs and gather the curricular information from such a large dataset was both difficult to undertake and beyond the scope of this study.[67]

Instead, I located a website that summarises the curricula content for all university degrees in the UK, providing the module titles[68] and module descriptions that are taught for

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[66] Fashion design courses include womenswear, menswear and costume design.

[67] As discussed in the Chapter 2, I had contacted 22 HEIs but none were willing to participate in this study.

[68] This sample was selected by searching on a higher education research website (www.whatuni.com) which listed 62,155 UK courses for 2019-20. I used the search term 'fashion design undergraduate degrees' Each

each year of study. Using the search term 'undergraduate fashion design'[69] showed that there were 110 degree programmes across 55 HEIs in the academic year 2017-2018, when this study was undertaken. I collected the titles and descriptions for the first year modules of all the undergraduate fashion design courses in the UK, because there was limited information provided for the second and third years of study: this could point to a greater emphasis on student-directed learning during these latter years of study. In my experience the first year of study tends to be when key ideas about fashion design are established through the curriculum. The module titles for the first year of study generated a data sample total of 333 module titles and descriptions. To further explore the potential meanings of this text data and to make sense of a large volume of the sample (Miles and Huberman 1994), I used an inductive analysis approach to undertake a qualitative content analysis (Bryman 2015, p.180).

Data Analysis

To code the data, I used a two-step coding process (Bryman 2015, p. 398). Step one was an *initial coding* process (Saldana 2016, p.115), also known as 'open-coding' (Charmaz 2014), in which I counted the frequency, predominance and significance of specific words or terms used in this data sample of 333 texts (Rose 2016, p.82). By reading and marking the data several times, I was able to identify emerging clusters of themes and consider how they fitted with each other. Diagrams were also used to show emerging links between themes (see Figure 3.1). After several iterations, no new themes emerged. This suggested to me

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undergraduate fashion course listed module titles accompanied by between two and six sentences describing the course content.

[69] From the initial sample of 124 courses, 14 were excluded as they were exclusively fashion business degrees.

that the major themes in fashion design education had been identified and saturation point

reached (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.136).

3.3.2. Results and Findings

Five categories emerged during the initial cycle of coding the data, showing the most

common module content in undergraduate fashion design education:

- *Technical instructions*, from terms including 'flat pattern cutting', 'garment

  construction', 'technical workshops', and 'writing'

- *Art-making practices,* from terms including 'visual cultures',' illustration', 'hand

  drawing' and 'trend forecasting'

- *Professional practices,* from terms including 'work experience', 'industry placement

  in a business or organisation' and 'career aspirations'

- *Fashion history,* from terms including 'historical sources and narratives', 'archives'

  and 'historical collections'

- *Digital methods,* from terms including 'digital media' and 'digital communication'

From these five categories I was able to develop three codes:

- *Skills* – with sub-categories of technical instruction and art-making practices.

- *Contextual and historical* - with sub-categories of culture and writing practices.

- *Industry* – with sub-categories of placements and business.

To further explore these three codes and their sub-categories, a second cycle of *axial*

coding was undertaken (Saldana 2016, p.244; Boeije 2009, p.108). During the *axial coding*

process, I re-applied the three codes, *Skills*, *Contextual and historical* and *Industry*, to all the 333 module descriptions provided for the first year of the 110 undergraduate fashion design courses.

After the data was re-coded, I decided to undertake content analysis to identify the most widespread codes in the sample to explore what the most common taught element in fashion design education might be (see Figure 3.1). The most common sub-categories related to the coding category *Skills*: this related to many module descriptors which used terms related to computer aided design, illustration, trends and pattern cutting, as well as skills related to studio practice, product development, or general skills linked with undergraduate study, such as academic writing. These sub-categories in *Skills* were further organised to show their interrelatedness, and this pointed to four key skills being taught in fashion design education (see Figure 3.3):

- *Art and design skills* (terms identified in the data included 'drawing', 'illustration', 'trend research', 'design thinking', 'design development' and 'creative technology')

- *Pattern cutting and garment construction skills* (terms used included 'garment cutting', 'cut', 'engineering', 'innovations' and 'technical processes')

- *Communication and presentation skills* (terms used included 'collection', 'visual layout', 'application' and 'development')

- *Digital technologies and Computer Aided Design* (CAD) *skills* (terms used included 'creative technology' and 'technical processes of fashion')

Within these four areas, art and design was the most commonly taught skill .

I next looked at the sub-categories related to the second coded category, *Historical and contextual studies*. The most frequently mentioned descriptive terms included 'history', 'theory', 'contextual' and 'culture'. These terms could be further organised as relating to three themes: contemporary, historical, or future-focused issues in fashion (see Figure 3.3):

- *Contemporary issues in fashion* (terms included 'hot topics', 'present day', 'modern life' and 'contemporary cultures' and one project called 'Modernity')

- *Historical issues in fashion* (terms included 'historical collections', 'archives' and 'historical concepts')

- *Future issues in fashion* - terms included 'future context', 'future concepts and 'fashion futures'

In the sub-categories related to the third coded category, *Industry,* the most common terms related to partnerships and associations with established fashion designers and fashion brands through industry placements, competitions and awards (see Figure 3.3):

- Partnerships and associations referencing well-known fashion designers – terms included 'live projects' and 'competitions', 'industry visits', 'professional expectations of potential employer'

- Competitions – terms included 'fashion shows', 'exhibitions' and 'awards'
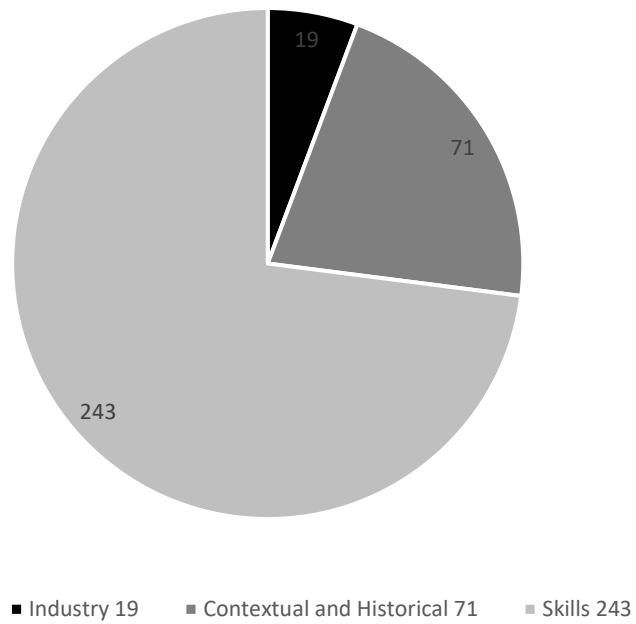
FIGURE 3. 1 MODULE CONTENT FOR FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE FASHION DESIGN, 2019-2020. UK.

■ Art and Design 181   ■ Pattern Cutting 36   ■ Communciation 18

● **Digital technologies and Computer Aided Design (CAD) skills 8**
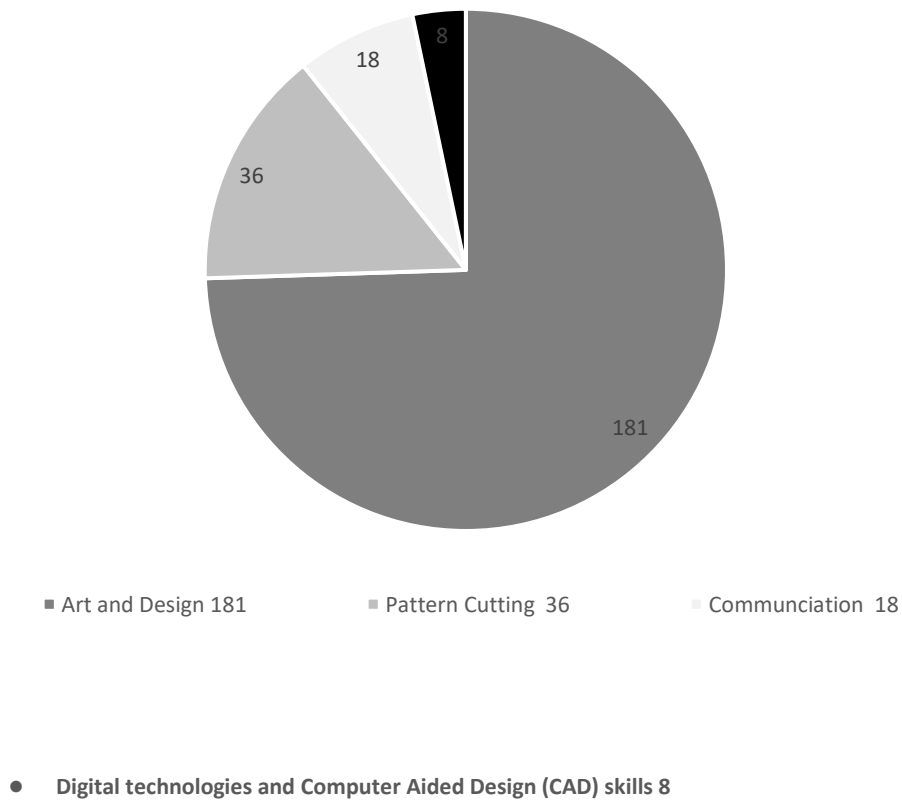
FIGURE 3. 2 MODULE CONTENT: SKILLS BREAKDOWN, UNDERGRADUATE FASHION DESIGN, 2019-20, UK.
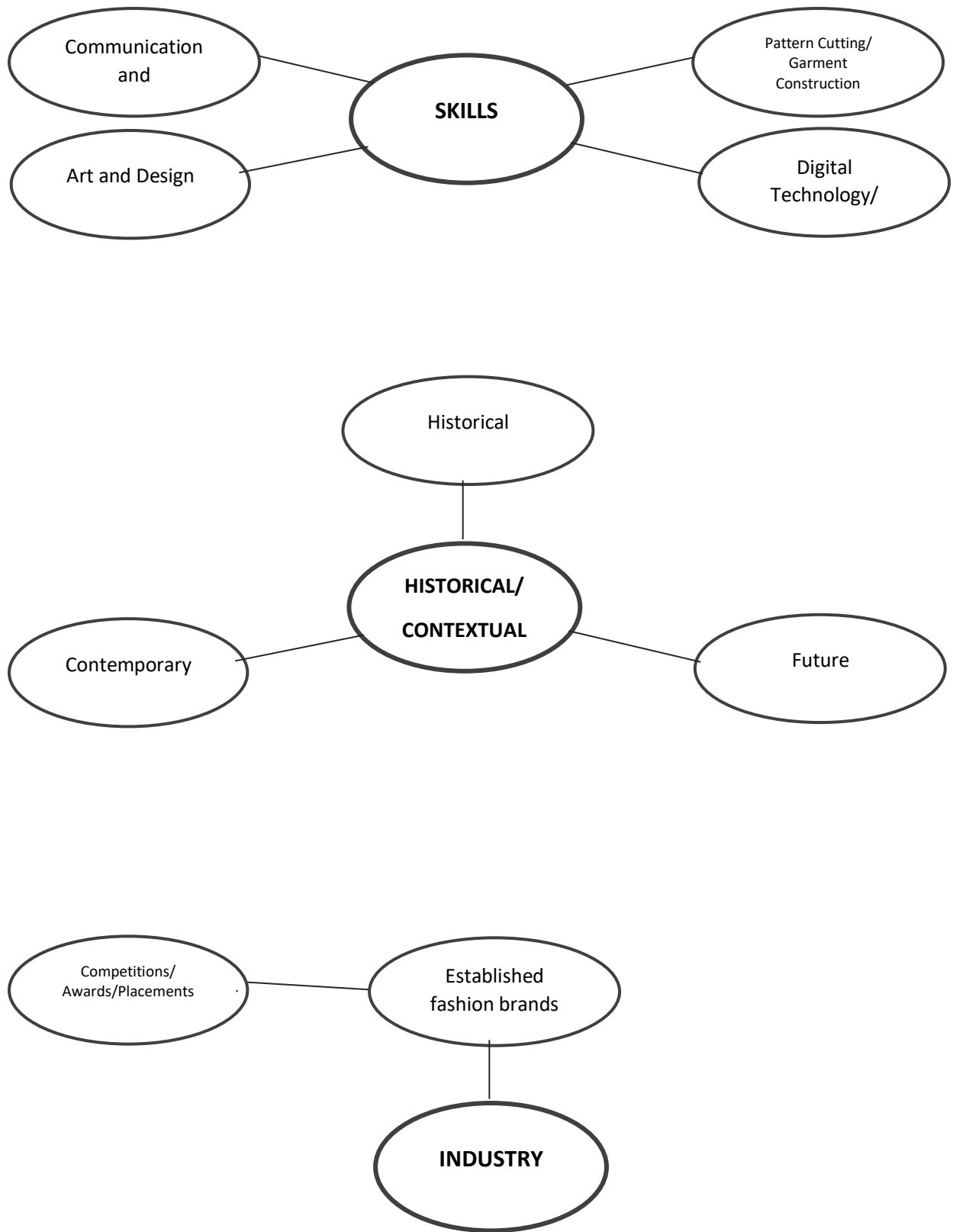
FIGURE 3. 3 THREE AXIAL CODES AND THEIR RELATED CATEGORIES.

This scoping study set out to explore the dominant pedagogical paradigm and curricular content in undergraduate fashion design education and its relationship with colonial and racist logics in fashion design pedagogy. Two key findings pointed to the dominance of visualisation in fashion design education, and how fashion history and contextual studies are structured through linear, temporal concepts in fashion design education. These findings have therefore helped me identify what data to gather to investigate how racialised and gendered representations are constructed in fashion design education in *Step Two* of this research phase.

However, adopting a research design that used a positivist content analysis research approach offered me limited findings. Indeed, at first the results from the data were unremarkable, showing that there are three key areas of study that underpin fashion design education which relate to teaching: *fashion skills*, *historical and contextual studies* and *the fashion industry*. As an experienced fashion design educator I was expecting these results, because teaching skills to construct a garment also involves teaching about the history and context of those skills and the industries in which those students can apply those skills.

Instead, returning to the metanarrative of fashion design education did offer one surprising insight: it was evident that skills in visualising fashion were the skill most commonly taught in fashion design education. This puzzled me, given that fashion design is a 3D discipline, in which the central aims are to design around and for the human body and learning to use 3D skills such as pattern cutting, laying out plans and using specialist equipment, including the overlocker and the industrial sewing machine. This disconnect between the body and the design process is contradictory, although may be accounted for by several factors: for example, working in three-dimensional contexts takes up more

physical space than working in two-dimensional contexts and also requires the use of expensive machinery and materials. However, this finding is significant; returning to my research question this approach perhaps reflects how the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) reproduces Cartesian mind/body binary thinking in fashion pedagogies to disconnect and subordinate ideas about how the body is dressed compared to how it is visualised. This result raised questions about what the impact of separating two-dimensional from three-dimensional skills might be in relation to how race and gender was represented in fashion education.

Again, I expected historical and contextual studies to be the second most common module content in this sample. In the sample of 333 module descriptions, 71 descriptions were about historical and contextual studies: these also included 17 project titles. Significantly, the data revealed a pattern in which historical and contextual studies were conceived through a temporal lens, structured as 'contemporary', 'historical', or 'future', suggesting a framing along a bounded and singular linear temporal modality. For example, when then word 'culture' was mentioned in five descriptions of historical and contextual studies, it was linked to 'contemporary' cultures. My prior experience as a fashion design educator also correlates with this pedagogical model in which I have taught projects called 'Twentieth-Century Fashion Design History', '1960s Fashion' and 'Future Fashions'; and drawn on fashion resources such as books and museum fashion collections based on historical periods.[70]

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[70] See, for example, History of Fashion collections curated according to periods of time, such as 1840-1900 and 1900-1970 at The Victoria and Albert Museum (www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-fashion-1900-1970/)

While it may be the case that some of these courses will include wider cultural issues in their curricula, that the HEIs were unable to fit into the module descriptions, it was significant to note that none of the 71 historical and contextual studies descriptions in this sample provided text to show content related to non-linear modalities, apart from one institution that mentioned 'sustainable fashion' twice. Therefore, this finding, referring to non-linear modalities in fashion design education, was helpful in showing how fashion history is conceptualised through a conventional temporal sequence of past, present and future, although without detailed project briefs this cannot be verified. Two undergraduate course descriptors made connections across different parts of the world and offered 'global perspectives' as a module topic; both were at the same institution. In addition, this sample showed only one course which utilised the term 'sustainable and ethical design' in its module content, again showing a lack of awareness of the interconnectedness between the local and the global in fashion design (Leshkowich et.al 2003; Teunissen and Brand 2006; Paulicelli and Clark 2008; Fletcher and Grose 2012; Cheang et al. 2021).

The third most frequently taught element of fashion design education involved the fashion industry, with many references to industry placements, awards, and competitions. Moreover, the inclusion of established European and US fashion designers and fashion brands within the module content shows the ongoing hegemony of the Western-led fashion industry in fashion design education. I noticed that no terms associated with employment in fashion were connected to, for example, the charity sector or governmental organisations, which pointed to the narrow ways in which fashion employment appears to be currently conceived in fashion design education. While significant, due to the scope of this thesis and its focus on racism in fashion education I made the decision not to further

explore the role of the fashion industry in fashion design education; however, the significant role of the fashion industry in fashion design education will be later discussed as part of future research agendas in Chapter 6.

In general, this data did not**,** however**,** provide details of specific, situated meanings and meaning-making practices in the context of fashion design education, such as *what* forms of visualisation are deployed and *where* in the fashion design process, or how these temporal concepts contribute to how racialised and gendered representations are constructed. This showed me the limitations of my methodology, and the limitations that resulted from using a positivist approach. This insight was useful to inform the next stage of research and helped me recognise the need to adopt a more interpretivist research approach.

3.4. Stage Two: Investigating Representations of Race and Gender in Fashion Design Sketchbooks

The previous section identified the important role that fashion visualisation and Eurocentric fashion epistemologies play in fashion design education, the next stage of this research turned to *how* race and gender are constructed in the fashion design process, by analysing the visual representations of race and gender by fashion students in their sketchbooks. The sketchbook was chosen for analysis as it is a key tool for art and design students to visualise their research and concepts. The fashion student's sketchbook can therefore provide a key source of data to examine how fashion education teaches and validates the representation of race and gender.

While sketchbooks play a significant role in art and design processes and fashion visualisation, as discussed in Chapter 2, there are gaps in research around the role of race and gender in the sketchbook ideation process. To date, studies have been valuable in identifying the techniques deployed by fashion designers using sketchbooks to develop their fashion concepts, but how might the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) operate in the fashion design process presented in fashion sketchbooks, and thus reproduce the 'modern/colonial gender system' (Lugones 2010)?

3.4.1. Sketchbook Analysis: Pilot Study and Larger Sketchbook Study

My years of experience as a fashion design educator meant that I was used to regularly seeing fashion design students appropriate sources from various cultural contexts, but also to seeing how this was overlooked by colleagues and students. Therefore, to begin this first phase of research I undertook a pilot study to locate a gatekeeper and gain ethical consent from the institution, educators and students to look at the sketchbooks, given the sensitivity around investigations into racism in education and HEIs; furthermore, at this stage I was unsure what I was looking for in students' sketchbooks and therefore needed to test out my approach.

During this period, I had been teaching fashion design at two HEIs - College A and College B, and decided to make a request to both for access to research a group of students' work on a project that I had not taught, in the hope that this would minimise sample bias. However, when I started to discuss my request with the head of department at College A, I sensed a deep discomfort in the conversation as I began to raise the issues around cultural difference. This colleague was a white woman who did not appear to want to pursue the

conversation. In contrast the Head of the Visual Arts department at College B seemed more

supportive, although uninterested in the topic. My impression was that College B liked the

status that being part of a PhD research topic offered, irrespective of the topic. I next

contacted three colleagues teaching on four fashion courses at College B, explaining my

research and requesting access to sketchbooks; however, only one tutor agreed. This was

the only non-white tutor from the group and perhaps this explained why they agreed to my

access. I obtained informed ethical consent from the student group to analyse the

sketchbooks of a group of thirteen students on an art foundation course who had

specialised in fashion design; the project brief was titled 'Shelter', and I had not taught them

on this project.

Pilot Study: Sample Selection

As students take their work home on completing the project, access to a group of

sketchbooks had to be undertaken in a short window of time during an assessment which

only take place a few times each academic year. To choose what to analyse I also considered

- What *quantity* of data to collect

- and *what* to look for in the sketchbooks.

Access was granted to the thirteen sketchbooks during an assessment period, and I began

by photographing each page, although this approach produced excessive data with more

than 800 sketchbook pages. While it took a long time to look through these pages for

representations of non-Western cultures and gender, I could only see one sketchbook that

had used representations of non-European and non-Anglo-American cultures as part of their

research process. In this example, gender was presented through images taken of a female

mannequin, a fashion college resource. I noticed how there was no representation of a fully

human form on these pages, only the disembodied mannequin.

At this stage, rather than locate another set of sketchbooks, which would involve

waiting for another project to be completed, adding additional research time that was

unrealistic in terms of the timescale and scope of this study, another approach was adopted:

I decided to undertake a close analysis of a sample of the pages which showed

representations of non-European and non-Anglo-American cultures in this one sketchbook.

Given my prior knowledge and teaching experience, in which I have regularly seen examples

of racialised and gendered differences used in the fashion design process – different

cultures and feminised representations but based on the same tropes and stereotypes – my

hope was that this sample of pages might help me understand what techniques were being

employed to mobilise and represent race, gender and other forms of cultural difference in

the fashion design process.

Pilot Study: Methodology

In contrast to Step One of this research phase, this approach was driven by the aim of

decolonising objective-led research, as outlined in Chapter 2; this approach stresses the

importance of reading data holistically and centring the researcher themselves. For me, this

meant being led by 'intuitive inquiry and strategic questions' (Saldana 2016, p. 57), guided

by my twenty-year experience in fashion design education, as both a fashion student and a

fashion design educator. [71] As discussed in Chapter 2, drawing on my prior experience and

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[71] See S.T. Ahmed, 2007, MA dissertation, unpublished

being led by my instincts and emotional responses to recognise patterns in the data (Darder 2019) were essential to this methodology.

The following sections used a visual discourse analytical approach (Rose 2005, p.150), as outlined in Chapter 2.

3.4.2. Pilot Study: Results and Findings

The set of pages analysed came from one sketchbook produced by a white female British student (Student A). The student had developed ideas for the project theme 'Shelter' by using a mind map (see figure 3.4) which showed a range of ideas, including links to technology, nature, religion, clothing and the body. One of the threads on the map developed the theme of 'Shelter' in relation to ancient Egypt through the following sequence of words:

'cardboard – night/darkness, mummies, ancient Egypt, Alexander McQueen, Anish Kapoor, Hussein Chalayan' (see figure 3.4).

Several pages in the sketchbook showed evidence that Student A had undertaken primary research in the Ancient Egypt collections at The British Museum, London, using postcards, photographs, notes and sketches (see figure 3.5) representing mummification, sarcophagi, details about wrapping and a skull. The writing by the student includes the word 'death' three times; related words include 'morbid' and 'gory'. These terms invoke ideas of stagnation, the end of life and loss. Juxtaposed with the dominant drawing of a skull and images of mummification, Ancient Egyptian culture thus becomes an exoticised place associated with the macabre; something strange and potentially 'edgy'. Furthermore, these narratives present Egyptian culture as timeless and ahistorical.

Further investigation of the sketchbook highlighted how Student A had taken

inspiration from techniques associated with the wrapping practices used for the

mummification process (see figure 3.6); however, there is no reference to the cultural

significance of forms of wrapping in Ancient Egypt: for example, how ideas about wrapping

bodies were linked to funeral rites and the afterlife, Ancient Egyptian deities and complex

spiritual belief systems. Instead, the techniques of wrapping have been re-connected to the

work of a European artistic partnership, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, whose practice focuses

on large-scale environmental sculpture. The student writes:

> After visiting the British Museum and seeing mummification, I was inspired by
>
> wrapping, *like* [my italics] artists Christo and Jeane [sic] Claude who believed that
>
> wrapping objects removes the object's identity. I wrapped the ½ scale mannequin
>
> with various yarns and fabrics. I love this piece because the calico reflects my theme
>
> of preservation/mummification (Student A, see Figure 3.6).

Here the student shows creativity by creating a connection between Ancient Egyptian and

contemporary art practices: however, this fashion design process also appropriates Ancient

Egyptian mummification techniques. This technique of appropriation uses inspiration

without context: for example, there is no recognition here of *how* and *why* removing

FIGURE 3. 4 STUDENT A'S SKETCHBOOK SHOWING A MIND MAP FOR THE THEME 'SHELTER'

FIGURE 3. 5 STUDENT A'S SKETCHBOOK SHOWING ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CULTURE.

FIGURE 3. 6 PAGES FROM STUDENT A'S SKETCHBOOK SHOWING WRAPPING TECHNIQUES

identity was a key reason that the Ancient Egyptians used mummification[72]. Consequently, there is no reference to the social and cultural meaning of wrapping: for example, ideas about the afterlife, deities and belief systems in Ancient Egypt.

Amongst these images were Student A's re-working of the wrapping techniques in 16 images on two different mannequins, one life-size and one a scaled-down version, both standard-size torsos, disembodied figures without legs, arms and head. I did not especially notice the mannequin bodies here: instead, my focus was on the experimentation with wrapping techniques and the materials used. Turning to other representations of gender, I was surprised by the range of body imagery presented on these pages: mummified decaying bodies, a skull, sarcophagi and female white bodies on fashion catwalk shows by the European male designers Philip Treacy and Alexander McQueen. Most of the bodies represented that were alive belonged to white female bodies, whereas those from Ancient Egypt were genderless, raceless and dead. Here my gaze was drawn mostly to the Ancient Egyptian bodies, because these images were also larger on the pages. In this way the impression given to me was that these Ancient Egyptian bodies were hyper visible, but the mannequins and fashion bodies were invisible because of their neutral and standardised forms, repeated in small images.

My prior experience as a fashion design educator meant that I had seen similar forms of representation in numerous other sketchbooks, using primary sources from museums and appropriating non-Western cultures as a source of inspiration. Therefore, despite the need to exercise caution with findings from a small sample size, this study nevertheless showed some value in undertaking an in-depth, close analysis of racialised and

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[72] See: *Ancient Egypt - Life and Death in the Valley of the Kings* (BBC).

gendered representation in the fashion design process. In these data, I observed evidence of the concept of the *abyssal line*, 'the invisible divide that works to silence subaltern cosmopolitanism' (de Sousa Santos 2014, p. 125), coined by the Portuguese decolonial thinker Boaventura de Sousa Santos and discussed in the literature review in Chapter 1. This was seen in the 'system of visible and invisible distinctions' (ibid p.118) facilitated through a fashion design strategy based on methods of appropriation. My observation may support the hypothesis that a two-step strategy of *decontextualisation/recontextualisation* is used as part of the fashion design process. This fashion design strategy appeared to draw on simplistic, essentialist binary oppositional thinking (McRobbie 1998, p. 11) to control and manage cultures from the Global South by re-working them *into* cultures of the Global North (Escobar 2017). These findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent to which the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) and colonial logic operates to produce racism in fashion design education.

The first observation shows how *decontextualisation* happens in the fashion design process: this was evident in both the lack of information provided about the sources of inspiration used and the use of the British Museum, as an ongoing site of coloniality and a Western-centric gaze (Hicks 2020), as a primary research resource. For example, the technique of wrapping found in the practice of mummification in Ancient Egyptian cultures (see figure 4.6) includes no information about the history of why this mummy is on display in the British Museum, nor the context of these wrapping techniques, which created a context-free space in the sketchbook. A consequence of this technique was that a space was opened up that appeared to facilitate a design process that permitted the student to re-work ancient Egyptian cultures. Without speaking to Student A, it is not possible to ascertain

why they chose to re-work a source from the Global South *into* new contexts of European art to *recontextualise* Ancient Egyptian cultures. However, in some ways this line of questioning is unnecessary because in explaining this result it appears that this example followed the *conceptual fashion* approach (McRobbie 1998, p.52) in fashion design education, supporting fashion design's longstanding need to align itself with fine arts traditions in order to gain legitimacy in the art and design education sector. Therefore, it was no surprise that as part of this approach Student A made links with fine art forms; the significance for this study was that the link was made to *European* art forms. Therefore, it is in this second step of the process that *recontextualisation* appears to then render Egyptian culture ahistorical and disconnected from its complex beliefs; it is inserted into European ideas, showing the mechanics of the 'modernity/coloniality' paradigm which creates and sustains racial hierarchies (Quijano 1993).

Contrary to expectations, Egyptian culture appeared to be hyper visible, pointing to how non-white bodies are marked in contrast to the invisibility of white bodies (Puwar 2004, p. 58; Fine 2021, p.7). The invisibility of white female forms in this context shows the power of white normativity and the universality of white female forms in fashion. In this way, cultural difference is presented as an aesthetic backdrop to various themes but emptied of meaning, including the historical and social contexts associated with Egyptian cultures. Conceived in this way, the sketchbook presents a paradoxical version of cultural pluralism, both celebratory as well as depoliticised and de-historicised. This finding suggests how the process of *recontextualisation* enables asymmetric power dynamics to operate so that cultures of the Global South can *only* be validated when they are inserted into European cultures of the Global North. This process of Othering shifts between 'strangeness

and familiarity' (Huggan 2013, p.13), so that Ancient Egyptian wrapping techniques are only convincing as a form of 'fashion' when connected to contemporary European forms of wrapping; without this endorsement their meanings are considered irrelevant and of limited value. Consequently, difference here becomes dissociated from power, and, instead, asymmetric forms of knowledge production are reproduced.

However, these findings did not sufficiently explain how art and design techniques were deployed to enable this fashion design process. Nor do these results rule out the influence of other factors in this pilot study, such as the institution, the role of the educators and students or the project itself. I also wondered whether a non-white student might have presented another fashion design process, or to what extent this fashion design process might or might not be replicated or challenged in other educational institutions? Further research was required to establish the viability of the decontextualization/recontextualization hypotheses.

To do this, the next step of this research had envisaged analysing a larger group of sketchbooks for a comparative study across different HEIs; however, when I contacted 22 HEIs, I received few responses and no offers to engage with the project, which was both time consuming and ineffective, as discussed in Chapter 2. This lack of interest in my research topic might reflect how the abyssal line has also impacted the research process and my role as researcher in this PhD (de Sousa Santos 2007; 2014). Access to a larger group of sketchbooks was finally agreed at another HEI, College C, where I had recently begun teaching at the time of this study: the gatekeeper's non-European ethnicity may have been a contributory factor to my gaining access. The next section presents the analysis,

results and findings from the study of this larger group of fashion students' sketchbooks in College C.

3.4.3. Larger Sketchbook Study

This section continues to build on the findings from the pilot study to answer *how* racialised and gendered differences are represented in processes of fashion visualisation; and *how* Eurocentric narratives shape fashion epistemologies. The first year of the BA Fashion Womenswear course was chosen at College C because this initial year of education and training is an important site where key ideas about how to design in fashion are first introduced to students; informed consent was given by all the students. The data comprised a sample of 70 sketchbooks and the focus of analysis remained solely on the sketchbooks because it was not possible to identify the ethnicity or gender of all the students involved in the timeframe of this study. The sketchbooks were produced by students during term 2 of their first year in College C (January to March 2017) in response to a ten-week college-set brief taught by four tutors, I was not one of the tutors. The brief, titled 'Fabric Exploration & Design', was an example of a 'live' brief[73] approach which links education with the design industry; it required students to choose one of three themes produced by the trend forecasting company *WSGN*[74] for Autumn/Winter 2017/18; the themes were: 'Nocturne', 'Earthed' and 'Design Elements'. Access was granted to me over two days while College C

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[73] 'Live' briefs are used across many different educational contexts and disciplines and their aim is to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a project based in a real-life setting and so gain the experience of working in and with the fashion industry

[74] WSGN, formerly known as Worth Global Style Network, is a London-based trend forecasting company that develops themes used by fashion designers to guide and inspire their future collections.

was assessing the sketchbooks and I could see the entire cohort's sketchbooks together in one place.

Methodology

This study used the same methodology that was used in the pilot study; however, given the larger data sample generated here – between 2,800-3,500 double-sided sheets of visuals - there was a need to develop a more manageable 'sampling procedure' to take account of the limited timeframe of two days for me to access the data (Rose 2016, p.57). I planned the study in two steps: Step One, to examine the group of 70 sketchbooks as a whole; and, following the findings from the pilot study, Step Two aimed to look at *how* different art and design techniques were employed in the sketchbooks as part of the process of *decontextualising/recontextualising* the findings from the pilot study. The aim here was to focus on *how* the images had been assembled inside the books, something I had not examined during the pilot study.

Two subset research questions and a *constructionist* approach, discussed in Chapter 2, guided the research process to identify the representational systems used in the sketchbooks; this meant looking for material objects – images and marks - and effects used in the sketchbooks (Hall 2013 [1997], p. 11). To do this, I was guided by the geographer Gillian Rose, who states that to study visual images requires attention at 'three sites at which the meanings of images are made: the site of production, the site of the image itself, and the site of its audiencing' (Rose, 2016, p. 67). To address each of these points, I made notes about:

- the *technologies* employed by the student to focus on what techniques had been used to apply the image to the sketchbook

- the *site of production,* which meant addressing where the image had originated and whether it was a primary or secondary photograph, drawing or text

- what kinds of social and political relations were being mobilised through the images and text (audiencing).

3.4.4. Larger Sketchbook Study: Results and Findings

This analysis of a larger group of sketchbooks looked for evidence of *how* the *decontextualisation* strategy operated, and located four key design tactics at play:

- The *uniformity* inside and outside of the sketchbook

- The widespread use of *photographic images, mostly secondary*

- The extensive use of *collage*, *montage* and *cropping techniques*

- *Disconnections from sources*

The *recontextualisation* strategy was found to rely on three key tactics that appeared to license the students to re-work cultural differences for fashion design:

- The dominance of *white normativity*

- *Racist stereotype* thinking

- New *hybrid* images constructed based on *re-working images* – by using techniques such as adding paint, etc.

The next sections discuss these results in more depth.

In Step One I looked at the entire group pf sketchbooks, both the pages *in* the sketchbooks, *and* the books themselves, which were displayed in vast piles for assessment on large pattern cutting tables in College C. My immediate observation from seeing the sketchbooks was that they all looked the same: uniformly A4 in size, with only a few in A3, and all were manufactured by established fine art brands, such as Winsor and Newton.*[75]* The sketchbooks each consisted of between 40 and 50 heavyweight white cartridge paper sheets; a few sketchbooks used black cartridge paper. While some sketchbooks were spiral bound, the majority were case-bound, with a black cover: a white sticker indicated the student's name and class (see Figure 3.7); a minority of students had also decorated the covers with stickers.

While the reason for their similarity may have been dictated by the project brief or the institution, the second impression I had related to how similar the content also looked. Despite the three different themes that each student could explore, the style and overall aesthetics in each book when seen as a whole group – rather than individually – were, surprisingly, homogeneous: comparable photographic images, identical art and design techniques and the same styles of technical illustration.

Remarkably, all the sketchbooks followed the same linear design process, completing pages in an ordered, singular direction from start to finish. Ideas from the brief built on themes using imagery, and then the images were re-worked using technical fashion flat illustrations[76] of the final design. Further, while the students had clearly each spent

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[75] Winsor and Newton is a London-based company who produce fine art materials, founded in 1832.
[76] A technical fashion flat illustration in fashion design refers to sketch that is a two-dimensional technical drawing illustrating a garment with basic solid lines.

FIGURE 3. 7 COVER OF THE SKETCHBOOKS (NAMES CONCEALED WITH WHITE RECTANGLES TO ANONYMISE STUDENTS' IDENTITIES).

different amounts of time on each of these stages, I noticed that all followed this sequence, with a series of technical fashion flat illustrations in black and white built around a heteronormative, disembodied and usually female body towards the latter pages of their sketchbook.

The effect of these homogeneous sketchbooks was to remove the students' and the fashion educator's personalities, so that individual authorship became absent from the fashion design process; this rendered their sketchbooks both placeless and non-situated. This was in direct contradiction to the usual emphasis in fashion on 'express[ing] the individual' designer through a signature style (Wilson 2003, p.12). Indeed, it was remarkable that stylistically the sketchbooks all looked so similar. Furthermore, these sketchbooks would have not looked out of place in a fine art department, indicating the ways in which fashion design has historically aligned itself with fine art discourses in art and design education to strengthen its unstable status as a feminised subject in the art school, as well as showing the different apparatus used to support the *conceptual model* of fashion design education, (McRobbie 1998, p. 48-52), as discussed in Chapter 1.

My findings showed that the prevailing form of imagery contained in the 70 sketchbooks was photographs, and these appeared to have been taken by someone else other than the student, although the lack of written references made it difficult to confirm this. The absence of text was striking; in comparison, sketchbooks from other art and design disciplines tend to include writing in the form of supporting annotation, as well as personal information such as diary entries or to-do lists (O'Neil 2013, p. 294). One sketchbook stood out because it had photographs taken by the student of a series of streets at night-time in response to the 'Nocturne' brief (see Figure 3.8).

I made notes of *how* these images had been created and applied to the sketchbook pages, looking at their shape, size, colour and spatial organisation. Most of the photographic content in the sketchbook pages could be grouped as follows:

- *popular culture* imagery, such as fashion media, advertising, street culture and music;
- *abstract colours and shapes*, many taken from twentieth-century European art movements such as Pop art, Cubism and others.

Other forms of visuals included the student's own drawings and references to fabrics and text, and could be grouped accordingly:

- *fashion sketches* in pencil or black fine liner, alongside more detailed 'flat' illustrations, black-and-white line drawings that show a garment as if it were laid flat to display technical information (see Figure 3.10)
- *fabric swatches* (see Figure 3.11)
- *text,* handwritten in small, limited quantities, often illegible (see Figure 3.12)

Most pages in each sketchbook used the same collage technique to apply the photographic images to the sketchbook pages: Students had used combinations of colour photocopies: pages taken from magazines or computer-printed images which had mostly neatly cut straight edges – a few were purposely torn (see figure 3.9) – and glued onto sketchbook pages. Key to this collaging technique was how very little, or none, of the original white, or black, cartridge paper could be seen, so that in general the whole page was covered in visuals.

Along with these isolated images, another key representational strategy evident in all

the twelve sketchbooks was a similar technique, *montage*, defined as

> 'the process or technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate
>
> sections of films to form a continuous whole; a sequence or picture resulting from
>
> such a process.' (OED Online, 2021)

Or:

> 'the act or process of producing a composite picture by combining several different
>
> pictures or pictorial elements so that they blend with or into one another; a picture
>
> so produced.' (OED Online, 2021)

These definitions are important to this discussion because they describe the techniques of

taking pre-existing images and materials to create a new image through processes that re-

order, contrast and juxtapose. The resulting images now carry new meanings, often with

spectacular effects that create suspense and excitement (Leibowich 2007).

Cropping images is another representational tactic at play that can be seen in the

numerous photographic images to provide a perspective or precise detail; for example,

Sketchbook D (see Figure 3.16) presents the word 'Lust' alongside several white female

bodies, many neatly edited to bring focus to the groin area, resulting in a hyper-sexualized

view of white able-bodied normative female forms. Combined with the term 'lust', these

images evoke a pornographic narrative, juxtaposed against an image of a white religious-

looking female statue, emphasising a moral dimension. The opposite page in Sketchbook D

presents the word 'Greed' above images of ornate, jewel-encrusted skulls, dominated by

two images: one of a white semi-nude female with gold jewellery spewing from her mouth

FIGURE 3. 8 PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY STUDENT IN RESPONSE TO THE 'NOCTURNE' BRIEF.

FIGURE 3. 9 PURPOSELY TORN EDGES.

FIGURE 3. 10 EXAMPLES OF 'FLAT' ILLUSTRATION BLACK-AND-WHITE LINE DRAWINGS.

FIGURE 3. 11 EXAMPLES OF FABRIC SWATCHES.
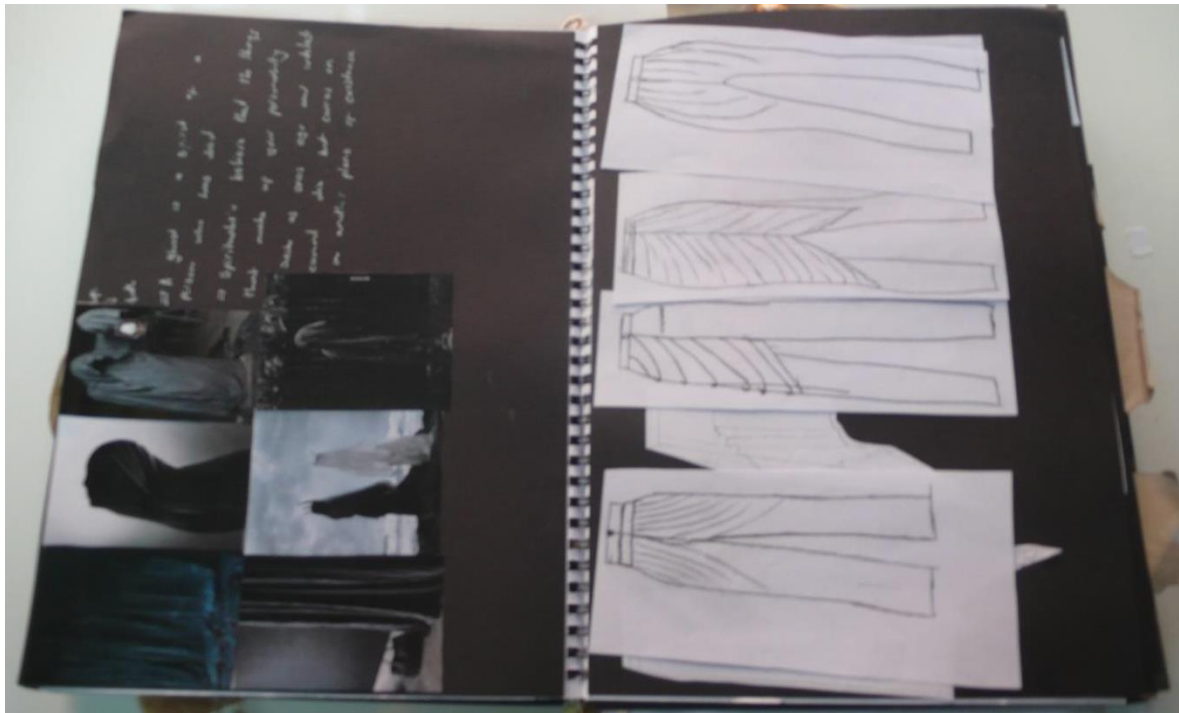
FIGURE 3. 12 EXAMPLES OF SMALL HANDWRITTEN TEXT, OFTEN ILLEGIBLE.

FIGURE 3. 13 PAGES (1) AND (2), SKETCHBOOK A SHOWING HAND DRAWN TECHNIQUES OVER RAP CULTURES IMAGERY

and another of a black female cradling her face with her hand dripping with molten gold paint; both images are again highly sexualised. These exoticised images appear to be reconstituted from perfume or make-up advertising campaigns, reflecting the continuance of a contemporary global commodity culture built on marketing campaigns that use 'Othering' representations. (Huggan 2001). Here, although the exoticised imagery has been re-ordered, it nevertheless continues to reproduce a power imbalance.

The production of Otherness here is built upon a *frisson* (Craik, 2015) – a spark or a quiver – constructed by the contrasting bodies so that the black female form develops the simultaneous narratives of familiarity, due to her proximity to the white female form, and strangeness, due to the adjacent images of skulls. In this example, exoticism in Sketchbook D operates in ways that continue to control cultural translation through the re-coding of secondary exoticised fashion images *back* into a familiar Western fashion design format of the rectangular framed sketchbook pages.

As discussed, very little or none of the original white, or black, cartridge paper was visible in any of the sketchbooks. While most of the pages were covered in imagery, I was struck by how little text there was, and the overall absence of any personal writing was evident in most of the sketchbooks. Where it did appear, the text was generally handwritten in small, limited quantities, and mostly illegible, meaning that it was difficult to decipher the sources of the images.

In two examples the text was computer printed using a 'handwriting'-style font to give a personal feel to the page. Text appears in Sketchbook E (see Figure 3.17): one page has an excerpt of a poem by the author Christy Ann Martine, while on the adjacent page is a quote from the British artist Andy Goldsworthy.

On further examination of the twelve sketchbooks with representations of non-Western cultures, there was evidence that one sketchbook did incorporate text more fully, but used it as a form of imagery with creative presentation. Handwritten text has been included in Sketchbook C (see Figure 3.15) running alongside an image of First Peoples, or Native American Indians. The text describes the geographical details and the names of the peoples with the title 'Cheyenne Indians' partly visible and text stating that 'they were spiritual and smoked the peace pipe'. While this attempt to make links between different registers of ethnicity gives some context, with no date or authorship and with the application of sepia tone to the paper, along with burnt edging, the overall impression is that this is a culture that is timeless, trapped in some ageless period of history.

For example, pages (1) and (2), Sketchbook B (see Figure 3.14) explores the theme 'Nocturne' by presenting 16 photographic images. Half of the images present a human form through images of heads, skulls and masks; an additional four photographic images depict the skins of animals and are used as borders: none are drawings. The 16 images are arranged over two pages, and the images presented are:

- Three buildings, two external images, one internal; one is crumbling and old

- Weapons

- Two black female bodies, shoulders uncovered, faces painted and masked in different materials. Heavy make-up. They are not smiling but looking provocatively into the camera, gazing at the viewer

- Six masks – no body attached

- Two bodies dressed in materials – impression is that it is ceremonial dress (image a). Photograph looks old, but is undated

- Animal skins, including snakeskin, imagery bordering the pages.

None of these images appear with any reference to authorship or where the student has sourced the image from. One small photograph here (see page (1) Figure 3.14) shows a black-and-white image of two masked people, adorned with elaborate fabrics and costumes, with no clear indication of whether this image is contemporary; no location is given; no information about the purpose for this style of clothing or the gender, race or ethnicity of the subjects. Perhaps this image originates from a non-European or Global South location because of the style of clothing and the masking of the faces, but with no references here, or any analysis of the image by the student, the viewer cannot tell whether this clothing is everyday dress or something worn for a special occasion. This lack of detail excludes and erases the knowledge of the peoples presented here: who are they?

The above discussion is evidence of how tactics of *decontextualisation* might operate in fashion design sketchbooks. The following three sections present the results of tactics that appeared to *recontextualise* imagery and sources, thereby creating new fashion narratives.

Step Two of the analysis involved reducing the samples to those that presented examples of non-white or non-Western/Anglo-American or non-Eurocentric imagery; however, only 12 out of the 70 sketchbooks showed examples of such representations. This was a considerable surprise: based on my prior experiences as a fashion educator I was expecting to see more examples than this, because many students use non-Western sources of inspiration in their design process. This absence of examples, however, provided evidence of the dominance of white normativity and the white gaze (Dyer 1997; Garner 2007), and the universality of white heteronormativity shown through the overwhelmingly European

FIGURE 3. 14 SKETCHBOOK B, PAGES (1) AND (2) EXPLORING THE THEME OF 'NOCTURNE'.
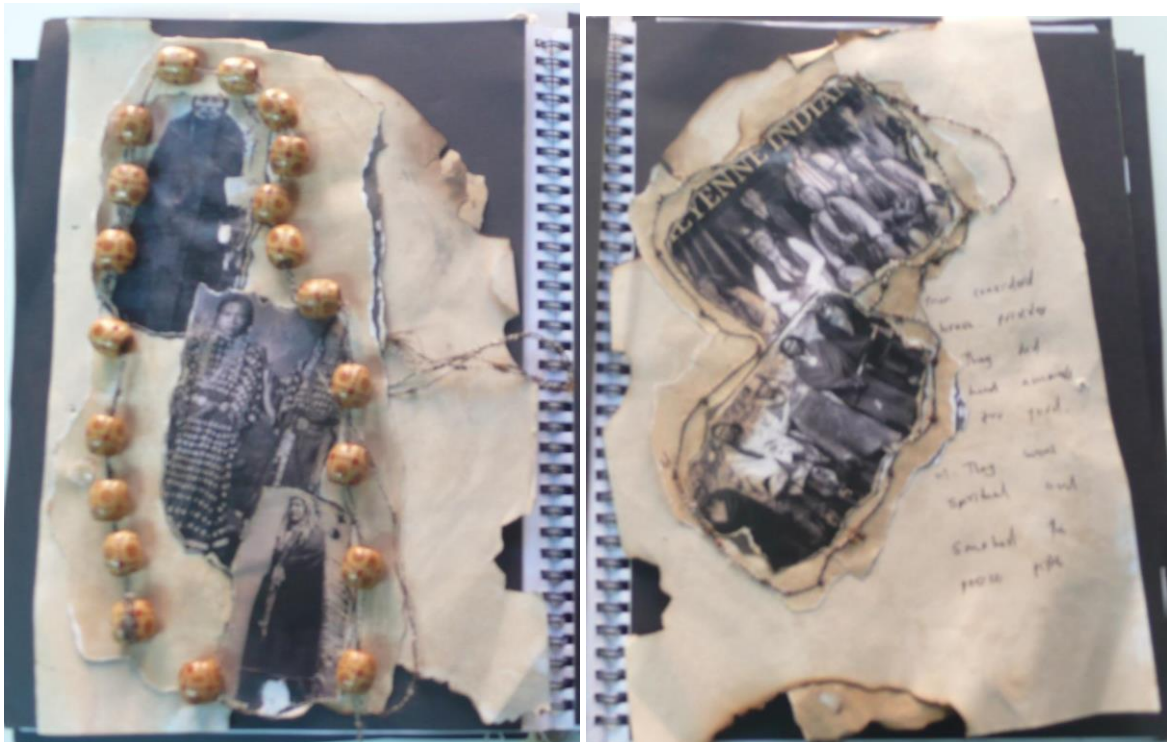
FIGURE 3. 15 SKETCHBOOK C SHOWING IMAGES OF FIRST PEOPLES OR NATIVE AMERICAN INDIANS.

FIGURE 3. 16 SKETCHBOOK D SHOWING HIGHLY SEXUALISED IMAGES.

FIGURE 3. 17 SKETCHBOOK E SHOWING WHITE FEMALE BODIES IN PASSIVE POSES AND HANDWRITTEN TEXT.

and Anglo-American themes, symbols and bodies related to fashion cultures. For example, in Sketchbook E, on the theme of 'Earthed' (see Figure 3.17) white female bodies are seen as passive, and in Sketchbook D as oversexed, although given this sample is from first-year students, this might change during the three years of study. Fashion catwalk images and fashion illustrations are dominated by thin, tall, white female bodies. I saw no evidence of white plus-size female bodies and few men's bodies – this may be because the majority of students were studying womenswear design. I also noted how I was able to perceive whiteness in my role as a researcher; however, in my role as a fashion design educator it would be much harder to recognise the universalising mechanics of whiteness so easily.

I noticed that where representations of non-white or non-Western/Anglo-American or non-Eurocentric imagery appeared in the twelve sketchbooks, the majority followed simplistic binaries and were generally in response to the project brief title 'Nocturne', with many examples of racist stereotyping based on associations with the word 'dark'. In these examples, there were numerous representations of non-white bodies, including black bodies, especially female black bodies. This is important to note because how bodies are visually raced plays a key role in how visual stereotypes are constructed and deployed: here, we can see a variety of Othered bodies (Murji 2006). Three key images stood out to me, as they were built on established racial stereotypes: oversexed black female bodies, black male bodies alongside images of rap music and crime and an image of tribespeople next to skulls and voodoo objects. These exaggerated representations worked to essentialise black bodies, in particular black female bodies, and continue longstanding colonial discourses of domination in which 'female bodies symbolise Africa as a conquered space' (Santos 2018, p.109).

Another trope could be seen in images of First Peoples or Native American Indians in Sketchbook C (see Figure 3.15), which had been tinted sepia to render the images timeless and ahistorical, like the representation of ancient Egypt in the pilot study (see Figure 3.6).

In contrast, several sketchbooks that addressed the theme 'Earthed' drew on stereotypical imagery associated with nature, which were juxtaposed with images of white female bodies, natural landscapes, poetry, handwritten text and pale colours (see Figure 3.17). Here, nature appears gendered as female, as well as racialised as white. There is an abundance of literature on racial stereotyping (Insert references) and the process of Othering (Said 2003 [1978], p.26), but key to my observations here was how these representations were deployed through a process of 'simplification and exaggeration' (Murji 2006) so that black bodies were seen through a white gaze and female bodies were represented through patriarchal modes of domination.

I also looked for non-stereotyped, non-white bodies, and did find clear examples that problematised simple binary oppositions to show the intertwined power differentials. For example, Sketchbook A stood out (see Figure 3.13): drawing on images of rap music and culture it did not fall into this simple binary and provided a narrative that instead homogenised rap cultures, eroding categories of race, although still constructed on racial hierarchies and stereotypes of Black men.

At some point, often in the middle of the sketchbooks, there is a shift to working into, across and over secondary sources, using marks and different media to create 'new' hybrid images: for example,

- the addition of three-dimensional materials, as seen in pages (i) and (ii) from Sketchbook A with additional sheets of blue coloured acetate (see Figure

3.13); and from Sketchbook C, with the addition of a beaded necklace (see

Figure 3.15)

- manipulating photographs by burning the edges of the photocopied photographs on

  pages (i) and (ii) from Sketchbook C (see Figure 3.15) and staining them sepia, giving

  the impression that they are old

- hand-drawn imagery over photographs, for example the addition of red crosses and

  questions marks daubed with red paint in pages (i) and (ii) from Sketchbook A (see

  Figure 3.13)

- computer-printed text (see Figure 3.16)

While there may be several explanations for this shift, such as a student's personal

desire to please their educator or peers, or perhaps a lack of independence, this creative

input shows how the student has imposed their imprint *onto* their sources of inspiration to

develop new meanings. However, as described in the pilot study, I wondered in what ways

this re-working of imagery might in fact further exaggerate and essentialise cultural

difference. For example, to what extent did the crude red crosses daubed over the 'mug

shots' images of Black men make them even more hyper visible?

Chapter 1 argued that very little was found in fashion literature on the topic of *what*

processes of racism exist within fashion design education and *how* such processes operate

as part of systemic racism. The next section discusses the findings of this fashion design

approach in fashion design education. Significantly, these examples of processes and

practices illustrate one of many possible ways that cultural differences can be constructed in

and through design processes in fashion design education.

A Non-Critical Space

A key feature of all the sketchbooks was their excessive output, evidenced by the quantity

of pages within them, each page crammed with visuals and uniformly collaged.

Paradoxically, the effect of this approach was that these highly private and individualized

spaces all looked the same, concealing the identity of the student, the institution and the

educator. Despite this emphasis on individuality, with each fashion student attempting to

create a highly personalised take on a theme, when seen overall as a group the effect was

that they all looked very similar, both in external physical shape and size *and* internal

content.

Therefore, it was striking how the sketchbooks appeared to privilege aesthetics

above all other criteria, so that while the impression I had was of 'aesthetic intensity'

(McRobbie 1998, p. 48), there was also a banality caused by the uniformity and at times

meaningless collages. While this was not surprising, when combined with a limited amount

of written text, this indicated a lack of criticality in the sketchbooks. Even when moments of

criticality did appear, such as through the addition of text, or when the student had taken

their own original photographs, it was often aestheticised, in the form of computer-printed

text in a handwriting font (see Figure 3.16) or tinted with paint (see Figure 3.15), rather than

linked to the individual student.

White Normativity

I continued to reflect further on the absence of the student from the design process; I could

gain no sense of authorship in the sketchbooks. Neither was there a sense of either the

fashion design educator who taught the student emerging in this work or the HEI they

attended, so I could not gain a sense of who had taught this project or where they had been

taught; indeed, it seemed to me as if these sketchbooks could feasibly have been produced

in any other HEI in the UK, or even in other countries. The more I puzzled over this, the

more I recognised that this phenomenon could be explained through the concept of

modernity/coloniality (Quijano 1993), that enables whiteness to operate as a normative and

silencing strategy in processes of racialisation (Frankenberg, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Clarke and

Garner 2010; DiAngelo 2011). This would explain the 'ordinariness' of whiteness and why it

was simultaneously everywhere in the sketchbooks and yet also easily overlooked.

This also made me begin to reflect on my role as a researcher *and* fashion design

educator, and how I, too, was being racialised as white through the process of viewing the

design work. While I was able to reflect on this in my capacity as a researcher who was

foregrounding my racial identity, I wondered to what extent in my usual professional role as

fashion design educator I would be able to notice this. I questioned how this normative

display of whiteness I was analysing in the sketchbooks might therefore also work as a

technology to normalise whiteness for fashion educators too, resulting in institutional and

departmental sensitivity towards race and fashion. This might also explain some of the

concerns of my gatekeeper and why, as someone of non-European ethnicity, they granted

me access to the data.

A Linear Design Resource and Process
Digging deeper into the why the sketchbooks appeared uniform, I questioned how the

construction of the sketchbooks themselves might affect the design process. Each page

presented was part of a sequential order of pages, so that all the content appeared to follow

the same linear design process, with ideas about the brief, often beginning with a mind map

(see figure 3.4), imagery showing inspiration, re-working of the images and finally technical flat illustrations of the final fashion design. This linear model tended to conclude with a series of technical black and white illustrations of fashion designs built around a heteronormative, disembodied, raceless and usually female body towards the end of the sketchbook (see figure 3.10). While this might have been a directive from the institution, seen across a large group of data I noticed, for example, that no sketchbooks were sequenced in a non-linear way, such as introducing design ideas right at the beginning of the sketchbook, for example. This made me wonder how different the fashion designs might have been if a non-linear sequence had been followed, and the extent to which the universalising structure of the sketchbook as a technology and resource and the design process might prevent spaces in which connections and diversity could be featured.

The next section now draws these findings together to return to research question 1: *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the UK?*

3.5. Discussion and Conclusions

Returning to my first thesis research question: *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the UK?* the aim of the first section of this chapter has not been to analyse individual and context-specific content of the modules of different degree courses, but rather to gain the metanarrative of undergraduate fashion design education and the ways in which colonial logics might shape curricular content. The results from this data analysis show how the two-dimensional visualisation process in fashion appears to be disconnected from the three-dimensional making process, providing tentative evidence for how the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017)

reproduces Cartesian mind/body binary thinking in fashion pedagogies in two significant ways:

- The result of prioritising visualisation in the fashion design process results in a fashion design process in which working around a physical body is subordinated in the fashion design process.

- By structuring fashion history through temporal concepts, fashion design becomes framed within linear and boundaried thinking.

However, there was a further finding from Stage One of the research, which related to my choice of using a positivist methodology and the recognition that such an approach was limiting. While this approach was useful in identifying clusters of themes, it offered no explanation of *how* these pedagogical approaches were deployed in class and what students created in response to fashion design pedagogies. Consequently, these findings helped me develop two further sub-questions to guide Stage Two:

1. How are racialised and gendered differences represented in processes of fashion visualisation?

2. How do Eurocentric narratives shape fashion epistemologies?

This chapter has shown how my research process was shaped by my situatedness as a researcher who is a woman of colour and my methodological choices. My findings showed evidence of how Cartesian mind/body binary thinking structures fashion design pedagogies through hierarchical thinking that subordinates the body in the fashion design process so that fashion students are designing *for* the body and are disconnected from designing *on* the body. In addition, fashion history was shown as being taught through temporally linear and

boundaried concepts, a key characteristic of coloniality (de Sousa Santos 2014). This was evidenced through teaching that prioritises techniques of visualisation in the fashion design process and fashion history and contextual studies that were based on temporal concepts.

While it was not a surprise that visualisation was a dominant theme in the data analysed during this phase of research, what was most interesting was how this impacted on other parts of the fashion design process so that other aspects became deprioritised. This offered valuable insights into the mechanics of the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) in fashion design education. One major consequence of the dominance of fashion visualisation in fashion design education could be that teaching fashion as a two-dimensional skill may become more important in fashion design education than three-dimensional skills. Instead, the visualisation of fashion concepts in education can provide space for design students to explore their imagination and creativity, emphasising individualisation in the design process.

This educational trend aligns with what sociologist Angela McRobbie refers to as fashion education's over-reliance on fantasy narratives (McRobbie 1998). Longstanding debates about the role of fantasy in fashion (Barthes 2006, p.86) and the 'magic' of fashion (Bourdieu and Delsaut 1975) have been critiqued, most notably by feminists, who argue against fantasy narratives in fashion design because they can reduce fashion to 'a vehicle for fantasy' (Wilson 2003, p.246), although such approaches can also be applied to create speculative counter-fashions as part of wider aims to challenge hegemonic fashion narratives.[77] While creativity underpins all design education, an over-emphasis on making

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[77] See for example, *Fashion Fictions*, led by Amy Twigger Holroyd, a platform which creates fictional fashions of alternative fashion cultures and systems. See: https://fashionfictions.org/about/ [Accessed 7.4.21]

space for the role of fantasy in design processes can further exacerbate existing hierarchies built upon patriarchal, racist and sexist binaries. This information is crucial in understanding some of the ways in which the fashion design education paradigm might be conceived though the 'modern/colonial gender system' (Lugones 2010); and, how such an approach can, according to feminist thinking, work to repress 'the possibility of multiple trajectories and the denial of the real difference of others.' (Massey 2005, p. 70).

These findings informed the next research phase presented in Chapter 4 to answer the questions guiding this study: *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* The findings from the sketchbook analysis revealed how the sketchbook can be seen as a technology to produce alterity in fashion design education enabling a *non-critical space* to exist in which racist and sexist forms of fashion design both flourish as cosmopolitan, multicultural and spectacular narratives, while paradoxically erasing meanings and contexts of difference. The techniques of collage and montage give licence, therefore, to a fashion design process in which problematic and potentially racist representations are constructed, reinforced and reproduced.

Yet, I found that it was not only what was in the sketchbook that was revealing; the process of undertaking the research itself provided other significant results indicating the privileging of whiteness in fashion design education through my role as both a researcher and a fashion design educator. As detailed in Chapter 3, despite several attempts to gain access, the only two gatekeepers who supported this first phase of research were two fashion design educators: one was non-white and one was non-European. This lack of support for my topic revealed a finding relating to institutional whiteness (Gabriel and Tate 2017; Bhopal 2018; Cupples and Grosfuguel 2019), and how the design process also

racialises those who are viewing the fashion design process as white. This was evidenced in the mostly European and Anglo-American themes, symbols and bodies related to fashion cultures presented in sketchbooks, reproducing the universality of white heteronormativity and resulting white gaze so that whiteness seemed invisible to me, based on my experience as a fashion design educator. Both processes of racialisation therefore point to how the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) helped me to understand *where* the mechanics of racism in fashion design education exist. More significantly, exposing the mechanics of racism allowed me to 'see' what was missing in fashion design education and also what was needed to formulate ideas for anti-racist forms of fashion design education.

The concept of the 'sociology of absences'(de Sousa Santos 2018, p.25), outlined in Chapter 1, which describes the role of 'silence' and 'silencing' in knowledge production, has therefore been useful to this discussion in understanding how the *abyssal line* (Santos 2007; Santos 2014) operates through the fashion design process. Using Santos's 'sociology of absences' as a framework helped me to develop three possible reasons for the lack of context given in the sketchbooks for the representations of non-white or non-Western/Anglo-American or non-Eurocentric imagery: *a non-critical space*; *white normativity*; and *a linear design process*.

This emphasis in the design process on individualism, rooted in thinking on modernity, has long been associated with how fashion design celebrates current star, or celebrity, designers (Calefato 2019; Mensitieri 2020). Delving deeper into the findings, this showed the fashion sketchbook's ability to perform as a non-critical space creating problematic decontextualised and re-contextualised narratives which can contribute to cultural appropriations and other forms of stereotyping and processes of Othering. What my

analysis showed was how representational practices in which hegemonic fashion discourses – in this case the project themes, the mechanics of the sketchbooks and techniques of imagery and mark-making – work to subordinate the Other.

Significantly, in the pilot study the fashion design process used in the sketchbooks gave Student A licence to create *their* representation of Ancient Egyptian wrapping techniques. In addition, the representation of gender as a normative female mannequin body raises further questions about how fashion resources reproduce heteronormative and racialised binaries. It was this translation between contexts that appeared to show the production of a new space in the sketchbook, one which permitted a *non-critical space* to dominate. I wondered if a *non-critical* space could reinforce racial hierarchies in which non-Western sources are represented as static and ahistorical, and European and Anglo-American sources and designs are seen as contemporary and creative; and if so, could a subversion of the power dynamics in which Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installations are re-worked in the style of Ancient Egyptian forms generate an alternative fashion design process whose starting point is knowledge systems from the Global South? These questions will be addressed in Chapter 5, which aims to challenge colonial ways of designing in fashion design education.

The modernity/coloniality (Quijano 1993) system that produces *white normativity* also indicated various ways in which the legacies of colonialism are evident in the fashion design process. In this way, the fashion design process shows one way that the *abyssal line* operates in fashion design education to give legitimacy to Global South cultures when they are *in* the context of European cultures (de Sousa Santos 2007; 2014). This approach could even be seen in material that emphasised rap culture (see Figure 3.13), a form of subcultural

style already rooted in some forms of resistance (Polhemus and Proctor 1978; Hebdige 1979) but subscribing to hierarchical categories of race.

However, a notable feature of this analysis was that very little emerged about the role of the fashion educator. This observation could indicate several factors, including the normativity of whiteness in the teaching staff: in the case study all four tutors teaching the project were white. This dominance of white tutors might also contribute to how students locate and engage with non-Western sources, or fail to. In contrast, my experiences of teaching fashion have, over the years, often resulted in substantial numbers of students exploring non-Western sources of fashion: perhaps my South Asian ethnicity legitimises their research choices. Although these representational practices that Other may appear to legitimise and vocalise marginalised communities, it must be remembered that the Other is positioned in multiple intersecting structures of dominance and power as gendered, raced, colonised, classed and sexualised; and these narratives are dominated by white normativity (Dyer 1997).

This lack of criticality in fashion education is not new, however. Sociologist Angela McRobbie claims that she stepped back from teaching cultural studies to fashion students because of the ways in which cultural theories were appropriated in fashion design (McRobbie 2016, p.11). There is, therefore, a need to identify ways to teach a more contextualised, situated, and meaningful form of fashion design, which the next chapter sets out to address.

3.6. Limitations of the Study and Next Steps

The studies presented in this chapter had several limitations. The module content of undergraduate fashion design courses that were analysed in Stage One will, no doubt, have

changed since the academic year 2019-20, and the focus on curriculum summaries lacked

insights into the role fashion educators and students play in response to this material.

Consequently, another iteration of this study would focus on the human dynamics and the

role of relationality in the curriculum; recognising this limitation helped to shape Research

Phases two and three of this study.

Furthermore, this case study showed the sketchbook work from only two of the UK

HEIs that teach fashion design, and therefore cannot be representative of this sector in the

UK. However, given the important role of fashion visualisation in the majority of

undergraduate fashion courses, as discussed above, along with my own experiences as a

fashion design educator, this sample offers data which, according to sociologist Gillian Rose,

are both representative and significant (Rose 2016, p.57):

- *representative* of undergraduate fashion design education, as, in my experience,
  there is limited variation in how sketchbooks are used between different HEIs;
- *significant* because it is during this phase of fashion design education that design
  ideas are shaped and begin to be established.

This first research phase has thus provided me with a broad overview of how the

'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) operates in fashion design education, but this phase

of research did not provide insights into *how* these pedagogies are used in the creative

process. The next chapter explores ways to teach fashion design that address the findings

from this chapter and devises a fashion design process that is contextualised and centres

the Other by focusing on subaltern epistemologies (Spivak 1999) to replace the dominant

decontextualisation/recontextualisation design process identified here.

CHAPTER 4: Devising an Anti-Racist Fashion Design Pedagogy

This chapter presents *Research Phase 2*, that consists of two case studies which respond to the second research question of this thesis**:**

Research Question 2**:** *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?*
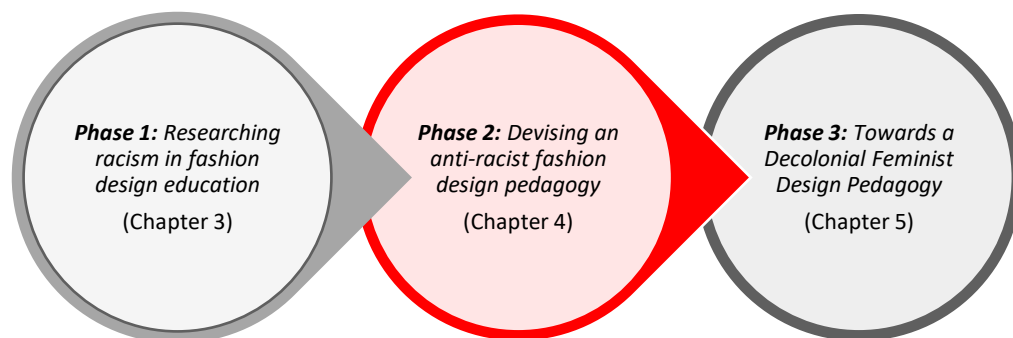
This chapter presents two case studies of fashion design classes that I taught: Case Study One: 'Using my Mother's Saris' (this consisted of two classes, Sari Class One and Sari Class Two), to which I brought my mother's clothing as the main fashion resource; and Case Study Two: '*All About Love'*, that revolved around a class that I taught which asked students to question the role of the mannequin, a ubiquitous fashion resource in fashion design education. Both case studies were designed following a pedagogical action research approach (PedAr) (Norton 2019).

The classes were devised to respond to the findings from Chapter 3 and to create a more contextualised, situated and relational fashion design process that draws on my experiences as a fashion design educator who is a woman of colour.

4.1. Introduction

The second research question reflects emerging debates in decolonising design that stress the urgency for more research around the *practice* of decolonisation, including pedagogies, rather than current, predominantly theory-led, debates (Taboada et.al. 2020). Reflecting such sentiments, this chapter presents three fashion design classes that I taught during 2017-2019 that are rooted in decolonial feminist pedagogies, as outlined in the literature review in Chapter 1 (Carpenter and Mojab 2017; Jong et al 2019; Verges 2021). These classes experiment with alternative anti-racist approaches to fashion design pedagogy rooted in my body and identity politics as a woman of South Asian Indian ethnicity.

To disrupt Eurocentric fashion design pedagogies, I drew inspiration from both South Asian Indian fashions (Tarlo 2014; Sandhu 2015; Lewis et.al 2018) and vernacular everyday fashions (Buckley and Clarke 2017) using garments pre-worn by my family and friends, to explore possibilities to disrupt the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) in fashion education. Sari Class One and Sari Class Two set out to explore and test the potential of using an alternative decolonial feminist fashion design process inspired by the postcolonial and transnational feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty's pedagogical strategy 'The Feminist Solidarity or Comparative Studies Model', described in Chapter 1 (Mohanty 2003, p. 242). In these classes I centred my biographical fashion voice as a form of *anti-fashion* (Polhemus and Proctor 1978) in fashion design education.

The second case study, the *All about Love* Class, set out to question the dominance of universalist standardised educational fashion resources, focusing on the mannequin. This fashion class drew on Black feminist bell hooks' work *All About Love* (hooks 2000) to initiate

an alternative fashion design process in which students centred their relationships on people they loved, instead of designing for a universal, abstract body.

4.2. Background to the Case Studies

Both case studies presented in this chapter discuss undergraduate fashion design classes that I taught in College C between 2017 and 2019. Following Research Phase 1, discussed in Chapter 3, I had begun to take tentative steps in my teaching to incorporate *anti-fashion* (Polhemus and Proctor 1978) in my classes and to consider how my cultural identity as a British Asian Muslim cisgender woman of the Indian diaspora related to my fashion design praxis. (see lesson plan examples in Appendix B.1). Up to this point, non-Eurocentric fashion ideas that had shaped my life remained absent from my teaching, so I now began to question whether I might teach fashion in a less Eurocentric way by including fashions and styles from the Global South and its diasporas that are part of my life, such as the *saris* that my mother wears, or the *hijab* that I still sometimes wear.

By reflecting on my personal relationship with fashion, I used these experiences as alternative 'epistemic resources' (Moya 2006, p. 98). I was especially drawn to my mother's clothing; my mother still wears a sari, which plays a key role in signifying her racial, ethnic and religious identity, and this offered me a possibility to to counter oppressive racist, sexist and colonial educational structures.
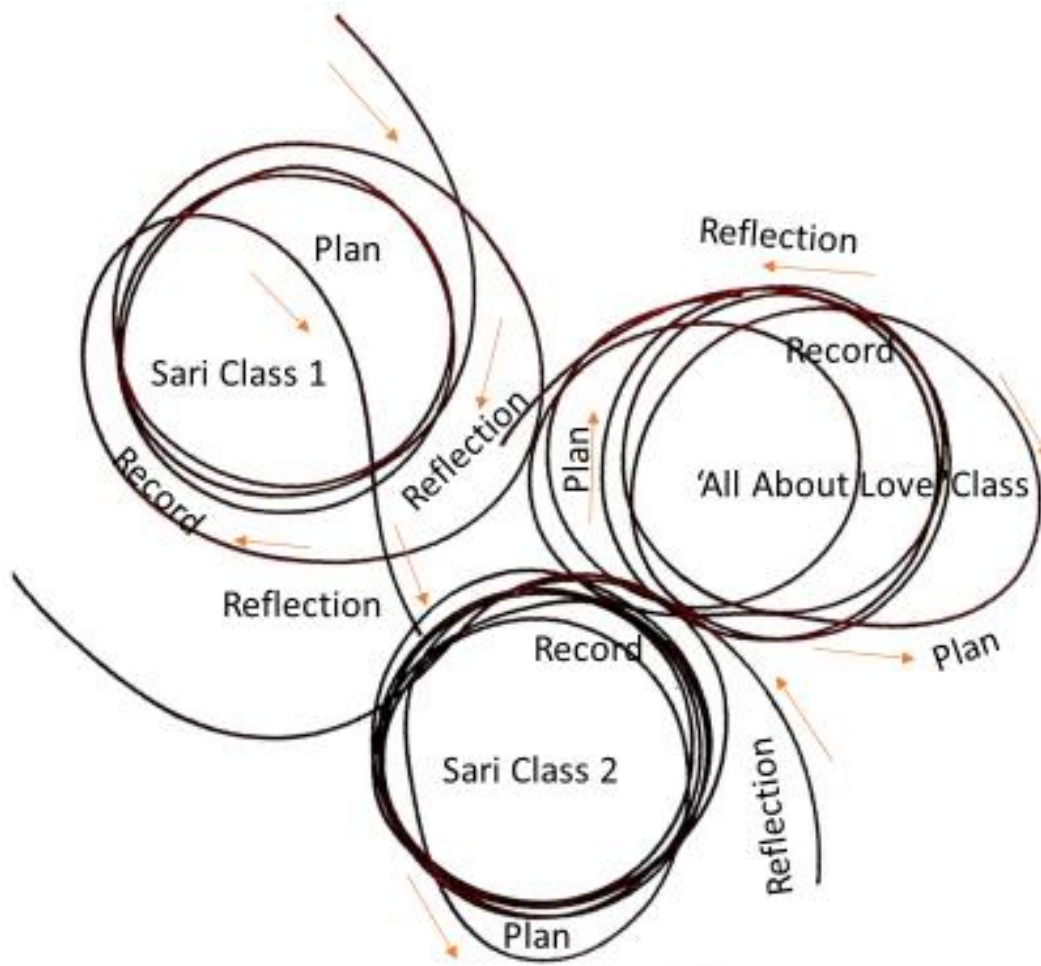
Aims and Objectives

The aim of *Research phase 2* is to centre myself as woman of colour fashion educator in my teaching. To do this I adopted a pedagogical action research (PedAR) methodology (Norton 2019), outlined in more detail in Chapter 2. This methodology has enabled me to devise two classes which followed a cyclical process of iterative phases of reflection and analysis, both during *and* after my teaching. After the first iterations of Sari Class One and Sari Class Two, I devised a further pedagogical intervention, the All About Love Class. The data I have collected in this research phase include photographs taken during the ideation process by fashion design students and uploaded by students onto a class Facebook page (see Figure 4.) and my own reflections and observations.

The overarching pedagogical action research (PedAR) methodology used for the

research design employs an autoethnographic approach outlined in Chapter 2 (Busia, 1993;

hooks, 1987; 2000 Boylorn, 2006; Kilomba, 2010; Ahmed, 2017; Breeze, 2017; Sobande

2018; Osei 2019) and shaped in response to a dominant white pedagogical HEI fashion

design context (Haenel 2019; Biondi 2020).

4.3. Case Study One: Using my Mother's Saris

The sari is a garment formed of a long piece of cloth that can be draped to create more than

a hundred different styles (Kapur Chishti, 2010). The sari represents an example of

rectilinear forms of garment construction (Burnham 1973, Lindqvist 2013) which can disrupt

and problematise paradigmatic colonial constructions based on traditional/modernity

binary construction methods in fashion which present unstitched cloth as a traditional and

ancient form, in contrast to sewn garments, which are perceived as 'modern', perpetuating

the *modern world system* (Grosfoguel 2016). My strategy was to introduce the sari in the

classroom to counter the racist stereotypes in which the sari is steeped, especially

concerning notions of the 'primitive' (see Antliff and Leighten 2003), cultural traditions and

gendered passivity, *and* re-present the sari as potentially more 'modern' than sewn

garments (Banerjee and Miller 2008 [2003], p.3).

The sari appealed to me for several reasons. First, the sari remains one of the oldest

forms of pre -colonial unstitched clothing in the world that continues to be a vernacular

form of ordinary pre-modern dress thus challenging the over emphasis on modernity in

fashion (see Ranavaade and Karolia 2017). Worn throughout the South Asian Indian

subcontinent and diaspora (Banerjee and Miller 2004; Chishit 2013;Tarlo 2013; Sandhu

2015; Kaur and Agrawal 2019), pertinently, the sari is a garment my mother wears daily

which embodies her identity and so is personally connected to me. Moreover, the sari

remains marginalised in hegemonic fashion design epistemologies and practices, as well as

in fashion design education in the UK, identified as part of discourses around 'traditions'

(Boyer 1990) and thus deemed to be old-fashioned (Banerjee and Miller 2004) and

associated with stereotypes of the passive, submissive Indian woman (Puwar and Raghuram

2003). Although knowledge about the sari can be found in most fashion design HEIs, such as

in books on the topic in HEI libraries, the sari tends to be used as a form of inspiration in

explicitly antihistorical terms, and its complex aesthetics and symbolism are mostly ignored

and misappropriated in Western fashion forms with little acknowledgement of its history

and context (Haran 2021).[78]

Therefore, in these classes I used the sari to disrupt fashion's reliance on binary

norms and present alternative ways in which the sari has been used as a form of subcultural

resistance, drawing inspiration from many sources, including the London-based campaign

group Sari Squad,[79] the Indian suffragette movement (Mukherjee 2018); and the fashion

label Not Sari.[80]

This sharing of Global South fashion knowledge was intended to initiate a process of

fashionalization, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Niessen 2003, p. 244)*,* in the hope that an

alternative non-colonial fashion design process and pedagogical methodology would

emerge to replace the dominant *decontextualisation/recontextualisation* design tactic

identified in Chapter 3.

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[78] The following Western fashion designers have appropriated Indian saris: John Galliano for Christian Dior Spring/Summer 2008; Karl Lagerfeld's Bombay-Paris Collection for Chanel Pre-Fall 2012 collection; Alexander McQueen, Autumn/Winter 2008; Jean Paul Gautier Autumn/Winter 2017 collection.

[79] The Sari Squad were a group of women, mainly of South Asian origin, who wore saris as a form of visible protest against far-right racist groups in the UK in the 1980s

[80] Fashion label set up by the Canada-based designer Pranavi Suthagar

4.3.1. Sari Class One

'Sari Class One' was written and taught by me alone and was the sixth class in a series of eight delivered as part of a short course called 'Analysis and Strategies of Contemporary Fashion' (see Appendix A.3) for a group of 47 third-year undergraduate fashion design students at College C in the UK. This case study of third-year students contrasts with the first-year group whose sketchbook work was analysed in Chapter 3. Here, the third-year student group consisted of majority female students (43 female and four male): most were specialising in fashion womenswear, with a minority specialising in fashion menswear. A significant number of students were from outside the UK, originating from mainland Europe (mainly France, Italy and Russia) or from outside of Europe (China, Korea and India most commonly). Most of the students were of white ethnicity. The class ran during an early evening slot for two and half hours during Term 1 (October – December). Each class consisted of a mixture of a lecture-style address from me, plus a practice-based design activity undertaken in pairs or small groups.

In response to the *decontextualisation/recontextualisation* design tactic identified as part of the fashion design process in Chapter 3, I adopted postcolonial and transnational feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty's pedagogical strategy she terms 'The feminist solidarity or comparative studies model' (Mohanty 2003, p.242), discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. My aim was that by using this pedagogical strategy students would be encouraged to explore each other's different cultures and histories through a collaborative fashion design process, encouraging dialogue between students *and* fashion design educators and further the project of decolonising fashion design education.

To help students explore their points of connection I moved the furniture to establish an inclusive space: a large empty central area for students to move about more freely, devoid of the usual fashion design resources such as pattern cutting tables, industrial sewing machines, whiteboards and chairs. Reversing the usual design process in which classes would begin with the context of the topic being discussed, followed by a practical activity, this time I decided to begin with a hands-on design activity. Informed by the findings from the previous chapter, I wanted to test the potential of using a non-linear fashion design process and begin the class with garments, rather than the usual process of working towards making a final garment. I wanted to see how students could bring their lived experiences and knowledge into the classroom and perhaps make connections with one another, as well as myself. In this way, the class was not just about exploring the potential of a sari, it was about exploring relationality in the fashion design process.

To begin the class, I opened a large bag that contained thirty of my mother's saris, which were neatly folded. The group gathered around, and I asked them to pick up and feel the saris and ask questions. Students enquired about how old the saris were, what material they were made from and from what area of the world they originated. I noticed how tactile the students were, curious to unfold the saris and cautiously requesting permission to open them out. As students continued to ask questions, such as how long the saris were, I noticed how one student of Indian heritage (Student 1) began to explain to others in the group what the *pallu* is: the loose end of a sari which is generally worn over the shoulders and is an integral design element of how the sari is draped in various ways according to taste and custom. As Student 1 continued speaking she spontaneously gave a demonstration of how a *pallu* might be worn and a sub-group of students formed around her as she interacted with the garment. Within this sub-group other students began to hold the saris against

themselves and mimic the actions of Student 1, using the *pallu* to cover their head and shoulders too.

Leaving the saris in a dishevelled heap on a table, I then asked the whole group a direct and closed question: 'Is the sari fashion?' I wanted to find out how students articulated the West/non-West fashion binary thinking in relation to their role as fashion designers (Niessen 2003; Jansen and Craik 2016). A silence followed. I purposefully acknowledged the silence and waited for students to respond, rather than facilitate a group discussion by using prompts and further questions. Most striking in the silence was that I sensed a feeling of unease with my questioning and discomfort with the lack of responses. As a tutor of Indian ethnicity, I knew that asking this question would further compound the complexities of how to answer such a question: what might be my response if a student were to say 'no'? Finally, the lengthy pause was interrupted when another student, of Indian heritage (Student 2), raised her hand and replied 'yes'; she added that she wore saris in India, and she thought saris were fashionable. However, she then added that several of her peer group in India think of the sari as something that their grandmother wore and wanted to dissociate themselves from that. Significantly, nobody else contributed to this discussion, so next I asked the class to raise their hand if they had ever worn a sari. Student 1 and Student 2 raised their hands, and two other South Asian students also replied that they had worn saris to religious festivals and weddings; one British white student said she had worn a sari to an Indian wedding.

This last admission was not a surprise to me: indeed, inter-racial marriage within the diasporic UK Indian community that I come from means that it is not uncommon to see white women wearing saris at community gatherings. Furthermore, the media often shows

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UK politicians and international dignitaries wearing saris on official occasions such as on a tour of India or when visiting a religious site or Indian community in the UK. However, as the student claimed, white women only tend to wear saris on occasions such as weddings or festive occasions, not in everyday settings.

Next, I showed the students a series of slides which presented various ways in which a sari can be worn:

- Photographs showing saris worn by my mother in the UK, 1970 (see figure 4.2)

- Photograph showing my great grandmother wearing a sari in India during the 1960s (see figure 4.3)

- Images of regional variations in India, such as the sari worn with pleats towards the back of the body, rather than the more common form of front pleating

- images of saris transformed into other garments such as the *sarini* (bikini sari), *sarong sari*, *gown sari* and *divided trouser sari*

- images of saris worn by *hijras*, the third sex community in India

- Non-passive bodies wearing saris, including protesters: this included images of the group Sari Squad*,* historical photographs of the Indian suffragette movement and photographs of women wearing saris at the Grunwick strike in 1976 (Anitha and Pearson 2018).

FIGURE 4. 2 MY MOTHER WEARING A SARI, 1970S, THE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW, LONDON

FIGURE 4. 3 MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WEARING A SARI (RIGHT), INDIA, 1960S AND MY GREAT GRANDFATHER IN A LUNGHI.

- instructional videos explaining different ways to put on a sari from 'The Sari Series'.[81]

I also offered personal anecdotes about the types of saris my mother wore, using the saris that I had brought along. In particular, I highlighted one that originates from the 1960s – it is a handmade batik sari adorned with bold orange, yellow and brown swirling abstract colours and could be described as looking 'psychedelic' (see Figure 4.4). Although my mother wore this sari through the 1960s and early 1970s and it can be seen in many family photographs from that time, I have never seen her wear this sari in my adult life. I asked her about this before I brought the saris along to the class and she told me that this sari's batik print felt 'modern' when she had bought it in the late 1960s, but today she felt this pattern looked 'old-fashioned'. She added that she felt that the pattern on the sari was for someone younger than her, and consequently she felt 'too old' to wear the sari these days.

Following this presentation and general discussion about my mother's saris, students were asked to self-organise into groups of three or four and work together to test out variations of how the sari could be worn using either their own bodies as models or working on each other's bodies. Inspired by some of the examples they had been shown, students began to co-create different possibilities from my mother's saris with a mixture of both evening and work saris made of a variety of materials, from silk and cotton to nylon and polyester. A further factor to consider here was both the timing of the class in the evening, which I observed appeared to lend an informality to the class, and the absence of technical fashion equipment such as mannequins, resulting in a lack of technical support for students

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[81] The Sari Series is part of *Border and Fall*, a digital publication presenting India's craft and fashion communities. The Sari Series is a project to document India's sari drape and presents over eighty short 'how to drape' films showing regional sari draping techniques. See: hhtps://thesariseries.com [Accessed 12.3.22]

during this experimentation. Further, no students had any of their sewing equipment with them, such as pins or measuring tapes, as the class was timetabled as a theory class with no practice element, although I had planned design activities each week.

I asked each group to use their mobile phones to photograph each of their draping experiments throughout this process. As they captured the variety of outcomes, I asked the students to upload the photographs onto Facebook (see Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6), directly onto a group page that had been set up by their course leader specifically for this student year group. The Facebook page was shown in real time on the projection screen in class so that all students could see what each group was posting, thus enabling transparency and collectivism around the design process within the classroom. I noticed that this process was enthusiastically welcomed because students laughed and watched the screen with interest as they saw each other's magnified images appear on the projection screen. There was also concentrated interest in each other's experiments.

As students began to unfold my mother's saris and explore draping, pleating, tying, knotting and other forms of fabric manipulation around each other's bodies, the experiments of two groups stood out:

Group 1: The first group was noticeable because it was the only group disrupting gender binaries by using a male student as a model and tying the sari around his body; however, to put this in context, within the class of 47 students there were only four male students. I noticed that other male students in the class did not experiment with trying on the sari. This male student, in contrast, appeared extrovert and was comfortable getting
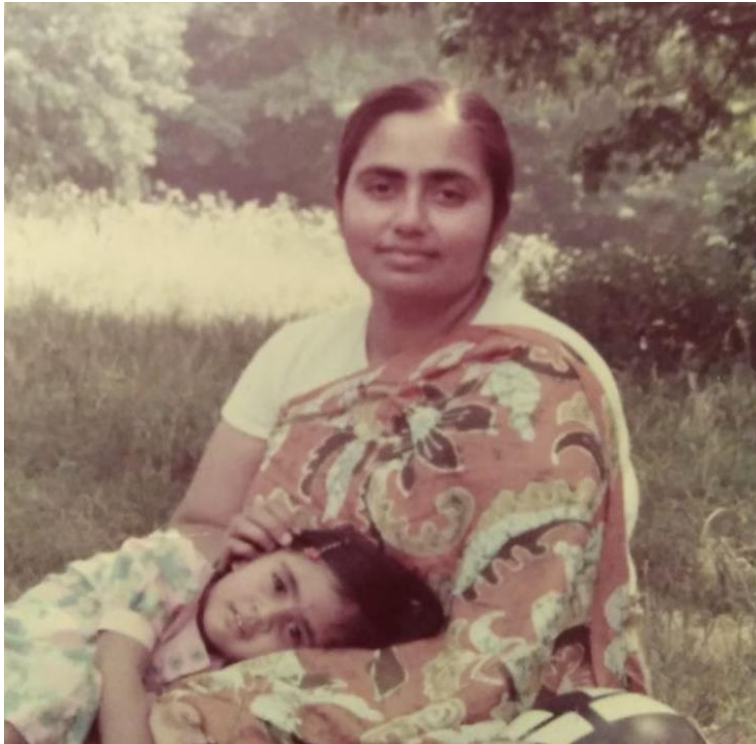
Figure 4. 4 My mother wearing her batik print sari, 1970s

Figure 4. 5 My mother's batik print sari re-worked by a student
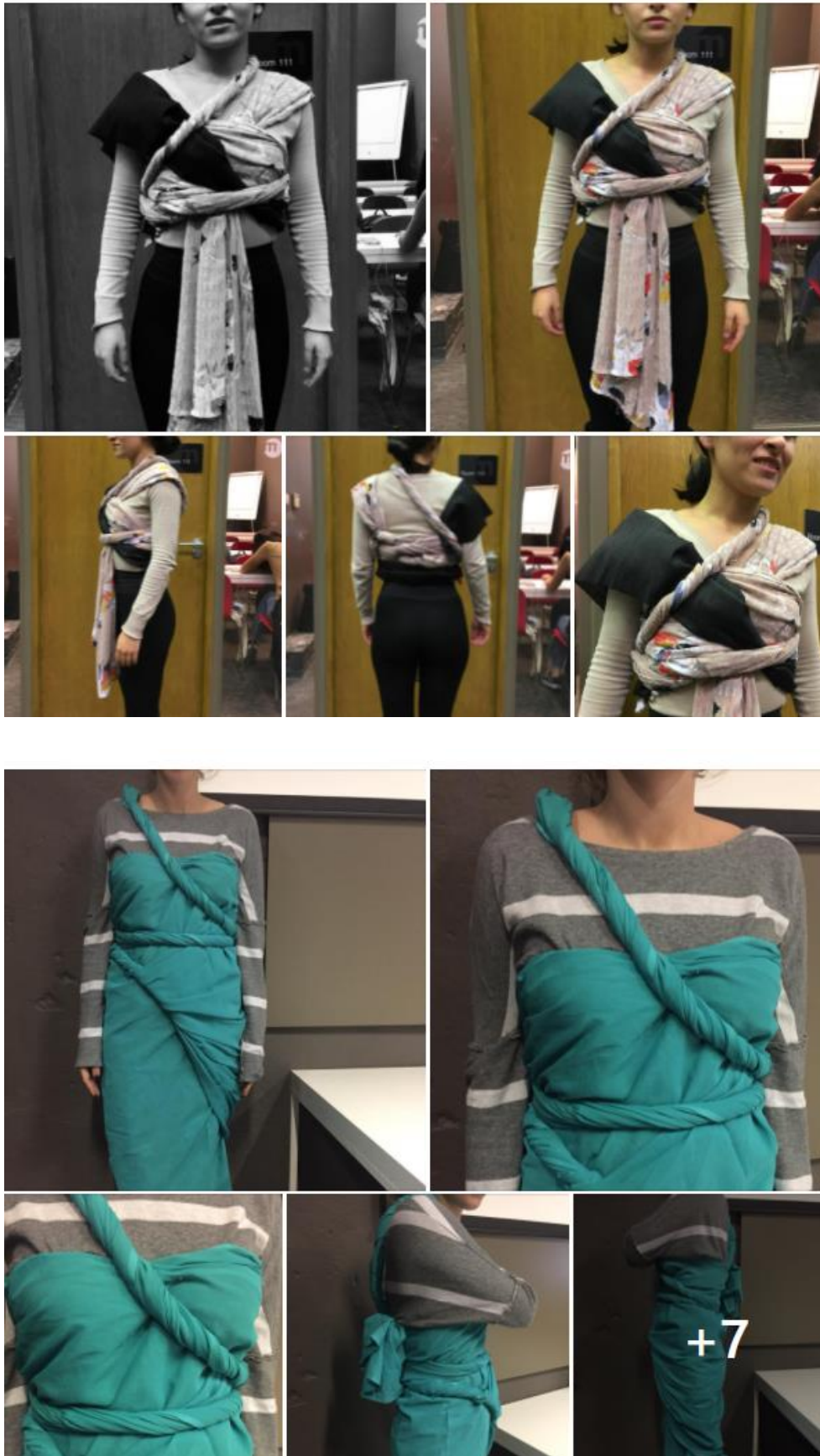
FIGURE 4. 6 STUDENTS' PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXPERIMENTING WITH SARIS, FACEBOOK

attention from four other female students who were enveloping him in several saris at once. While this male student appeared to enjoy the attention he received from being the model, there was a sense of amusement from all the members of the groups as this happened, and I wondered whether he was being made fun of during this exercise. In response to the group's increasing laughter, it seemed to me, he began to 'perform' each time his photograph was taken, playfully covering his face with the *pallu* in a dramatic way.

Group 2: A second group began to show a particularly sophisticated approach to the task by working with specific pleating techniques. This was developed by one member of the group who told me she was from Thailand. This student said that she was experienced in tying a *sarong* and she began to show the rest of the group multiple ways in which a sarong can be tied. As I came over to speak, the student included me in this tutorial and showed that there were many different ways of working a pleat into the fabric (see Figure 4.7). I was not aware of these methods, and, following this student's instructions, I tried them out with a sari on myself, while other members of this group watched us both and copied our experimentation.

A further two key issues were raised by several of the student groups as I walked around the room. The first issue centred on the relationship between the fashion technique of pattern cutting[82] used to construct garments and unstitched cloth in which garments are draped to construct garments: one group asked me how a paper pattern could be developed from this experimentation with unstitched cloth; and how such a design could be

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[82] Pattern cutting is the two-dimensional process of adapting body templates (blocks) in paper or card to make patterns for garment construction. The patterns are then traced onto fabric, cut out and assembled to make the three-dimensional garment.

FIGURE 4. 7 STUDENT EXPERIMENTING WITH THAI SARONG-INSPIRED DRAPE

further developed and reproduced for different sizes. This question made me realise how clearly this experimentation was a *reverse* of the conventional fashion ideation process in which paper patterns are developed *before* the garment is constructed in fabric. These questions appeared to stem from the students' main fashion practice classes, that require technical illustrations and a technical file of paper patterns for each final garment idea.

The second issue raised by the group of students was that they would never have thought about designing a sari at undergraduate fashion level because in terms of fashion technique the sari was just a length of fabric, despite our discussion about the sari being constituted of different elements, such as the *pallu*. This led to further questioning about

whether unstitched cloth could warrant the status of a fashion design because it produces a garment that lacks technical precision or mastery. This point was raised by every group I spoke to and highlighted the complexity of the original question, 'is the sari fashion'?

4.3.2. Sari Class Two

'Sari Class Two' was the second iteration of a class using my mother's saris as part of the fashion design process and, as previously mentioned in Sari Class One, I wanted to continue to test the potential of adopting Mohanty's 'Feminist Solidarity or Comparative Studies Model' (Mohanty 2003, p.242). This class was taught in the following term (Spring) to another cohort of students at the same HEI, College C, but to a larger group of 55 second-year undergraduate fashion design students – 53 female students and two male students. It was the second session in a series of four in a short project called 'Manifesto' (see Appendix A.4) that was co-written with another tutor – Tutor B - who specialises in textiles.

'Manifesto' explored ethical aspects of fashion design, including topics such as fashion and race, as well as issues of climate change. The aim of the project was for students to devise a personal manifesto outlining their approach to fashion design. I would start the lesson with a presentation on the weekly theme, which was followed by another presentation from Tutor B, focused on textile techniques that the tutor considered to be related to the theme. We planned these sessions by discussing our general theme but wrote our presentations separately. After our presentations we would give the students a practical design activity focused on experimenting with textiles to explore the issues raised. Sari Class Two had been planned primarily by me on the theme of Western/non-Western fashion binaries, and Tutor B let me lead on the ideas for this class. Since Sari Class One, I

had been thinking of ways to further incorporate my lived experiences more fully into my teaching and therefore wanted to continue with the approach and bring in some of my mother's saris, as they could be used in the textile experimentation element of the class. Tutor B was enthused by this idea, and in our planning, we decided that I would start the class with a presentation about Western/non-Western fashion binaries and then Tutor B would focus on ideas for textile experimentation that could be applied to the saris.

Spatial arrangement of furniture again played a pedagogical role in Sari Class Two; although this class took place in a different classroom, which was open plan and situated in the middle of the building in College C, like Sari Class One there was no access to technical equipment for fashion design, such as sewing machines or mannequins, here.

Sari Class Two began with my presentation, which focused on broad themes related to binary thinking in fashion around Western/non-Western fashion concepts (Niessen 2003; Jansen and Craik 2016). In this class I wanted to broaden out the theme around racial hierarchies in fashion knowledge. I introduced this topic by showing an image of two streets in London next to one another, Bond Street in central London and Ealing Road in Wembley, north-west London. Both streets are well known for fashion retail, but to very different communities. Ealing Road is situated in a densely populated South Asian area and has a large number of Indian retail stores, from the extremely cheap to luxury Indian couture selling for thousands of pounds. Indian designer fashion is familiar to Indians and increasingly to the global fashion market, and includes labels such as Manish Aurora and Ritu Kumar. Similarly, Bond Street has many fashion retail stores and, again, most of the retail products here are also worth thousands of pounds, although there are fewer stores selling affordable clothing: for example, the high-end department store Fenwicks, where

high street clothing is sold amongst more expensive products. The main difference between Bond Street and Ealing Road is that the global designer brands – labels such as Burberry and Chanel – on Bond Street are recognised worldwide especially by fashion students, whereas the Indian designer clothing available in Ealing Road are in generic fashion stores and the labels are mainly only known to those with an interest in Indian designer fashion or those with South Asian heritage.

Following the presentation, I posed a question to the group: 'Which street is more fashionable, and why?' (see Figure 4.8). The response to the question was initially muted; finally, a few students raised their hands to say that both streets were fashionable, and it was impossible to say one was superior to the other. I wondered to what extent my South Asian Indian heritage impacted on the discussion and made students uneasy for fear of saying the 'wrong' answer in front of me. However, when I asked who had been to Ealing Road, Wembley, none of the 53 students said they had. I then asked who had heard of Ealing Road, Wembley and none of the 53 students had. While this approach started an interesting debate about fashion knowledge, the specificity of my mother's saris began to get lost in the discussion as it moved on to the topic of luxury fashion and globalisation.

After my introduction and group discussion, Tutor B introduced the second presentation of the class, which focused on a variety of images connected to textile manipulation, such as draping, twisting, pleating and knotting, by Anglo-European textile artists and designers. Tutor B and I had discussed this section of the class and how it should relate to the saris, but I had not seen the images the tutor had inserted into the presentation. No images of saris were shown, or regional variations of how to pleat and fold a sari; instead, these images focused on experimentation by designers and artists based in

FIGURE 4. 8 WHICH STREET IS MORE 'FASHIONABLE'? POWERPOINT SLIDE, *SARI CLASS TWO.*

the Global North, and the different techniques they employed to manipulate fabrics, such as draping, pleating, knotting and folding.

Following the end of Tutor B's presentation, we moved onto the practical part of the class and I presented the same bag of 30 of my mother's saris to the students. Again, I had brought along a mixture of both evening and work saris made of a variety of materials, from silk and cotton to nylon and polyester. Students were asked to self-organise into groups of three or four and work together to test out variations on how the sari could be worn: to co-create different possibilities from my mother's saris. I emphasised the need for everyone to try on the saris and use their own or each other's bodies, because I wanted to prevent a disconnect between designing *for* the body with designing *on* the body, as discussed in Chapter 3.

A few of the groups began to come and pick up the saris and open them out, but there were only a few questions, which mostly related to their textile characteristics, such as the material they were made from, the decorative symbols, such as paisley, and the different types of embroidery applied. Although there were several students of Indian ethnicity in the group, I noticed that while they watched the proceedings none mentioned whether they had worn a sari before, although neither did I.

What happened next was important: the classroom was located close to another fashion classroom that contained several mannequins. Without asking for permission from me, although perhaps they had asked Tutor B, I noticed that three out of the eight groups had begun their experimentation using a standard-size female mannequin's body (see Figure 4.9). I immediately questioned the students' use of this approach and resource: responses included that it was easier, nobody wanted to have the sari worked onto their body in case a tailor's pin pricked them (students had their fashion sewing equipment with them for the textile manipulation part of the class) and sometimes there was no answer. All the mannequins used were female; the college did have a small number of male mannequins, but none were used by the students. Mannequins had not been explicitly banned in the lesson during the planning between the Tutor B and myself, so it was unclear whether Tutor B may have agreed to students' requests to use a mannequin, instead of working on each other's bodies. The large open-plan classroom made it difficult to track the students' movements easily.

Again, the class Facebook page was used to capture what each group were doing: I asked them to take photographs of their group experimentation and upload them onto the page (see Figure 4.9). I put Facebook up onto the class whiteboard so that it could be seen

FIGURE 4. 9 STUDENT EXPERIMENTATION WITH SARIS ON MANNEQUINS

FIGURE 4. 10 SARI RE-WORKED INTO EUROPEAN DRESS STYLE ON A MANNEQUIN

in real time by the whole group. This created a lot of energy in the room, acting as a digital

mode of making as some groups raced to upload images more quickly than others; some

groups tried to upload more photographs than other groups. Although no discussion about

quantity or quality had taken place either with myself or with Tutor B, I noticed the

competitiveness between different groups as more than a hundred photographs were

uploaded. While there was, no doubt, fruitful and productive experimentation with the

material qualities of the sari, I did not hear or notice anybody discussing ways to wear a sari

during their experimentation, and I wondered if this was linked to the decontextualised

textile technique images presented by Tutor B. Indeed, this technique-led approach to

experimentation

resulted in one group manipulating multiple saris and re-inserting them into a European dress style on a mannequin, so that there was no longer any resemblance whatsoever to a sari (see Figure 4.10) This made me wonder to what extent the presentation slides by *Tutor B* had been more influential than my discussion about West/non-West binaries in fashion.

4.3.3. Case Study One Reflections

This section discusses pedagogical ideas raised from these three points and how they answer my second research question of this thesis, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* Table 5.2 assesses the different pedagogical elements of each class to consider how these strategies contributed to building a more culturally diverse fashion design process by disrupting the logics of colonialism. In comparing the different classroom spaces, resources and teaching strategies to assess how these classes can respond to my second research question, it was clear that there are several similarities between the Sari Class One and the Sari Class Two – for example, the use of the same resource. However, significant differences included the more informal mode of pedagogical delivery and my role as an non-white educator in Sari Class Two.

Further analysis of these assessments led me to make three key reflections on how pedagogical strategies in Sari Class One and Sari Class Two were disrupting colonial and racist logics in the fashion design process through the implementation of:

- *Student-led pedagogy*

- *A non-linear design process*

- *Global South fashion resources*

What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support anti-racist forms of fashion design?		
	Sari Class One	*Sari Class Two*
Time of class	Early evening class enabled a more informal style of learning to take place.	Daytime class
Classroom space	Lecture style room in which furniture had been moved to enable an open space	Open plan space with some cutting tables, although they had been moved to the sides to open space in the middle of the space.
Educators	Non-white fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator
European-Anglo standard fashion resources	I used my Indian mother's clothing as a central resource	Textile resources included pins and various other forms of hand sewing equipment. Students had unauthorized access to college standard sized 8 female bodied mannequins.
Student-led modes of teaching and learning	Creation of dialogical space to enable students to discuss their connections to the resources resulting in my learning from a student.	Students spoke in groups and may have shared different knowledge; however, it seemed that the focus was on collaboration and team work.
Peer-to-peer learning	Students shared pre-existing knowledge about how to wear a sari or similar	Students worked collaboratively to create new forms of fabric manipulation
Aspects of non-formal learning	Using an auto-ethnographic approach resulted in students sharing their family stories with the group, enabling connections to be made.	Group work enabling a collective approach to designing in which different connections can be made alongside making and doing.
Global South/global North fashion design resources	Students were introduced to saris	Students were introduced to saris
Nondualist forms of fashion design	Menswear and womenswear binary was disrupted by using rectilinear forms of garment construction (Burnham 1997 [1973], p.4)	Menswear and womenswear binary was disrupted by using rectilinear forms of garment construction (Burnham 1997 [1973], p.4)
Relational modes of teaching and learning	Students shared pre-existing knowledge about how to wear a sari or similar	

TABLE 4. 1 WHAT APPROACHES COULD BE DEVISED TO SUPPORT AN ANTI-RACIST FASHION DESIGN PEDAGOGY?

My first observation from teaching both classes relates to the *pedagogical modes of delivery* (see Table 4.3) and especially how my *authority as a fashion design educator was de-centered* in Sari Class One in two significant ways. First, because some students shared their knowledge about saris with both me and other students in the class, my role as an educator leading the class was momentarily reversed, enabling me to learn from the student who demonstrated draping techniques used in Thailand that I knew nothing about. This unexpected example of *student-led pedagogy* produced a meaningful connection between me and the student and temporarily there was no division or hierarchy between educator and student; if someone had entered the room at that moment it would both have been unclear who was the student and who was the tutor. This student-led pedagogical approach was again mirrored when a student of Indian heritage displayed the purpose of the *pallu* on a sari to the group, demonstrating the value of *peer-to-peer learning* to create relational connections and intersections.

The second way in which I felt that my authority as a fashion design educator was de-centred related to how, prior to this class, my teaching skills and expertise were usually rooted in the use of European-Anglo standard resources and epistemologies. My concern was that using vernacular forms of fashion from the Global South – in other words, using non-valorised examples of fashion knowledge - as *the* key fashion resource might elicit a negative response from the students and undermine students' perception of my fashion expertise. This uncertainty about my capability as an educator led to my planned question about whether the students did or did not see the sari as a form of fashion and the need to explicitly address this question.

It was clear, however, that some aspects that resulted in the de-centring of my authority came from *accidental forms of pedagogy*, and I reflected on how different the

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Student-led pedagogies

	Sari Class One	Sari Class Two
My authority as fashion design educator is de-centred	Student-led learning with some sharing their knowledge of saris with myself and the rest of the group, an example of *accidental forms of pedagogy*	
Student-led teaching	Anti-hierarchical forms of pedagogy	
Peer-to-peer learning	Non-white Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator

TABLE 4. 2 STUDENT-LED PEDAGOGIES

Non-Linear Design Process

	Sari Class One	Sari Class Two
Garment-led teaching	Material-led learning with some sharing their knowledge of saris with myself and the rest of the group	Technique-driven learning with students collaborating on experimenting with the sari fabric.
No pattern cutting or technical files	None were used as this class focused on a more open approach using photography to document, rather than working from blocks.	Open-plan space with some cutting tables, although they had been moved to the sides to open space in the middle of the space.
Non-fantasy fashion	Non-white Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator
Embodied design process	Students tried on my mother's saris, handling the fabric and trying it out against each other.	While some students did work using each other's bodies by experimenting with textiles, others used a college mannequin.
Co-creation	Non-white Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator

TABLE 4. 3 NON-LINEAR DESIGN PROCESS

Global South Fashion Knowledge

	Sari Class One	Sari Class Two
Vernacular Knowledge	Creating a counter-hegemonic fashion discourse validating non-expert forms of knowledge-making.	
Essentialist identity politics		
Valorisation of Non-White Fashion design educator	A centring of my personal fashion experiences in the classroom dominated the class content.	Although my personal fashion experiences were centred, another tutor's ideas were also included, resulting in several co-competing fashion approaches.

TABLE 4. 4 GLOBAL SOUTH FASHION KNOWLEDGE

class might have been if neither of the students of Thai and Indian heritage had attended the class, and what other unexpected outcomes might occur in further iterations of the class. This made me question the potential for anti-racist forms of fashion design pedagogy and how to recognise good practice, given the important role that unplanned and accidental forms of pedagogy played here.

In contrast, in Sari Class Two I was unaware of any students discussing any personal views or pre-existing knowledge they might have of saris with either me or the class. Perhaps this could have been because during Sari Class Two I had not situated my mother's saris by sharing my family history, although it may have been because the sari is related to the Global South and disconnected from the majority of the students' fashion knowledge base. I considered how else I could have exposed the colonial logics of design without focusing on a specific global geography. Consequently, though students in Sari Class Two were aware that the saris were my mother's, my lack of narration about their contexts prevented conversations around historical and comparative thinking taking place, rendering my mother's saris lifeless. Instead, in Sari Class Two the student experimentation was led by a dualist narrative in fashion design based on Western/non-Western fashions and body dichotomy that singularised gender.

My second observation relates to the *non-linear design process* I employed in both classes, which replaced the dominant ideation process in which fashion students are encouraged to generate a high number of fashion concepts before producing a final design collection that usually consists of three outfits. Instead, here I inverted the fashion design process so that the class instead began with a set of final finished garments – the saris – presenting a garment-led design process. This did, however, also raise difficult questions

about the assessment and how students would be able to create a paper pattern from the draping and pleating experimentation. One effect of the exclusion of paper pattern cutting techniques here was that it also appeared to slow down the fashion design process, subverting the speeded-up capitalist modes of fashion design praxis (Hoskins 2014). By discussing the embodied practice of my mother wearing the sari, affect and emotion took on a more central role in the fashion design process (Sampson 2020); no longer was the user an absent or anonymous standard-size body. By presenting a 'real' user in the form of my mother, Sari Class One centred on the human in the fashion design process, encouraging a 'non-fantasy' approach to fashion design (McRobbie 1998). However, the opposite took place in Sari Class Two, as most students used the saris to experiment on standard-size class mannequins.

The role of technology was important in creating digital modes of making in the *non-linear design process* as students uploaded their sari experimentation ideas onto Facebook in real time, projected onto a screen in class, enabling all the students to see what each other was doing, making the ideation process more inclusive. Reflecting on the private and individual nature of the sketchbooks (Chapter 3), in contrast this approach was more visible to others and enabled students to share their experiments collectively and learn with and from one another, rather than against one another. While it was clear that competition still happened between the different groups, it was a result of group keenness rather than individual competitiveness.

The third point that I reflected on was how using the saris opened up space for *Global South fashion knowledge* to take on a more central role in the fashion classroom in two significant ways. First, in terms of creating a counter-hegemonic fashion discourse, this

approach enabled an alternative fashion episteme to emerge from my experiences. As a woman of colour. In the case of the sari, my Indian ethnicity and experiences gave context to Indian fashions, embodied by images of my mother and material evidence of her pre-colonial garments. This led to discussion of the role of unstitched cloth in fashion and even how saris could be used to create a more sustainable and zero-waste fashion design process (Siegle 2011; Fletcher 2013; Rissanen amd McQuillan 2016)[83]. While such discussions of zero waste discussions in fashion generally focus on technique-driven solutions, here, by using a material-led fashion process (Niessen 2003) with unstitched cloth, a space was opened for experimentation with pre-existing vernacular forms of fashion from the Global South.

The second significant way that centring *Global South fashion knowledge* had an impact was that by validating Global South fashion knowledge in a Eurocentric fashion design education space, my role as a non-white fashion design educator was valorised. Instead of keeping a part of myself marginalised from hegemonic fashion discourses and disconnected from fashion pedagogy, here space was given to *my* fashion experiences rooted in my South Asian Indian ethnicity and heritage from the Global south.

This approach, embedding Global South fashion knowledge, did, however, enable those students who had prior knowledge of the sari to take a more central role in the class, which perhaps made most students feel excluded. After the class I considered how this singular focus on my situated histories might also reinforce and maintain categories of identity. Such an approach could therefore produce problematic identity-driven and essentialist narratives (Nash 2011; Puwar 2003).

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[83] See the work of zero waste fashion designer Holly McQuillan, online:
https://hollymcquillan.com/category/sustainable-design-practice/zero-waste/ [Accessed 6.1.22]

Next Steps

Following these two pedagogical interventions I recognised the value of incorporating situated, embodied and relational fashion knowledge into the fashion design process to create the conditions for non-dualist and non-heteronormative design ideas (Willis 2006; Canli 2017; Martins 2019). Yet, I also continued to be frustrated in the physical space of the fashion design classroom and by the role of universalist fashion design resources – namely the mannequin – and its all-pervading role in fashion design ideation and education. Despite my introduction of an ontology-oriented approach to the fashion design process, and my attempt to exclude a resource steeped in heteronormative standardised dualist concepts (the mannequin), students continued to return to this resource during the fashion design process. How could I expose the problematic role of the mannequin in fashion design education?

Furthermore, I questioned whether my pedagogical approach of using my race and gender to open up debates on a Global South-led fashion narrative might in fact deepen categories of identity and fix them (Brown 2003; Nash 2020); could Sari Class One and Sari Class Two further entrench essentialist identity politics in relation to Indian fashion in fashion design education? For example, how might it be possible for this pedagogical approach to be replicated in a setting with a white fashion design educator? My material-led approach could, therefore, give rise to essentialist notions of cultural identity if it were to be undertaken without stressing the importance of historical and social contexts: however, without me, how could this be done? Mohanty raises such concerns and warns that the decontextualisation of identity politics in education through notions of individualisation de-politicises pedagogy. This approach can then result in tokenistic pedagogy around pluralism and diversity (Mohanty 2003). This point is especially salient here in fashion design contexts

in which identity is often appropriated as a source of design inspiration, rather than

respected as a source of knowledge (Jansen and Craik 2016; Green and Kaiser 2017).

Recognising the contradictory nature of my pedagogical approach, I next identified

alternative ideas that set out to practice a politics of difference based on heterogenous

ideas of identity as a means to challenge essential and fixed ideas of cultural difference.

How might fashion design pedagogies practise a more complex understanding of

difference? Returning to the field of feminist literature by Black women and women of

colour provided me with examples of praxis-oriented work towards feminist and anti-racist

thinking based on love, affect, and social change (Lorde 1984; hooks 2000; Puwar 2003;

Ahmed 2003; Nash 2020). In this writing I saw examples of the practice of Black feminist

love-politics through the transformational nature of 'love-politics as both a practice of the

self and a 'nonidentitarian strategy for constructing political communities' (Nash 2020, p.1).

In the context of praxis, Black feminist love-politics has been shown to be rooted in

strategies of survival,[84] providing examples of strategies and methods relevant to pedagogy

based on incorporating multiple perspectives and views with a focus on multiple ways of

doing and understanding.

An important example of Black feminist love-politics can be seen in the influential 'Killjoy

Survival Kit', a ten-point list outlined by feminist author Sara Ahmed in her important and

inspiring book *Living a Feminist Life* (Ahmed 2017). Ahmed's 'Killjoy Survival Kit' presents

various ideas, but in the context of the mannequin I was drawn to Item 10 in Ahmed's list,

which describes the importance of bodies: 'Bodies speak to us. Your body might tell you it is

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[84] See Audre Lorde. (2002 [1978]) 'A Litany for Survival'. In *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

not coping with what you are asking; and you need to listen. You need to listen to your body. If it screams, stop. If it moans, slow down. Listen'. (Ahmed 2017, p. 247)

How could I re-orient fashion design pedagogy towards listening to what bodies do and mean, to counter the universalist values embedded in the mannequin? This was my starting point for the following section, which describes the next iteration of this research phase and presents a case study of a class I taught that drew inspiration from feminist and social activist bell hooks' seminal book *All about Love* (hooks 2000).

4.4. Background to Case Study Two: Using bell hooks' concept of 'love'

This next class I taught took place in the same physical space as Sari Class Two but with a different cohort of undergraduate fashion design students as a stand-alone optional class at end of the academic year. The Head of Fashion wanted the course curriculum to include some additional experimentation and asked me and Tutor B to devise a workshop. Following our previous pedagogical approach, I devised the content and we decided that Tutor B would lead on textile instruction for the practice-based element. The class lasted three hours, and 34 second-year fashion design undergraduate students attended, in contrast to Sari Class One and Sari Class Two, which were for third-year students (30 students were female, four were male). I noted that attendance was low for this class, as the full year's cohort consisted of fifty-eight students.

The aim of this class was to initiate a fashion design process centred around lived experiences to generate intersectional forms of fashion designing, working directly onto the body or a mannequin. Following Sari Class One and Sari Class Two I recognised the difficulty

of any attempt to banish the mannequin as a resource entirely in this space, given that

mannequins were scattered throughout the building at College C – and further, the

mannequin has a central role within fashion courses at HEIs. Instead, the aim here was to

enable students to recognise how heteronormative universalist standard thinking around

the body dominates the fashion design process, from the light-coloured white skin

characteristics of the mannequin, which reinforce racial hierarchy and white supremacy, to

the way mannequins are always based on male/female binary able-bodied forms. I wanted

the students to re-centre relationality in the fashion design process and explore ways to

contribute to new forms of fashion design praxis; and to know whether such an approach

could create a counter-colonial fashion design process.

Taking inspiration from Black feminist love-politics and its emphasis on using love as

a strategy for transformation, I used as a starting-point the book *All About Love* (hooks

2000) in which Black feminist author bell hooks engages with the myriad meanings of love in

contemporary cultures. Significantly, I saw a parallel between the way the

decontextualised/contextualised model of fashion identified in Chapter 3 generated a

fashion design process disconnected from socio-cultural contexts and hooks' argument that

patriarchal fantasies continue to dominate society, resulting in lovelessness. Does the

prevailing fashion design process lack love? Hooks' call for 'the practice of love in everyday

life' (hooks, 2000, p. xxix) as a challenge to address society's lack of love helped me to

formulate the next question: whether using this approach in the design process could create

alternative and more equitable ways of fashion design.

Hooks' call for a re-definition of love advocates for it to be seen as a profound

emotion, deeply rooted in both politics and society and consisting of 'care, commitment,

trust, responsibility, respect and knowledge', suggesting that love has both agency and an active role to play (hooks, 2000, p.94). Therefore, understanding the full dimensions of a love-politics challenges the popular perception in society that associates love with notions of romance, heterosexuality and passivity, with a focus on individualism. A narrow understanding of love therefore prevents people from fully realising their full potential and how to form bonds of solidarity with one another: this would enable love to be an agent for social justice with the aim of ending 'dominance and oppression' in society (hooks, 2000, p. 76). I therefore saw the potential in using hooks' concept of love as a way to challenge inequalities in the fashion design process to produce hope.

4.4.1. All About Love Class

The class began with a presentation in which I first asked students to think about five people they loved. I next introduced hooks' concept of 'love' (hooks 2000) and asked students to think about love in the broadest sense and beyond narrow hetero-normative concepts, instead considering family members, such as parents and siblings, extended community members such as neighbours or teachers, friends as well as lovers. Before asking them to share who they had chosen, I next showed an image showing five people I loved, using a selection of personal photographs of my family and friends (see figure 4.11); most significantly for me I chose to include a photograph of myself dressed in hijab, something I had never done before in a fashion education context because it was a part of my religious identity that I usually keep private from students and colleagues.

Crucially, these images showed a range of bodies dressed in various forms of fashion, some for different types of occasion, and in my descriptions I paid close attention to their

From left to right: my great grandparents, 1970; my mother and myself 1990s, my friend's baby

Five people I love

FIGURE 4. 11 A POWERPOINT SLIDE USED IN 'ALL ABOUT LOVE' CLASS

social and historical contexts. As my family originates from South Asian Indian diasporas in the Global South, the photographs included examples of non-European dress forms: me wearing my full black *hijab* on a religious occasion; my plus-size mother wearing her workwear, a patterned polyester sari; my elderly great grandfather at home in a lunghi; and my brother on a religious pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, wearing two pieces of white towelling cloth, the ihram. I also included photographs of friends, including a pregnant friend in maternity wear, my friend's baby in a babygrow and my son and daughter in dungarees. I pointed out details on the garments to give the specific historical, social and cultural contexts, stressing how such styles are in constant flux. Therefore, I was showing a selection of photographs that capture living, breathing, diverse bodies: older people, children, babies, Muslim women, plus-sized women and non-Western men, which captured

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a wide range of fashion, including 'genderless' fashion and religious fashion; and, furthermore, that do not subscribe to Western heteronormative ideas of fashion culture. My hope was that this display of cultural difference would help to raise wider pedagogical questions about what is, and is not, a fashionable body.

Next, I returned to my question to students to choose five people that they love. I asked them to look at their list and then asked if they had ever designed clothes for these people as part of their undergraduate fashion education. One student raised their hand and said that she had designed garments for her sister; however, this had been outside college and had not been part of her undergraduate fashion design education. None of the remaining group of 46 students were able to say that they had designed garments for friends or family – or even for themselves – as part of their undergraduate fashion design education. These questions then opened up a space for a wider discussion about what types of bodies they do, or don't, design for as part of their undergraduate fashion education and what the distinction might be between fashion designing at university and fashion designing outside university. Several students pointed out that, to date, their fashion classes had solely focused on designing and illustrating for standard-size female or male bodies, although they had participated in a one-off project that aimed to design for a disabled body. Overall, most of the class said that generally they were designing for a male or a female standard-size body; two students said they had considered designing a genderless collection and one mentioned a plus-size collection. In this discussion I noted that nobody mentioned that they had designed or even considered designing for children or babies, the elderly, pregnant bodies or clothing associated with religious beliefs.

The second part of the class then required students to manipulate a variety of textiles to design a garment or fashion concept for one of their friends or family members they had chosen for their list by working on a body or a mannequin and adapting its physique to move beyond a standard human form, and Tutor B joined me for this part of the session. Students were asked to self-organise into small groups of three or four to encourage dialogue about different types of bodies and facilitate an engaged pedagogical process (Mohanty 2003). This emphasis on collaboration was therefore a deliberate strategy to open up a space for knowledge exchange to expand their thoughts on the diverse types of bodies they had selected for their lists. Six groups were formed.

Tutor B had brought along several bags containing various textiles, including lots of wadding. Students were allowed to help themselves to these materials and responded to this task in a variety of ways. Two groups began to work using each other's bodies by applying textiles, while the others worked on mannequins. As I walked around the room, I reminded students that the focus for this fashion design ideation process was on living, breathing bodies, in the hope that this would encourage students to discuss alternative fashion design criteria, such as comfort, durability and respect. Each of the six groups presented a final outcome which they were asked to present with a 'name' at the end of the class (see Table 4.4).

However, I was surprised that during the design process several groups developed themes that steered away from their chosen bodies and began to elaborate into fantasy narratives that were unrelated to the aims of the class: this was despite several prompts from me about returning to thinking about someone they knew. Part of the reason for this may have been related to how Tutor B was directing the textile experimentation, however:

'All About Love' Class Group work		
Group	*Project Name*	**Design process**
Group 1	*No Boundaries*	Group 1 took pieces of wadding and shaped them into large organic shapes, then placed these forms around the body, settling on the torso. Students said they began with the idea that they knew bodies that were plus-size and wanted to distort the human form in unexpected ways and see the relationship between fabric and form.
Group 2	*For my Cousin*	Group 2 were encouraged by one member who spoke emotionally about a cousin disabled through illness and living with an asymmetric body. To explore asymmetric fashion design, this group worked on each other's bodies using wadding. Their outcome showed how they manipulated one group member's body to exaggerate features before draping with textiles as an alternative to fitted and tightly sewn garments.
Group 3	*Time Worn Body*	Group 3 started their experimentation after discussing the changes of skin that occur during life: for example, one student discussed how their mother's body had changed after childbirth and another mentioned how their grandmother's skin had begun to sag under multiple layers of skin. Using wadding, this group then begin to change the mannequin's standard features and add layers to represent folds of additional skin. They then used textiles to cover this 'time-worn body' and develop a new fashion garment using draping techniques.

Group 4	*The Cloakroom*	Group 4 chose to work on a mannequin and used one group member's story about an incident they had when their clothing did not fit into a cloakroom at a nightclub, as an example of bodies that do not subscribe to heteronormative norms. Although I asked them to focus on someone they knew, as a group they continued to build a story around this incident, and I observed their exchanges which referred to how the mannequin and the materials 'looked'. I also noticed how Tutor B encouraged the students to work with the materials focusing on texture, colour and shape
Group 5	*Hanger man*	Group 5 were interested in how clothes becomes attached to different bodies and explored the connection between body and clothes. Although it was difficult for them to explain their concept, it seemed that the group were agreed on this process and despite my reminders to consider a specific body they were determined to explore how clothing works around bodies. The outcome consisted of multiple layers built around a mannequin. Again, texture and colour were important in this experimentation.
Group 6	*Nudity*	Group 6 discussed the different people that they 'loved' and then questioned the purpose of clothes altogether and used diaphanous materials to obliquely cover and reveal the mannequin form. The group were less interested in the colour and textures of the materials or the overall 'look, instead focusing on transparency.

TABLE 4. 5 GROUP WORK IN THE 'ALL ABOUT LOVE' CLASS

my sense was that some students were overly focused on the aesthetic of the activity and building ideas around how the outcome would 'look'. This made me question the difficulty for undergraduate students in diverging from the element of fantasy that is dominant in fashion and the extent to which fantasy-led fashion aesthetics have already been established by the time a student is midway through a fashion degree.

It should be noted that this stand-alone class was not part of any formal assessment at College C; however, this class was discussed as part of my end of year review with the Head of Education the following month. When we discussed the *All about Love* Class, the Head explained that although the student feedback for this project had been positive, the Head of the Fashion programme had felt that the final outcomes looked unfinished and so were difficult to evaluate. The Head of Education asked about the fashion skills that had been taught in this class. In response, I explained the aim of the class was to question universalist thinking in the fashion design process, but the Head of Education replied that there needed to be more emphasis on skills, and because of this made the decision to not run this project again.

The next section sets out to reflect on the pedagogical strategies employed in this class and the potential of Black and women of colour feminist love-politics (hooks 2000; Nash 2011) to act as a pedagogical tool to both disrupt binary oppositional thinking and provide a more ontology-oriented approach to teaching fashion design.

4.4.2. Case Study: Two Reflections

This section returns to my second research question of this thesis: *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* (see Table 4.2). I discuss how the *All About Love* Class presented an alternative embodied fashion design process which resulted in students re-thinking the heteronormative norms embedded in the tools of the fashion design process. Furthermore, this alternative fashion design process prompted questions about the key role that aesthetics play in fashion design. My clearest observation from teaching the *All About Love* Class was how a living and breathing human form appeared to be detached from the fashion design process. I noticed how students appeared to be unaware of the role that ordinary human forms play in the fashion design process, and in my questioning of who the students were designing for there appeared to be a disconnect between the outcome and the user. This contrasts with other design disciplines, such as product design, in which the user plays a central role in the design process.

Although I had expected students to work by experimenting on their own and each other's bodies, several students continued to use the standard figure of the mannequin. I was surprised at how two groups of students – Group 3 and Group 6 – worked collaboratively to adapt the form of the mannequin, re-imagining the mannequin form altogether. Focusing on the physical consequences of ageing on human bodies, Group 3 attempted to change the mannequin into an aged body by manipulating wadding into folds of flesh on the mannequin torso. In this way it seemed that Group 3 were beginning to consider creative ways to challenge hegemonies of body normativity in fashion, as well as bringing life to the flat and hard mannequin body. However, I noted that despite this

Adapting the 'body'/mannequin

Experimentation	*Project name*	Pedagogical context
Asymmetry	Group 2	Daytime class
Aging	Group 1: Ageing	Open-plan space with some cutting tables, although they had been moved to the sides to open up space in the middle of the area.
Folds of skin	Group 1: For my Cousin	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator
Taking the body away	Group 3: Nudity	This group focused on the idea about absent bodies and the role of accepting all bodies in society by removing 'shame'
New shapes	Non-White Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator
Folds of skin	Non-White Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator
Collaboration	Non-White Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator
Collaboration	Non-White Fashion design educator	Team teaching: One white textile educator, one non-white fashion design educator

TABLE 4. 6 ADAPTING RESOURCES IN THE DESIGN PROCESS

approach, the experimentation of Group 3 and Group 6 was restricted to pre-existing binary norms around gender and size so that intersectional conversations around the hierarchies of gender and body ableism were absent.

In contrast, working by using each other's bodies provided a more inclusive approach to fashion design, especially given the way those students who only undertook adaptations on the mannequin remained confined to hierarchies of gender and body ableism, as seen in the work of Group 3. Furthermore, using a cardboard pattern cutting block becomes a redundant element of the fashion ideation process, and it was refreshing to see students move around the classroom instead, in fabric. Textiles can thus become a more central part of the design process and experimental draping and pleating methods can

provide an alternative to tightly structured and sewn garments which dominate many forms of fantasy fashion narratives in Western garment construction.

4.5. Findings

While these classes were planned to intervene in and decolonise fashion design pedagogies, the findings also suggest the important role that unplanned non-curricular elements – resources, pedagogical approaches, and educators - also play in education to both support *and* disrupt colonial logics and racist thinking in fashion design education. This section raises important points about the role played by temporal and spatial pedagogical technologies, heteronormative fashion resources, and the student-educator power dynamics at play in the classroom. The first two findings suggest ways in which fashion norms are maintained through colonialist thinking and the further two findings point to ways in which pedagogical interventions might contribute to more inclusive forms of fashion design education.

Some fashion norms are maintained through a reliance on fashion resources

Exploring the potential of fashion experimentation with no pre-existing fashion resources in Sari Class One, I had planned that all the fashion design resources for Sari Class Two and the *All About Love* Class would be removed. However, I was surprised by the extent to which many students continued to rely upon the existing studio mannequins, despite my requests to work with their own bodies; students located mannequins around the building and used them, suggesting the important role that fashion design resources can play in maintaining heteronormative fashion values and validating the fashion outcomes.

Significantly, students' continued reliance on mannequins suggests how embedded such resources are in the fashion design process *and* how they are seen as neutral elements

in fashion education, akin to a prop. Perhaps some students owned mannequins or had worked on them in previous classes and courses: this illustrates the way in which the mannequin is already a well-established, ubiquitous fashion design resource for students in undergraduate fashion design education.

Aesthetic experimentation can reinforce cultural decontextualisation

In both the Sari Class Two and the *All About Love* Class students competed against one another to generate a large number of creative outcomes, encouraged by both me and Tutor B. It was clear that this approach was recognised as successful because this resulted in a greater number of image uploads on Facebook, leading to greater validation from the class groups. However, this drive for experimentation appeared to be led by aesthetic variations, and with increasing uploads I could see a greater distance created between the original curriculum context of manipulating a sari or fabrics *with* a body. Tutor B's presentation in Sari Class Two showed a variety of techniques for manipulating fabrics but with no references to where such techniques originated: it gave students the creative licence to pick and explore a variety of knotting, twisting and draping fabric manipulations *upon* the sari. Similarly, in the *All About Love* Class, three groups began with an idea about a specific person to design for but then built an extended narrative focusing on texture, colour and shape manipulations, prioritising the 'look'.

Informal learning encourages more student-to-student and student-to-educator connections

In contrast to the daytime scheduling of Sari Class Two and the *All About Love* Class, Sari Class One took place during the early evening, which appeared to make a difference to how

learning took place; although this was an unplanned element of my lesson, it resulted in an informal learning approach which impacted on group learning dynamics. For example, as fewer classes were taking place in the college, the building was much quieter; and due to the evening scheduling food also played a role in class, as some students brought snacks into the classroom, and requested to leave the class to purchase food, disrupting the usual conventional class schedule (usually food is prohibited in class). This also impacted on class discussion, as students began to discuss evening meal plans during their fashion experimentation, adding non-fashion elements directly into the fashion design process, changing the class atmosphere; perhaps this was why two students in Sari Class One felt confident to lead the experimentation and show me different pleating techniques. It also seemed significant that the removal of furniture resulted in some students sitting on the floor and again, enabling more student interaction and informal exchanges amongst the group.

Informal learning also appeared to be facilitated by the open-plan classroom space I had created, freeing up physical space for experimentation and enabling living and breathing bodies to move around the class. Without furniture and technical equipment limiting movement in the classroom space, there was sufficient room for body experimentation, which enabled living and breathing bodies to take up space.

An educator/student and student/student collaborative process of fashion design

A key moment in Sari Class 1 was when a student taught me different ways to pleat fabric, drawing on their Thai heritage, resulting in an unexpected reversal of the traditional educator/student role and educator-led pedagogy and leading to student/student co-

learning. This situation arose because I was unaware of the traditions of pleated garment styles in Thailand and so had to follow the student's directions while other members of this group watched us both and took their lead from the student's experimentation. This example showed the potential for a more fruitful collaborative process beyond curricular limitations: one in which student's experiences are more productively incorporated into classroom learning. Although this serendipitous example only occurred because the student had insight into a culture in which unstitched cloth was used for garments, perhaps more students in the group had fashion knowledges about unstitched cloth beyond an Indian or Thai context, too, but did not choose to share it with the rest of the group.

However, my working with, and from, a student perspective did indicate ways in which such a pedagogical approach could offer both fashion design students *and* fashion design educators a new space to collaboratively explore their different cultures and histories and forge a co-design fashion process.

4.6. Discussion

I return now to my second research question, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* and begin by considering to what extent was Mohanty's 'Feminist Solidarity or Comparative Studies Model' (Mohanty 2003, p. 242) that was used in all three classes - Sari Class One, Sari Class Two and *All About Love* Class – able to generate an alternative decolonial pedagogical methodology? Mohanty's model was adopted as an attempt to generate a non-colonial, relational and situated process of *fashionalization* (Niessen 2003, p. 244) to replace the dominant *decontextualisation/recontextualisation* design process identified in Chapter 3.

Re-embodying the Fashion Design Process

Mohanty's curricular strategy advocates a starting point for building a decolonial pedagogy that's asks: 'How do students learn about the inequities among women and men around the world? (Mohanty 2003, p. 243). Further, the strategy emphasises the need to recognise that the local and global 'exist simultaneously and constitute each other' (Mohanty 2003., p. 242). As someone of South Asian Indian diasporic heritage who was struggling to find ways to bring marginalised fashions into the classroom, this question focused my thinking on which human bodies were currently excluded from the fashion design process and how to build connections in the classroom to focus on *anti-fashion* (Polhemus and Proctor 1978) and pluralise the fashion design process.

The findings suggest that to decolonise fashion pedagogy requires both a reconceptualisation of both educational content *and* methods of teaching fashion pedagogy. This involved me in re-thinking how the fashion design ideation process functions to elevate the status of design – and designers – and disconnects fashion from its users and wider processes of manufacturing and production. It also required me to devise strategies that brought my role as educator closer to students to help students situate fashion within wider political, ethical, historical and cultural knowledges and practices.

Instead of excluding my South Asian Indian diasporic heritage and seeing it as 'Other', I now recognised my lived experiences as a form of *anti-fashion* (Polhemus and Proctor 1978) and therefore something to draw on to counter colonial logics in fashion design education. Using Mohanty's strategy to frame all three of my classes helped me to identify the concepts, tools and resources that were absent from the fashion design classroom, such as Global South fashions and non-normative bodies. This helped me locate

new, non-dualist pedagogical fashion resources – for example, my mother's saris – which were rooted in my identity, providing a meaningful 'epistemic resource' (Moya 2006, p.98). However, I noted that this resource excluded students' experiences, and to bring in a stronger student voice, in the *All About Love* Class I asked students to draw on their personal relationships as part of the design process.

However, in Sari Class Two, the absence of my personal anecdotes and photographs of Indian fashion allowed white normativity to dominate and I resumed my default position of excluding myself from fashion design education; in contrast, my attempts to include myself more proved pivotal in fostering of connections in the *All About Love* Class. However, the linear and hierarchical pedagogical modes of teaching and learning in the *All About Love* Class resulted in the predominance of fantasy-led abstract fashions, as students continued to rely on an aesthetics-led fashion design process. The dominant pedagogical process, one in which an educator typically leads the class with their subject expertise, further embeds notions of traditional hierarchical power relations. Despite implementing spatial and temporal changes to the classroom, such as moving furniture, or the evening scheduling of Sari Class One, the educator-led pedagogical process appeared to foster competition amongst the students (Mensitieri 2020).

Rooting the fashion design process in experience draws on autoethnographic approaches that place this experience at their centre: however, this approach can also produce essentialist notions of cultural identity if it is undertaken without stressing the importance of historical and social contexts. For example, without unpacking and situating the sari in Sari Class Two*,* the students creatively appropriated the sari to generate new, hybrid forms of fashion that arguably reinforced cultural decontextualisation. This point is

further elaborated on by Mohanty, who warns that the decontextualisation of identity politics in education through notions of individualisation de-politicises pedagogy. This approach can then result in tokenistic pedagogies based on pluralism and diversity (Mohanty 2003). This point is especially salient here in a fashion design context, where identity is regularly appropriated as a source of design inspiration, rather than as a source of knowledge (Green and Kaiser 2017).

For this reason, I focused the session on saris that had been worn by my mother and thus were connected to a person; some of the saris were faded or torn, and for each I explained where and when they had been worn, whether for special occasions or for everyday wear. Yet, by centring my experiences, I wondered to what extent I was excluding students' experiences? In Sari Class One, an unplanned demonstration by a Thai student enabled meaningful learning to take place, both between me and the Thai student and between the students as a group, but what if this student had not been in the class? Significantly, I did not already know these methods and learnt *from* the student's instructions, inverting the conventional pedagogical process. This made me question more deeply the relationship between the class content and a more democratic, non-hierarchical pedagogical process.

These PedAR experiments revealed the various ways in which Eurocentric epistemologies underpin fashion design resources and teaching and learning methods. The three classes demonstrated the value of re-orienting educational experiences towards historical and biographical specificities and points of connection; however, there was room to further develop the context of disconnection between communities to explore its potential for struggle and resistance against forms of cultural hierarchies.

While I recognised the ubiquity of white normativity in fashion design education, I questioned whether students also did, and the need for students to identify ways in which fashion is not neutral in order to counter cultural and racial bias in the fashion design process. I began to reflect on the need for a further cycle of pedagogical intervention that would directly address this concern and explicitly expose the absences in the Eurocentric fashion canon as a crucial step to take *before* reconceptualising fashion.

4.7. Conclusion and next steps

This chapter presented three examples of PedAR interventions in fashion design education. These three classes were rooted in decolonial and Black and women of colour feminist theory with the aim of exploring an alternative decolonial feminist fashion design process shaped through situated biographies and their relationship with fashion design. While the aim was to expose the ways in which the fashion canon is built on hierarchies of knowledge in which Eurocentric white normative universalist values are embedded, the emphasis was on the creative process and a relational fashion design process.

The findings suggested that to devise an anti-racist fashion design curriculum built around an anti-fashion design process, the educational resources in the fashion design process must first be reconceptualised. However, it was evident that the ability of the reconceptualisation of educational resources to make coloniality fully *visible* (Reyes 2019) was limited, due to the interconnectedness of patriarchy, racism and colonialism that underscore design (Schultz et al. 2018). The findings suggested a need for further experimentation with the pedagogical methods of teaching to deconstruct the Eurocentric fashion design canon itself.

Therefore, reflecting further on the three PedAR experiments left me wondering if this thesis would benefit from a further cycle of PedAR to explicitly make visible the colonial fashion design epistemologies embedded in fashion resources. The key areas of focus to be further explored might be the *spatial* contexts of where fashion is taught, the role of nonformal teaching and learning and the temporal aspects of learning, which all relate to historical, linear and hierarchical contexts.

To expand physical and curricular boundaries, the next chapter explores a case study that took place in an art and design HEI library, that aimed to show students more explicitly what is missing from the Eurocentric fashion design canon and a second, unplanned, case study of a reading group. Both studies attempt to explore the value of difference to build alternative knowledges that have been excluded and erased from pedagogies (Icaza and Vazquez 2018).

CHAPTER 5: Reimagining Institutional Spaces: Towards a Decolonial Feminist Design Pedagogy

This final empirical chapter presents Phase 3 of my research and consists of two case studies. Building on the findings and reflections from the Chapter 4, this chapter brings together two case studies to help answer the second research question of this thesis:

Research Question Two: *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?*

Phase 1: Researching racism in fashion design education (Chapter 3)

Phase 2: Devising anti-racist fashion design pedagogies (Chapter 4)

Phase 3: Towards a Decolonial Feminist Design Pedagogy (Chapter 5)
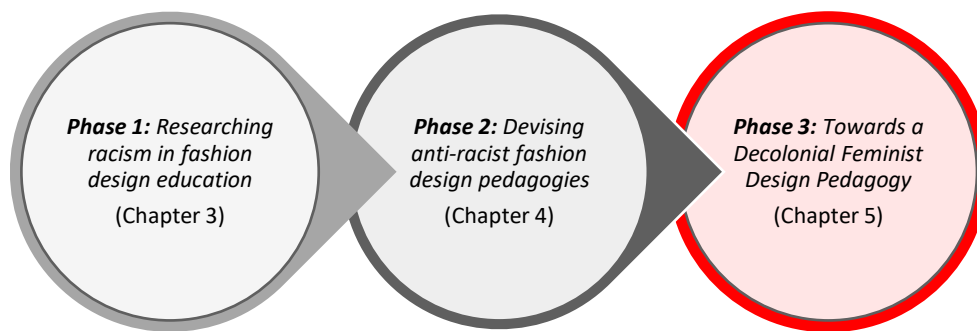
5.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 revealed the limitations of devising a culturally inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy built solely around traditional curriculum content in classroom settings. The findings pointed to the need to recognise the role of the institution in the creation of a more dialogical and relational fashion design process. In response, I undertook a final PedAR cycle, consisting of two case studies, a Library Class and a Reading Group. Both apply a decolonial feminist understanding of embodied pedagogy (Mohanty 2003; Patel 2016; Motta 2017; Icaza and de Jong 2019; Verges 2021), as discussed in Chapter 2, into a fashion design and a multidisciplinary art and design pedagogical context. The case studies aim to reimagine a more equitable relationship between educator and students and between educators, students, and the institution where fashion education is taught. The chapter concludes by discussing the spatial and relational interconnectedness of the pedagogical strategies presented in the case studies and the extent to which they could constitute a decolonial feminist pedagogy in fashion design education.

Phase 3 Research (Chapter 5)

Case Study One: a fashion class in an art and design HEI library with students with the aim of exposing colonialist thinking in fashion design epistemologies and devising a non-Eurocentric fashion design process.

Case Study Two: Womxn/Non-Binary People of Colour Reading Group, a multidisciplinary art and design group meeting outside of the classroom, but within an HEI space, without a formal curriculum.

FIGURE 5. 1 PHASE 3 RESEARCH, CASE STUDY ONE AND CASE STUDY TWO

5.1.1. The Library Class: Aims and Methods

Phase 3 research forms the final cycle of the overarching PedAR methodology (see Noffke et al. 2013; McAteer 2013; Efron and Ravid 2019) used in this thesis, as discussed in Chapter 2, to ask what constitutes fashion epistemology: what fashion knowledge is -and is not – taught? This aim of the first case study presented in this chapter, the Library Class, was twofold: first, to examine how colonialist logic underpins fashion design epistemology; and second, to disrupt and devise alternative heterogeneous fashion design histories.

5.1.2. Background to the Library Class

I offered the Library Class to a group of 12 postgraduate design history students who had elected to take an optional eight-class course called 'Decolonising Fashion History', organised and written by another tutor. I was invited to devise the content for, and teach, the fourth class in this course, which I had titled 'Re-imagining fashion herstories/histories: "Decolonising" Fashion History in (College D) Library' (see Appendix C.1). The idea for this class emerged during my first term of work at College D when I noticed a display shelf near the entrance to College D's library that presented a selection of books related to feminism, from feminist art practices to monographs on female artists; in the centre of the shelf were key works by the feminist art historian Linda Nochlin, who authored the seminal essay 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' (Nochlin 1971); this was, I could see, paying homage to Nochlin following the recent announcement of her death.

This display caught my imagination, as it foregrounded feminist forms of knowledge production in a space that was outside of the formal curriculum and the classroom space, yet situated within the institution. Furthermore, in centring feminist art practices and

knowledge, this display was an example of a counter-patriarchal art and design strategy. Therefore, here in College D's library an alternative feminist art epistemology had been imagined, albeit temporarily. This approach highlighted to me the significant role that systems of classification play in the organisation and creation of fashion knowledge through a hierarchical system that controls what books are placed on the library shelves and where; and the role that an alternative space in HEIs, such as the library, might have in dismantling, reversing and re-imagining knowledge away from Eurocentric fashion design epistemology.

This alternative approach to knowledge production raised two key questions in relation to my second research question,

- What fashion narratives currently prevail in the fashion design section in the library of College D?
- How might an alternative pedagogical approach be used in the library to expose colonialist thinking and devise 'pluriversal' fashion design narratives?

Before I taught this class, I wanted first to identify how colonialist thinking about fashion operated in library systems, so I undertook an analysis of the collection relating to the study of fashion in College D's library. The aim was to explore the seemingly neutral ways that library classification systems sort and shelve fashion books to identify them, and to further consider how hegemonic fashion knowledge was being constructed through colonialist logic in this context.

FIGURE 5. 2 FASHION DESIGN SECTION, COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

FIGURE 5. 3 FASHION DESIGN SECTION, COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

FIGURE 5. 4 FASHION DESIGN SECTION, COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

FIGURE 5. 5 FASHION DESIGN SECTION, COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

To analyse the collection, I took photographs of all 24 shelves of books on fashion in the library at College D in December 2018, during the afternoon, to gain an idea of how the books might be assembled during a typical day at college after students had also been moving the books around. My observations led me to identify four dominant fashion narratives underpinned by colonial logic and binary oppositional thinking (see Figures 5.2-5.5).

My first observation related to the way gender was represented in terms of a male/female binary opposition on the shelves. A few books included the word 'menswear' or 'womenswear' in their title, and these were focused on technical fashion content, such as tailoring or draping. Many other books were monographs about individual fashion designers which tended to be large format and full of glossy images. I was struck by the way most books about individual designers focused on the contribution of male fashion designers to fashion history; for example, the collection included monographs on Yves Saint Laurent, Emilio Pucci, Ralph Rucci, Tommy Roberts, Ralph Lauren, Martin Margiela and Charles James (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4).

While the collection on individual designers did also include some monographs on female fashion designers, including Zandra Rhodes, Elsa Schiaparelli and Coco Chanel, my second observation showed that books on male fashion designers dominated, resulting in less physical shelf-space dedicated to fashion produced by female fashion designers in comparison to those books on male fashion designers. Significantly, the contents of the books indicated that the majority were focused on the representation of female fashion, suggesting that dominant fashion knowledge is constructed around female bodies primarily from a male perspective.

This dominant gender binary narrative I had identified in Library D also increased my awareness of the way in which fashion knowledge shapes and directs fashion education. This made me reflect on my role as a fashion design educator and the myriad ways in which I also reproduce the dominant gender binary in fashion, such as through reading lists. To counter this, I tried to identify books on the shelves that were specifically about fashion from LGBTQ+ communities: however, there were no books that explicitly referred to this topic in their title when I searched; but without consulting the library catalogue I could not be certain of this. While I already knew that many of the individual fashion designer monographs were about LGBTQ+ designers, this information did not appear to be celebrated in book titles, and instead perhaps appearing inside the books as part of biographical information. Thus, on this day, the impression given to me – and, arguably, given to students looking through the shelves – by the fashion section of College D's Library was that the resources there appeared to be principally based around hetero-patriarchal concepts and narratives in fashion, built on simplistic conceptions of a male/female binary.

Delving deeper, my third observation related to how race and ethnicity were presented within the gender binary. Here I observed how the fashion narratives and knowledge constructed about female fashion designers were primarily focused on designers originating from Anglo-American and Western European contexts, mainly France, Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom. The exceptions were mostly books on individual Japanese designers such Rei Kawakubo and Issey Miyake, who had gained global renown as fashion designers (see Slade 2009). It seemed to me that the dominant fashion narratives of female designers were of those whose cultural perspectives were Anglo-American and Western European, seemingly privileging and normalising narratives of whiteness (DiAngelo 2018) in a fashion context.

Next, I spent time looking more carefully at how race was presented more generally in the books and found one shelf dedicated to books about fashion from geographical regions; physically this shelf was much closer to the ground and therefore more difficult to see. On this shelf, books presenting fashion in different geographical locations – for example, Russia, Asia and China, were grouped together (see Figure 5.6). College D's library catalogue reveals that the books on this shelf are classified as 'Global Fashion'; however, these books only relate to non-European and non-Anglo-American fashion.

Looking more holistically across the entire section of books on fashion, a fourth observation emerged, based on the Othering of non-Western fashion cultures, especially as these books about non-European fashion were grouped on just two shelves. The impression here seemed to homogenise non-European cultures, creating a further binary between 'the West and Rest' of the world (Hall 2007). The lack of books on non-Western fashion surprised me, as many books have been published on fashion design outside a European context[85].

These brief reflections on the fashion books contained on the shelves in the fashion section in College D cannot claim to be conclusive; however, this series of reflections helped me recognise the assembling of four key narratives in fashion design: (1) A celebration of individual designers built on a male/female gender binary; (2) A dominant fashion history about male fashion designers from Western Europe; (3) A global fashion history built on a West/rest narrative that homogenises difference; and, (4) the Othering of non-European and non-Anglo-American fashion cultures that reinforces Orientalist narratives. These narrow fashion narratives therefore appeared to misrepresent the history of fashion and

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[85] For an alternative selection of non-Western fashion books see, for example, Critical Craft Forum, *Unsettling coloniality: a critical and radical fiber/textile bibliography:* www.criticalcraftforum.com/unsettling-coloniality-a-critical-and-radical-fibertextile-bibliography/ [Accessed 24.12.21]

contribute to the ongoing 'epistemicide' (de Sousa Santos 2017) in fashion that continues to repress, discourage, and erase marginalised fashion knowledges.

These initial observations and reflections about the relationship between coloniality and knowledge production helped me reflect on the potential of a class with the aim of exposing how the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) operates though the epistemological structures of fashion design history. Reflecting on the discussion from Chapter 4, I recognised that to help students to re-think fashion in a global context (Cheang et al 2021), students first had to recognise the embedding of colonialist logic in fashion.

This thinking led me to devise a pedagogical strategy based on a two-step activity: to first expose the colonialist logic that underpins fashion history; and second, following the findings from Chapter 4, to 're-embody' fashion design epistemologies with diverse, inclusive, and plural fashion narratives. I considered how this two-stage approach to diversifying fashion history first required the highlighting of the empty spaces and pages of fashion history to identify who was absent and who was misrepresented.

5.1.3. *Library Class*

I approached Librarian A with an idea for a collaborative class in which we would co-teach students to explore the ethical issues in cataloguing and classification in the fashion section in College D's library. The aim would be to help students identify and expose the absences in fashion epistemologies. Librarian A responded enthusiastically, and we set up a meeting to discuss further in which Librarian A confided that in 16 years of working at College D this was the first time a lecturer had approached them to co- teach. Librarian A said they felt

overlooked by most academic staff; indeed, they said that they felt that most of the community of academic librarians experienced the perception of their role by the wider group of academic staff increasingly as merely offering technical support, resulting in a deprofessionalisation of librarianship: locating information rather than providing subject-specialist expertise. This hierarchisation of institutional knowledge appeared to me another way in which colonial logic orders epistemologies, so I was excited to bring Librarian A's extensive experience to the class.

In our conversations, Librarian A informed me about contemporary debates in the field of critical librarianship around the role cataloguing systems play in reinforcing narrow views of race, gender, sexuality and class (Sandford 2001; Bourg 2014; de Jesus 2014; Adler 2017; Crilly 2019); and the significant role that the field of commercial publishing plays in shaping epistemologies by determining what is and what is not published. Librarian A emphasised how these decisions were made prior to the complex task of cataloguing items so that in many ways what the publisher chose to publish informed the composition of the library catalogue. In Librarian A's view, the domination of publishing houses based in the Global North resulted in an underrepresentation of authors and themes from a Global South context, reinforcing epistemological hierarchies and fields of research.[86]

These conversations helped me to further consider how the hierarchical systems of knowledge I had seen constructed on the library shelves were not only restricted to the content of the books – these hierarchies also translated to the pedagogical process: the central role of the fashion design classroom as a bounded site of creative design in contrast

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[86] See for example #Merky Books, set up by the rap musician Stormzy to challenge the lack of diversity in publishing. https://www.penguin.co.uk/company/publishers/cornerstone/merky-books [Accessed 6.5.21]

to a library as a repository of fashion knowledge prompted additional questions around the hierarchical divisions between both theory and practice and educator and technician.

To explore these questions through another cycle of PedAR, I devised two activities for the fashion history library class, with three aims: to expose the 'sociology of absences' (de Sousa Santos 2014) in fashion epistemologies; to disrupt binary constructions of fashion that maintain a colonialist logic in fashion, as discussed in Chapter 1; and to explore a more collaborative student-educator pedagogical process. To address these aims I devised a worksheet (see Appendix A.7) for students to complete, based on undertaking an audit of a sample of fashion books in the library of College D to analyse how design knowledge is constructed and presented in the library.

The class, attended by twelve students, took place in an open space reserved for reading periodicals in the art and design library in College D, and consisted of two activities:

- Activity One began with a presentation by Librarian A, who introduced the historical context of library classification systems; this was followed by a content analysis of a sample of books taken from the library that was undertaken in pairs

- Activity Two was an exercise in which students were offered back issues of *National Geographic* magazine to cut up and use for collage as a way of re-imagining and designing new book covers to illustrate untold fashion history narratives

The questions I devised for the worksheet for Activity One were inspired by a document published in the United States in 1973, '10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism', written by the US Council for Interracial Books for Children (CIBC 1979). This document urges librarians and educators to re-evaluate previously highly regarded, classic children's books in terms of the racist and sexist language, imagery and story content

they contain,[87] and provides guidelines for detecting racism and sexism in books (ibid. 1979). The guidelines recommend checking the book content by analysing storylines, heroes, relationships among people, adjectives, historical contexts, illustrations and book covers and, interestingly, to look for the copyright date, because the authors claimed that prior to 1973 non-sexist books were less likely to have been published.

I identified a similarity in the guidelines offered in this document with how I was attempting, through pedagogical practice, to expose colonialist logic in canonical fashion texts. Since talking to Librarian A, I had also been learning more about alternative approaches to constructing knowledge in libraries from marginalised communities, such as indigenous-led book classification systems[88], feminist libraries[89] and alternative conceptualisations of libraries, most notably the Black Feminist Mobile Library.[90] I devised a worksheet based on identifying different categories of information in the books that were scrutinised: the author's gender, their geographical location, the date the book was published, the subject content and illustrations, and, following my conversation with Librarian A, I now also included the book publisher's location.

However, I wondered how to ensure that students could both expose the absent fashion histories and reverse their epistemological bias. I knew that it was important for the class to explore practice-based ways of doing this, or there would be a risk of perpetuating theory-based decolonial design (Taboada et.al. 2020). Therefore, in Activity Two I drew on

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[87] The CIBC encouraged the publication of non-white authors through the *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* (1966–1989), which assessed racist and sexist content in children's literature and promoted African American, Hispanic, Native American, and disabled and gay authors. See: https://socialjusticebooks.org/council-on-interracial-books-for-children-cibc/ [Accessed 19.9.22]

[88] See *X̱wi7x̱wa* Library, the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada: https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/ [Accessed 20.6.21]

[89] For example, see The Feminist Library, London: https://feministlibrary.co.uk [Accessed 20.6.21]

[90] See Black Feminist Mind, https://blackfeministmind.wordpress.com/ [Accessed 11.2.20]

Sadiyah Hartman's 'critical fabulations' (Hartman 2019) methodology that uses a speculative fiction approach[91] to re-tell neglected and overlooked histories, with the aim of bringing theory and practice more closely together[92]. As part of my PedAr research design cycle, I also reflected on the dominant role of visual representation in the fashion design process, as discussed in Chapter 4. I questioned students' imagery, looking at how it was sourced, and where from, and questioned the creative technique of collage: how might students re-appropriate these resources and techniques of collage towards a re-conceptualized pluriversal fashion design process?

To do this, I turned to a publication that was at the time re-evaluating its racist history, *National Geographic* magazine,[93] (Goldberg 2018; Brady 2018) established in 1888. I had spent years collecting over a hundred issues of *National Geographic*. Indeed, these magazines have always played a significant role as a resource in fashion design: for example, fashion designer Alexander McQueen took lots of inspiration from the magazine and was said to be '" obsessed with National Geographic magazine. I mean, obsessed"' and his design studio was famously 'piled high with the distinctive yellow and green livery of the magazine' (Cartner-Morley 2015)[94]. I decided to cover old books with white paper and bring my *National Geographic* magazine collection for students to cut up and re-create new fictional book covers for as yet unwritten fashion histories.

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[91] See (Osiewickz 2017) 'Speculative fiction'. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, for a detailed history of speculative fiction methodologies from 1960s New Wave radical feminist authors to today.
[92] See Rosner,D. (2018) for how critical fabulations methodology has been applied in design.
[93] See the *National Geographic* Race issue, April 2018
[94] Sam Gainsbury, Alexander McQueen show producer quoted in (Cartner-Morley 20115)

5.1.4. Library Class: Activity One Results

The class lasted for three hours and began with Librarian A giving a half-hour introduction to contextualise the way in which libraries organise knowledge by using classification systems. Librarian A next explained that the most widely used system in libraries across the world is the Dewey Decimal Classification system (DDC),[95] and that prior to this date libraries would place books on shelves in the order that they were acquired: DDC introduced the concepts of relative location and relative index so that books could be grouped accorded to subject matter; a library will assign a classification number that explicitly locates a particular volume in a position relative to other books in the library, on the basis of its subject. The number makes it easy to find a book on a specific subject and to return it to its correct location on a shelf.

This information was a surprise to me, as prior to my conversations with Librarian A, I had had a limited understanding of the relationship between the Dewey system and the way that books are arranged on library shelves. Two students in the class had heard of DDC; however, for the majority this was new information. Librarian A then discussed the limitations of the Dewey system in terms of reflecting and representing knowledge in a decolonial way and the steps being taken by critical librarianship initiatives to address this. Librarian A also talked about the role of mainstream publishing in relation to academic libraries' difficulty in sourcing published material that is accurate and represents pluriversal voices to fill the gaps in key areas of knowledge provision in their collections. In response, there were several questions from students, primarily around what other systems existed

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[95] The Dewey Decimal System (DDC) is a classification system for organizing the contents of a library introduced by the American librarian and library reformer Melvil Dewey in 1876 in the US, that became the most widely used classification system in the world. For discussions about racism in the Dewey Decimal System see Adler (2017); Gooding Call (2021).

for cataloguing and classifying materials: Librarian A pointed out that while some other libraries did have their own cataloguing systems, most academic libraries tend to standardise their systems to DDC for students and researchers to be able to use a range of different libraries easily.

I then handed out the worksheets and asked students to work in pairs for one hour. The worksheet included instructions to carry out an audit of a sample of books on fashion in three steps: Step One was to collect ten books from the shelves in the fashion section in Library D, using either random, stratified, or systematic sampling methods (Rose 2016); and Step Two required students to work in pairs and undertake content analysis of this sample using categories that I had devised based on my findings, described earlier in this chapter. Step Three required students to identify whether there were any additional categories of information for content analysis that would help expose racist and sexist bias in books on fashion.

As they began to work with the books on the shelves, students began to raise additional questions about the way books had been classified, that I had not expected: Why there were no books about fashion in non-English languages? Why were all the publishers based in cities? Interestingly, delving deeper into the library, one student did in fact find a number of books in another section that were written in Mandarin, showing that although there were alternative non-European art and design narratives in the library, they were difficult to locate. Another student searched online for further information about the authors of their sample of books and noted how the majority were well educated, and this triggered a further set of questions about class and privilege in the construction of fashion knowledge. I noted that the original information categories in the devised worksheet were

useful in prompting further questions about how fashion knowledge is constructed and by whom.

During a short break I collated the results of the Step One analysis. I then shared the results with the students: overall, 40 books on fashion had been collected and analysed by the student group, and my analysis of this sample showed that:

- None were published in the Global South

- 10 per cent of the books were written before 1973, 90 per cent were written after 1973

- Most of the books were written by female authors

- Less than a quarter of the books were written by authors based in non-European or non-US contexts; most of the content of the books focused on fashion in Europe or America

- Most of the illustrations in the books portrayed women; these women were mostly portrayed in passive positions

We next discussed Step Two of the worksheet, in which students were asked to identify other strategies that could be used to challenge the perpetuation of racist and sexist fashion narratives in fashion. The suggestions that were made are as follows:

- More books by non-Western fashion writers

- More self-published material

- More books by authors under the age of 35/ older authors over 35

- Images of older people in books and on covers

- Gendered representation on book covers

- Books in languages other than English

- Books focusing on the Pacific Islands

Following the dissemination of the results with the group, we had a short discussion. Although there was significant anticipation for the results, several vocal students all agreed that the results were not a surprise. I tried to explain the results as if we were co-researchers and had collaboratively undertaken the audit of a sample of the 40 fashion books together. I sensed a feeling of community during this feedback process – that we were accomplices investigating racist and sexist bias in fashion documentation together.

During the group discussion, several students began to relate this exercise to their own identities: for example, one student from the Pacific Islands questioned the absence of fashion knowledge from this part of the world in the sample. This appeared to influence other students and led to a discussion about the lack of intersectional thinking in fashion and the absence of queer and disabled fashion content in the sample of books.

Several students began to reflect on bias more broadly and shared personal experiences of prejudice they had faced. One student who identified as a lesbian parent explained how they never saw their life reflected in books on fashion. Another student described how they had lived in Japan and seen at first hand the huge range of fashion books published in Japan in Japanese, but questioned their absence from the library at College D.

A few students remained quiet: I noticed they were white students and I tried to bring them into the class discussion by bringing in issues of Eurocentrism and universalism related to the DDC system. Given the short duration of the class, there was limited time for discussion; however, it appeared that students were making links between Activity One and their own identities.

5.1.5. Library Class: Activity Two Results

For Activity Two, students could work alone or in pairs and were invited to collage imagery from the *National Geographic* magazines onto books that had been covered with white paper to create speculative fashion history books. I briefly spoke about the re-evaluation of *National Geographic* magazine and its relationship with racism, and its role as a fashion resource. I spread out the magazines, scissors, glue sticks and books with white paper covers on tables, ready for the creation of new 'titles'. As students began to cut up the magazines and work, the space became messy; another librarian came up to me and objected to this activity and the noise it was creating, and especially the use of scissors in the periodicals section. I understood their perspective but reassured them that no students would cut up the library periodicals, and that they were cutting up my own magazines. This did not, however, lessen this librarian's concerns, although Librarian A told me to ignore their colleague, but also to try and speed up the class. It was clear that practical art and design activities did not happen inside the library of College D, although it is a prestigious art school.

Although none of the students were practising fashion designers, and were more used to writing than making, they seemed to enjoy the practical aspect very much because there was laughter and talking throughout the hour allocated for this part of the activity. I went around the space and spoke with the students. One group had identified that non-European fashions were represented in the sample as traditional and never perceived as a form of contemporary fashion, and as a result they titled their speculative fashion book 'Emerging Burmese Fashions', taken from an image of women in Burma in one of the issues of *National Geographic* (see Figure 5.9). However, this issue must have been published

before 1989; I informed these students that Burma was a colonial name given by the British in the mid-eighteenth century and the country had long since changed its name to Myanmar[96] (like many countries that became independent from their colonial rulers). These students were not aware of this, and we discussed the problematic role of National *Geographic* as a resource, with its colonialist captions; if I hadn't informed them of this context, they would not have known that they were reproducing a colonial name. They then crossed out 'Burmese' and inserted 'Myanmar' instead.

I noticed how the other students' attempts to create speculative fashion histories by re-appropriating *National Geographic* imagery also, in some cases, appeared to re-produce racist representations because the original images had been created with imagery that reproduced racist tropes. For example, 'The Age of Fashion – Fashion after 50', (see Figure 5.7) presented the original *National Geographic* photograph of two women of colour wearing thick gold neck-pieces, with the intention of focusing on their older age. However, the image also appeared to exoticise and 'Other' them, too, and needed a further step of deconstruction to re-present a more inclusive and intersectional fashion narrative.

We then spent the last half hour sharing the seven outcomes that students had produced (see Figures 5.6-5.11) with the following speculative fashion history book titles:

- 'Emerging Myanmar Fashions'

- 'Global Gender-Fluid Dress – pre c21'

- 'The Age of Fashion – Fashion after 50'

- 'Fashion written in Japanese'

- 'Fashion in Families'

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[96] The nation formerly known as Burma changed its name to Myanmar in 1989
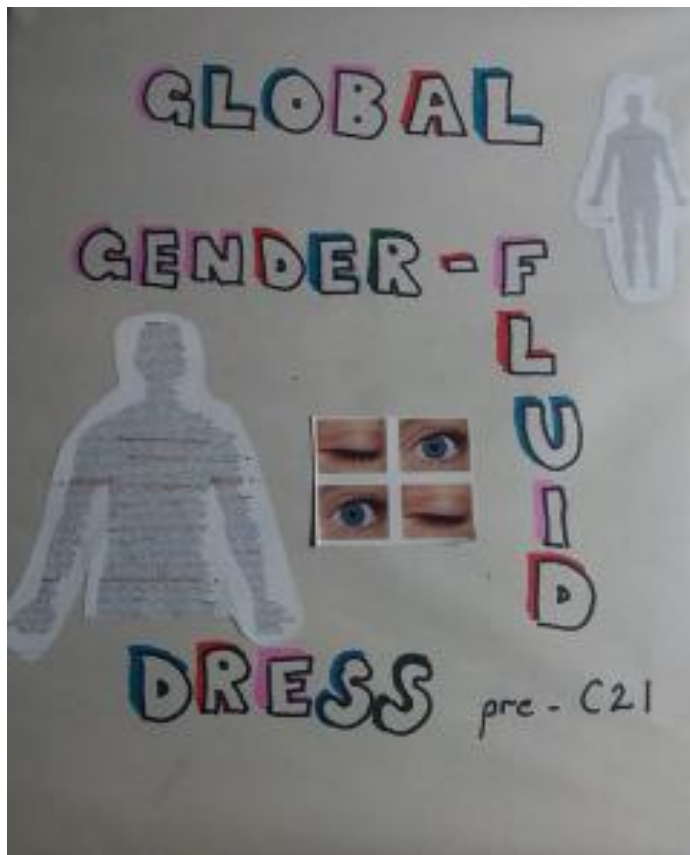
FIGURE 5. 6 'GLOBAL GENDER-FLUID DRESS – PRE C21', COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

FIGURE 5. 7 'THE AGE OF FASHION – FASHION AFTER 50', COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018
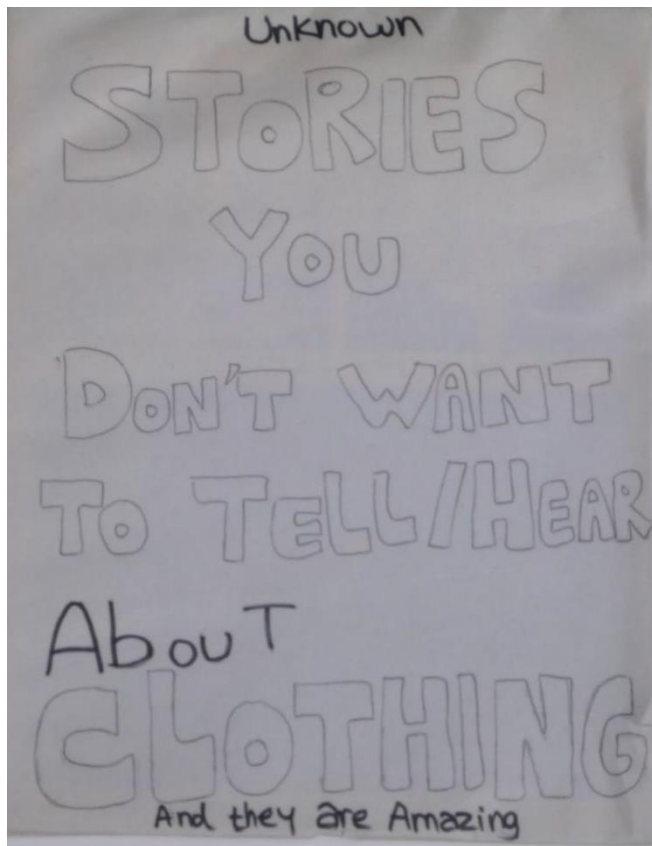
FIGURE 5. 8 'UNKNOWN STORIES YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL OR HEAR ABOUT CLOTHING AND THEY ARE AMAZING', COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018
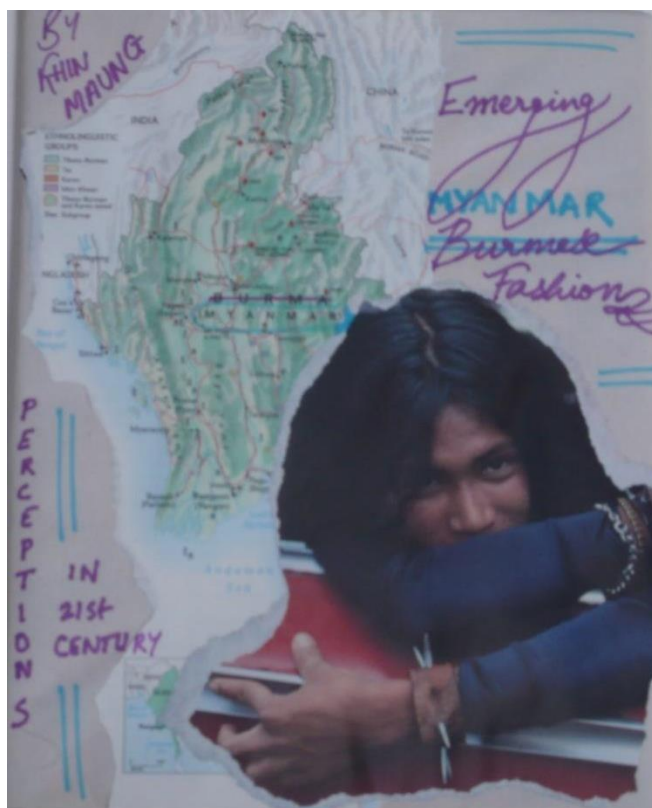
FIGURE 5. 9 'EMERGING MYANMAR FASHIONS', COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018
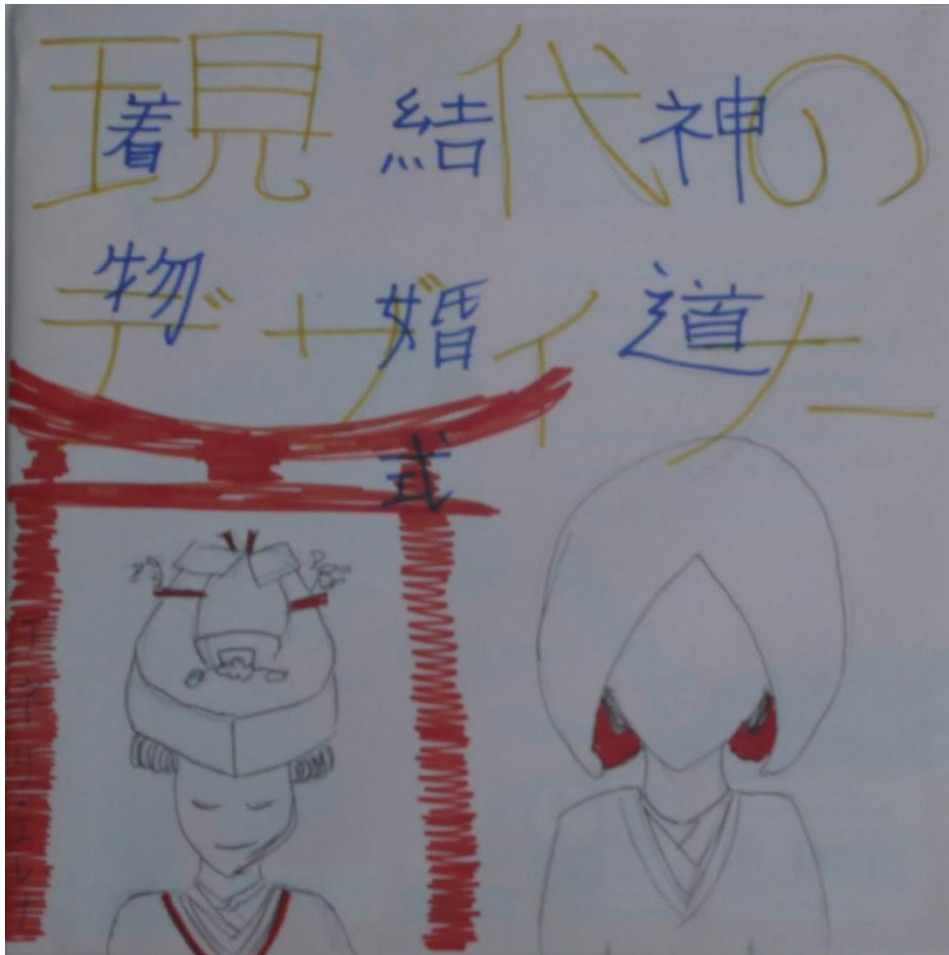
FIGURE 5. 10 FASHION HISTORY WRITTEN IN JAPANESE, COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

FIGURE 5. 11 'FASHION IN FAMILIES', COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018
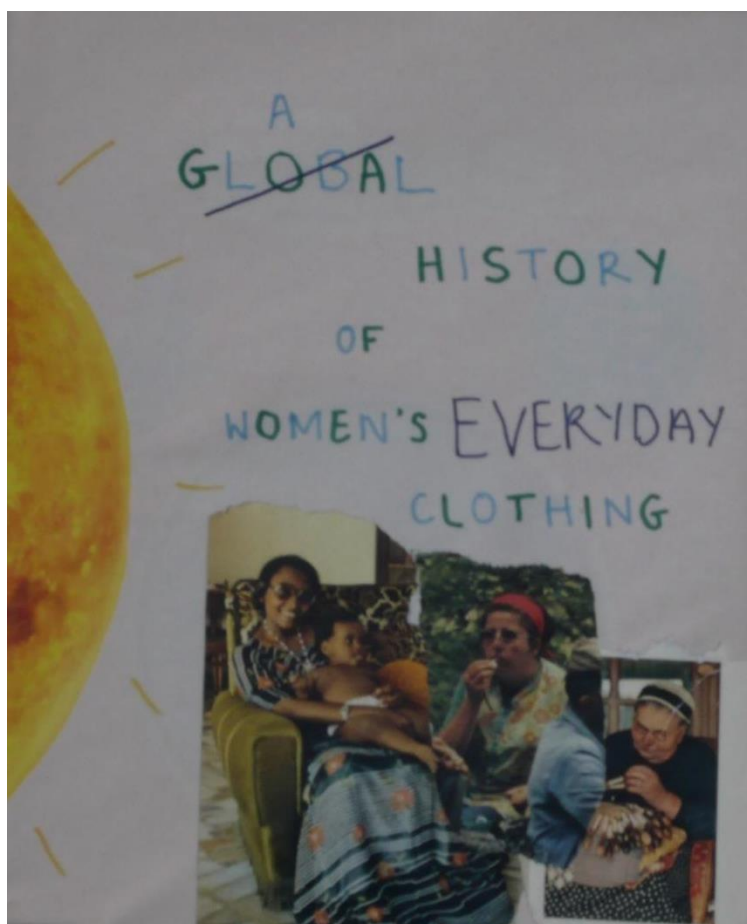
FIGURE 5. 12 'A HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EVERYDAY CLOTHING', COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018

FIGURE 5. 13 SPECULATIVE FASHION TITLES DISPLAY IN COLLEGE D LIBRARY, 2018 (DISPLAY NAME BLANKED TO ANONYMIZE COLLEGE D)

- 'Unknown Stories You Don't Want to tell or Hear About Clothing and They are Amazing'

- 'A History of Women's Everyday Clothing'

I noticed how several students used words such as 'expanded' and 'big' to explain their speculative fashions, suggesting that to move beyond Eurocentric fashion required the countering of universalist thinking in fashion. Several examples incorporated multiple positions, recognising the value of marginalised groups' perspectives: for example, 'Fashion in Families' (see Figure 5.11) showed a non-heteronormative family with different ethnicities and 'The Age of Fashion – Fashion after 50' (see Figure 5.7) presented older people from the Global South. To me this reflected how a speculative fashion methodology appeared to contribute to the creation of plural design practices (Escobar 2017; de la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Kothari et.al. 2019; Noel 2020).

While I observed these much broader concepts of fashions being discussed, it was interesting to note how the covers that received the most attention in the group discussion were those without images, in which felt tip pens had been used for text, such as 'Unknown Stories You Don't Want to tell or Hear About Clothing and They are Amazing'; it was not clear whether this was a consequence of their course of study, which was based on writing, so students may have lacked experience in creating visuals, or whether it was because of the reproduction of *National Geographic* magazines and using them in their original format.

As students presented their work, several discussed the practicalities of creating the covers: for example, they described whether they had torn images or cut them from the magazines, that the glue didn't work well, the scale of the books they were using and what

colour felt-tip pens had been used. I noted that this was an unusual discussion in a class focused on design history – this was the kind of conversation I would facilitate with fashion design practice students. Furthermore, there was little discussion of what visual narratives were being constructed – instead the discussion kept returning to the titles of the covers and their relationship with the Eurocentric fashion canon.

The books were then put on display in the library for a week. I tried to collect some feedback about the display from students: they all said they had seen the display and shared it with their peers, although the short timespan of the display meant that not everyone from their course was able to see the display.

5.1.6. Library Class: Reflections and Findings

This section discusses the results from the Library Class and the extent to which this case study responded to my second research question of this thesis, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support more culturally inclusive ways of designing for fashion design educators and students?* A significant aspect of answering this question can be attributed to the fact that the class took place in a library and not in a traditional lecture hall, design studio or classroom, although it remained within the formal space of an HEI. The effect of this space on the teaching was that due to the layout of the space I could no longer take up a prominent position at the head of the class and instead had to sit alongside students, which helped to challenge traditional asymmetric power relations between me and the students. Further, the chairs and tables were set out differently from the way they are in a classroom and it appeared to be a novelty for students to be learning here. As the class began, my role was taken by Librarian A, who many students knew through training

sessions but not in a teaching capacity. This meant that as we all sat down together for the beginning of the class, I sat as one of the students.

Another pedagogical method that I devised in the class was emphasising a more collaborative process between educator and student: the book audit in Activity One concluded with me sharing the results of investigating the Eurocentric bias of fashion history books together so that the hierarchies of educator/student were purposely blurred. This re-ordering of the traditional educator-led pedagogy opened the space for a co-research process between me *and* the students to investigate Eurocentric bias in fashion.

I did not anticipate how the library space would contribute to an informal pedagogical style in class: the library setting of the space was characterised by conventions such as maintaining quiet, resulting in whispering amongst the group, increasing intimacy, and at times humour, in the group. This overall impact created a more conversational atmosphere; however, it must be noted that the smaller size and the postgraduate level of study played a significant role in this, too. In comparison to undergraduate students, the average age of the cohort was older, and many had professional work experience and greater self-awareness.

Librarian A's introduction to the DDC system for the class was crucial in explaining the racist logic underpinning library classification and thereby gave a context to the class. Librarian A's introduction to the class was therefore central – and, devised in response to the two-step fashion design strategy of **'decontextualisation/recontextualisation'** identified in Chapter 3, appeared to erase research contexts and create a void to facilitate creative decontextualisation. Instead, here Eurocentric fashions were re-contextualised for students

as part of the wider discourses around colonialist thinking. This pedagogical method seemed to play an essential role in uncoupling the decontextualisation/recontextualisation tactic.

The use of *National Geographic* magazines as a fashion resource steeped in a racist history of Othering non-Europeans further contextualised how visual racist logic has underpinned various media. This process of re-conceptualising fashion through creating a speculative book cover appeared to be mostly based on disrupting binary concepts – for example, old/young (see Figure 5.7), heteronormative/LGBTQ+ (see Figure 5.6). Thus, the speculative and re-imagined fashion histories appeared to both expose the biases in fashion epistemologies and present alternative intersectional fashion that would normally be excluded from the Eurocentric fashion canon.

For students more used to textual analysis, using visual images in collage techniques synthesised theory and practice to bring about more liberatory forms of design. Although there was a tendency for students to engage more closely with book covers that focused on textual communication (see Figure 5.8), the hybrid approaches taken appeared to expand the potential of different modes of communication: several students drew on their personal experiences to create speculative fashion histories (See Figure 5.11) supporting a non-expert approach to knowledge creation. The focus on practice and design making, rather than conventional writing approaches, in Activity Two appeared to disrupt traditional disciplinary boundaries and revise the way fashion histories could be presented through an interdisciplinary approach.

However, in evaluating whether this hybrid approach was successful in creating alternative fashion discourses, there was an inherent paradox in the process in its re-presenting of intersectional fashion narratives through appropriating pre-existing *National*

Geographic images, which are themselves rooted in racial stereotypes. Questions remained

about whether this approach to re-imagining fashion and devising an alternative critical

visual fashion vocabulary simply perpetuated Eurocentric binary thinking. For example, to

what extent does the prominent image of two people wearing thick jewellery on their necks

and legs in 'The Age of Fashion – Fashion after 50' (Figure 5.7*)* continue to reproduce

'Othering' clichés that perpetuate the stereotype of marginalised fashions as static, and thus

reinforce narratives of modernity in fashion?

I wondered whether another PedAr cycle was required to address the limitations

which came from applying strategies of re-appropriation and the risks of reproducing

colonialist thinking. Indeed, the limited contextualisation of how these *National Geographic*

images were produced, and by whom, or even the potential agency of the subjects (see

Kutesko 2018), can further embed simplistic West/Rest distinctions in fashion. However, it

was clear that this pedagogical approach did appear to offer some creative possibilities for

alternative heterogeneous fashion design narratives built around a design process of

'fashionalisation' (Niessen 2003).

I had now arrived at the end of my research design, and the final case study for this

thesis. However, during this time at College D, I collaborated with Student X to set up a

reading group exclusively for Black students and students of colour identifying as female or

non-binary named The Womxn/Non-Binary People of Colour Reading Group (W/NB POC

Reading Group). This pedagogical intervention at College D reflected ongoing questions I

had about epistemological silences and misrepresentations, exclusions, and colonial

histories in the curriculum, but it also reflected ongoing global student-led calls to

decolonise the university and address institutional racism.[97] For this reason, the W/NB POC

Reading Group has been included in this chapter as it provides empirical data that

contributes further responses to Research Question 2.

5.4. Case Study Two, Reading Group: Background

The Womxn/Non-Binary People of Colour Reading Group (W/NB POC Reading

Group) took place in term-time over four academic years, but it was beyond the scope of

this study to analyse the activity of all these years; instead, in this section I present data and

analysis of three terms' activity during the first academic year 2018-2019, when the group

was first set up, as this provides key insights into the relationship between institutional

structures and systems with decolonial pedagogies.

Identifying and locating data with which to analyse the W/NB POC Reading Group

was a complex task, due to the multiple ethical issues raised around maintaining

confidentiality, trust and participant anonymity, as discussed in Chapter 2. While no

participants raised objections to being part of the study, anonymity was a crucial element of

my methodology, which enabled sensitive conversations to take place; if these

conversations had been recorded, for example, there was a risk that students might have

spoken less freely and this would have constrained discussion. Therefore I chose to use

ethnographic field notes: I made brief notes in the weekly sessions and afterwards would

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[97] See Olufemi et. al (2019) *A Fly Girl's Guide to University: Being a Woman of Colour at Cambridge and Other Institutions of Elitism and Power.* Kenilworth, UK: Verve Poetry Press, which presents a collection of memoirs, essays, poetry and prose by four women of colour who studied at Cambridge, addressing the whiteness of Cambridge University and similar institutions.

write more detailed accounts. Using a discourse analysis approach and participant observation, my field notes use an autoethnographic methodology to bring relational and ontology-oriented insights into this phase of research (hooks, 1987; 2000; Busia, 1993; Boylorn, 2006; Breeze, 2017; Ahmed, 2017; Sobande 2018; Osei 2019; Verges 2021; Varela 2022).

For the year 2018-19 that is presented I had written 27 separate entries, shown in Table 5.1. At first I was unsure of how to analyse these notes, but using 'excerpt strategy' (Emerson et al. 1995, p. 211) by visually marking my notes helped to build patterns and themes across my data. Through this process I was able to identify nine themes during the academic year, which are presented in the following sections.

All names and possible markers of identification were removed when writing up this chapter; therefore I was unable to present any more detailed content created in the group: for example, drawings that were made in the session with a community artist, or screenshots from the online Slack group; however, the focus on this chapter is on the pedagogical process that was taking place and how that contributed to answering Research Question 2. Furthermore, as my field notes resulted in a reliance on my viewpoint, where possible in this chapter I have also incorporated different students' perspectives by including a student text message, a student analysis of a reading list, student testimonials, publicity for the group and an excerpt of a transcript from a public engagement event.

Year	Term	Number of Meetings
2018-2019	Term 1	9
	Term 2	7
	Term 3	6
Total	3	24

5.4.1. Year 1, Term 1

In 2017 College D held a one-day symposium exploring issues of race within art and design practices. As I had recently begun teaching at College D as a visiting fashion design lecturer and new member of staff, I decided to attend. The day consisted of several keynote lectures by well-known academics writing about race, alongside artist-led presentations. At the end of the day during the final question and answer session a student from College D asked the panel a question:

[….] so my question for the panel, which I'll give context to, is um….what advice do you have for students who are trying to call out these issues [racism] at institutions who are being constantly silenced and what advice do you have for these students as they continually experience colonial violence and racial violence on a daily basis at the hands of their tutors and peers…(clapping from audience) mmm…and um…yeah…yeah…I mean it's clear to me that [College D] is a place that's really afraid to talk about race. I've never seen the work of William. J. Pope be presented without naming his …. without the words black or race being said in presenting his work. Like, I've never been in a place where one of my students, my fellow students and peers,

can, like, make images of black women dying and that be dismissed as minor

sexism…um…which is happening right now in the [X] department. Um… and …yeah,

also presenting staff, not even saying things to them, just presenting them with stats

and figures which they tell you are not real reading lists because they're not

compulsory.' (See Figure 6.15)

(Student X's transcript, reproduced with permission from author)

Two of the panellists answered the question sympathetically by discussing

contemporary student-led activism in universities trying to diversify reading lists[98] and the

crucial role that reading lists play in reinforcing racist hierarchies. One panellist responded

with the suggestion that Student X should set up a reading group for women of colour

students as this was a good way to collectivise and connect with others, and that perhaps a

member of staff at College D could support this. The panellist looked around the auditorium

as if to see whether any staff might identify themselves for this support role. However, this

suggestion was followed by a significant silence during which I sensed a tangible discomfort

in the auditorium as members of the audience looked around the lecture hall to identify

staff. In my role as a newly appointed lecturer at College D, I was unsure whether to identify

myself during this silence and so remained quiet, too. No member of staff volunteered to

help Student X.

After the symposium, as people congregated outside the auditorium, I saw Student X

and approached them to discuss the issues they had raised around racism, coloniality and

the Eurocentric western-led dominated curriculum at College D. As we spoke, I noticed that

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[98] See the student-led campaign to decolonise reading lists at Cambridge University 2017, Decolonising the English Faculty: An Open Letter [Accessed 8.5.21]: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Qji9ojNzumOeKboLLBBWs5fxJfEPVAw4JDNtdz2yAtU/edit

a small but sizeable group of Black students and students of colour had come to join in our conversation. I knew only one of this group of students. The group became bigger, and students started to raise several questions: why other members of staff at College D had not attended the symposium, and why reading lists continued to be Eurocentric. Many students then began to raise other issues: the different experiences of racism, which influenced the marks they had received for coursework submitted at College D; the B.A.M.E attainment gap (Amos and Doku 2019); the lack of lecturers with appropriate expertise to teach postcolonial identity politics within art and design; ongoing concerns about Eurocentric reading lists (see Figure 5.15) and a recent initiative to expand student reading lists to consist of literature by only Black and authors of colour, creating a problematic binary (See Appendix C.2); micro-aggressions by white staff towards Black students and students of colour; and racial bias in access to PhD

FIGURE 5. 14 READING LIST ANALYSIS COMPILED BY STUDENT X

programmes at College D for Black students and students of colour.

I was shocked by these accounts from Black students and students of colour. In contrast to the literature on racial inequality in art and design education (Araeen 2001; Theuri 2016) and racism in higher education (Gabriel and Tate 2017; Arday and Mirza 2018), this first-hand experience of listening to deeply personal accounts of racism struck an emotional note and I felt the rawness of racial injustice. As these students' verbal accounts were given outside the auditorium, away from the formal symposium proceedings, I was aware how starkly this conversation contrasted with the uncomfortable silences in the auditorium.

Multidisciplinary: Connecting Art *and* Design Students

As students continued to talk to me it was significant that many of the students did not know one another, either. The space that had opened here was unique in assembling students from different art and design disciplines, from architecture to printmaking, sculpture, painting and woven textiles. As I spoke, I noticed students introducing themselves to one another and wondered about what opportunities students had at College D to mix in this way; despite College-wide lectures and social events, there were, as far as I was aware at that time, few, or no, spaces for students from different disciplines to learn together.

While students congregated, in my capacity as a member of staff at College D, it was clear to me that I was being pivoted into a position of responsibility. In that moment I felt a connection to these students based on my experiences of racial inequality as a woman of

colour educator, and a strong sense of purpose towards action. This intense emotion

recalled the discrimination I had experienced as both a student and an educator in

predominantly white fashion design education spaces, and I instinctively knew I had to do

something: I decided to help, and respond to the keynote speaker's suggestion of

assembling a women of colour reading group at College D.

First, I collected the email addresses of the 12 people who were talking with me and

told them that I would first ask my Head of Department (HOD) about the feasibility of

setting up a reading group for women of colour and I would contact them about it as soon

as possible. I next emailed my HOD, who responded positively but said that they would need

to speak to their line manager, as there were practical issues to organise: booking a room,

requesting additional budget for my teaching hours and publicising the group. This would

take some time.

The Challenge to Create Decolonial Pedagogical Spaces

In parallel with ongoing correspondence with my HOD, I emailed the 12 students I had

talked to and arranged to meet them. However, with no institutional support at this stage I

suggested that the first meeting take place in College D's canteen: four people attended.

The following week we met again in the canteen: the group had increased to 11 students,

the new members of the group having heard about it by word of mouth. The weekly term

meetings were open to all who identified as a Black womxn[99] or womxn of colour.

While I continued to wait for an answer from my HOD, I received emails from students

across College D requesting more information about the reading group. I decided that it

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[99] The term womxn has been used since the 1970s. See Karpinski,M. (2020) Available:
httpps://yourdaye.com/vitals/cultural-musings/what-is-the-meaning-of-womxn/ [Accessed 12.11.20]

was important to maintain momentum and created an email list to communicate that we would have our first meetings in the canteen on a weekly basis on Fridays at 5pm. Between ten and 14 students attended these first meetings, and as the group introduced themselves to one another they also discussed issues of racism in College D. However, the open-plan space of the canteen constrained private conversations – also, as a large group of exclusively non-white women we sensed we might be drawing attention to ourselves. For example, as a student began to recount a racist incident they had experienced in a class crit[100] during which they felt another student had made a racist comment, the student accused of racism joined the canteen queue and the group's voices became quiet. Consequently, several students said that they did not feel 'comfortable' talking in the canteen and asked if there was a classroom available. This prompted discussion about setting up alternative digital modes of communication.

In response to these concerns, during our third meeting a student set up a Slack[101] online group to provide an space for conversations and to facilitate more frequent contact between participants. Most students had experience of using online platforms, and the students and I began to create different channels for conversation on the Slack space to share resources. Some channels had descriptions; others did not:

- **Call For Papers:** I created this space.

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[100] A crit is a pedagogical mode of learning in which students take turns to present their work to their peers to gain feedback, enabling students to offer critique on each other's work. Most art and design curricula use the crit as part of the formative and summative assessment process. See Rowles, S. (2013) *Art Crits: 20 Questions - A Pocket Guide: Featuring Interviews with UK Fine Art Staff on the Topic of the Art Crit*. London: Q-Art.

[101] Slack is an online collaboration tool in which invited participants can communicate with one another in real time. Different groups and channels can be set up for various purposes by all participants.

Other channels were all created by students, including the descriptions:

- **Events:** Recommendations
- **Books:** Texts, Readings, Articles, and Books we want to share with one another!
- **Exhibitions:** Recommendations
- **General:** This channel is for workspace-wide communication and announcements. All members are in this channel
- **Meetings:** Dates, times and locations
- **OursaferspacesPolicy:** To create a set of ideas and rules that we will abide by in the group to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and just treatment of all members
- **Random:** Non-work banter and water-cooler conversation
- **Venting:** A place we can use as an outlet for letting our anger/emotions out
- **Wehavethemoney:** Ideas for what we should do with a budget of £200

During the first term the students and I posted daily on these channels. As there were no clear protocols for communication in Slack, I was unsure whether I needed to respond to a student's link or not; for example, on one occasion I spent substantial time reading and responding to an article a student had posted in the 'Books' channel; however, the student did not respond to my reply and I noticed that no-one was interested in my response either, and it generated no discussion. Further, during the College vacations there appeared to be even less participation. In meetings I would mention the Slack group, and although there would be enthusiasm, after the first term I noticed that it was mostly me who was posting, although the number of reading group participants was growing. Occasionally there would be a response from someone to a posting, but after a while that stopped and finally, I found I had limited time to keep maintaining the posts and stopped engaging with the space towards the end of Term 3.

As new students joined the W/NB POC Reading Group and were introduced to the online Slack space, students asked me questions about how to use this space; I felt students

expected me to post content as an educational resource, rather than using the Slack channel themselves as a space for dialogue among the group. To me, this suggested the transient nature of student participation in non-compulsory educational initiatives: the students joining the group later perceived the online space as additional content to support the existing curriculum, in contrast to the way it was first initiated by a student as a private space to discuss issues in the HEI context and share ideas around race, racism and art and design.

Collaborative Decision-Making Process for Curricular Content

During our third meeting we began to discuss what to do in the reading group and whether we were going to devise a curriculum for reading, and what that might be. I tried to facilitate a participatory process in which students' voices could be central by asking students what they wanted to read, but most students remained unsure and instead deferred to my position of authority and asked what I would suggest, and I found myself responding in my role as lecturer. As I was currently re-reading *Borderlands* by Gloria Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa 1987), a key intersectional feminist text, I suggested we read a chapter each week. My role as a visiting lecturer enabled me to access an electronic copy to be acquired for the library, if available, to share with students; however, when I approached the library at College D, I was unable to access a copy of the book: the process for acquiring reading materials for students needed to be linked to a recognised course in College D. In addition, College D did not have a copy of this book and would be unable to order a copy without authority from the HOD. Instead, I found a free online copy that I shared on the Slack group.

My impression was that the students liked the formal direction of this plan, so I next suggested I would send an email with an digital chapter of the book and locate a space where we could convene in private. Although three weeks had passed since the group had begun, College D still had not replied to my ongoing requests for support, so I decided to use the lunch hour in my teaching room when I knew the room would be free. Five students turned up to our fourth meeting to discuss the first two chapters of Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*; however, one student had not read the text and found it difficult to join in the discussion as a result, and another student said they found the text difficult because of language issues: their first language was German and the book was in English and Spanish; one student arrived late. On the fifth meeting, not everyone had undertaken the reading of the next two chapters and there was a sense of disappointment in the group, as the discussion was unable to progress without feedback and discussion by all participants. By the sixth meeting it was clear that because these activities were optional, the participants had insufficient time or inclination to read the text, so instead we discussed themes related to the text. Indeed, I was finding it hard to make the time to do this reading myself in addition to my other commitments, and found myself frantically reading the chapters and making notes on the day of the meeting on my commute to the HEI.

I also considered to what extent the text chosen might itself be an issue and whether if we had a more democratic way of choosing a text then it might be something that more participants would want to read. So, I next tried to initiate a group discussion on the Slack group around texts by women of colour focused on issues of race and injustice and found that fiction proved quite popular: for example, the science fiction of Octavia Butler (see Butler 2014) . However, due to legal copyrights, all texts had to be scanned by the institution and due to UK copyright legislation only one chapter, or 10% of the book, could

be circulated digitally, ruling out the sharing of entire books of fiction. I did, however, ask the library to purchase some of Octavia Butler's novels, as well as Gloria Anzaldúa's books, which they did; but several regular reading group attendees complained that as there was only one copy of these texts available, these books were invariably on loan already. I asked the library about the potential of purchasing multiple copies for use in reading groups, but this request was declined.

Group Bonding through Sharing

To locate a space for the group to convene, our first meetings took place during the lunch breaks in the room where I was teaching, as I knew it would be free during that period, although the lunchtime scheduling resulted in several students arriving late or needing to leave early for another class. Several students, and myself, brought food to the group space, and I noticed how this enhanced the rapport within the group. Lunches were shared, students handed around food to those without; food tastes and choices discussed. At subsequent meetings I decided to bring extra food along for students to eat, and one student who had also worked in the canteen of College D also brought in leftover food from their shifts to share. I observed how food appeared to enrich and support conversation, playing an important role in the group dynamics and in helping the conversation to flow.

However, as we finished eating and turned to discussing the chapters, I also noticed that a more formal atmosphere took over. Food had been put down and talk slowed down, and the flow of previous conversations disappeared. As a voluntary endeavour with no institutional support, I also felt I had insufficient time to adequately invest in structuring the discussions. I questioned the extent to which I was trying to mimic, and thus reproduce, a usual class setting, despite this being an extracurricular setting: was I trying too hard to

replicate a normal university class? Or did the students expect some form of instructional tuition from me? What exactly would the format of the meetings be, given that it could feel overwhelming to focus solely on racist issues in the HEI with little or no resolution in prospect?

5.4.2. Year 1, Term 2

Since the reading group had been launched, both I and my HOD had written several emails to a more senior member of staff to request financial support and permit room bookings for the W/NB POC Reading Group. However, the replies stated the need for more time to organise funding and rooms and that they would reply in due course. In the continued absence of institutional support, in Term 2 I resumed the co-facilitation of the reading group as there was now a group of around 25 regular and keen participants.

Exclusive Non-White Pedagogical Spaces

Meeting ten was the first session for Term 2 and again took place in my teaching room during the lunch break. During the meeting another student, a white male, arrived early for my afternoon class, confused about whether their class had begun, and entered the room to join the group. While I explained the exclusive nature of the W/NB POC Reading Group, I sensed a degree of discomfort in the room from everyone, as the white male student remained in the room. This student then asked whether he could sit quietly and listen to the issues raised in the group. As I looked around the room two students looked at me and shook their heads, so I was unsure what to do. The group looked towards me for authority, I felt, so I then asked the white male student to speak outside the classroom with me, where I explained the exclusive nature of the group in more detail: how students often respond to

postcolonial and decolonial debates by speaking from their personal experiences of racism

and how that can be difficult to do in front of those who have not experienced racism or

sexism. The student said they understood and left; however, in my role as educator I felt

deeply conflicted about the exclusive nature of the reading group, what I had just done and

whether exclusive spaces should exist within HEIs.

As I re-entered the teaching room, a student suggested that to prevent other non-

white or male students attempting to join the class again that they could make use of

institutional protocol that enabled students to book rooms at the College for their own use.

The next meeting took place using this method, scheduled for the end of the day. This was

more successful, but it required multiple emails to confirm the room.

As Term 2 began, news about the reading group had begun to spread through

College D, and Black male students and male students of colour would now regularly stop

me in the building to ask whether they could join the reading group. In addition, I was

beginning to receive frequent emails from white students who were interested in

postcolonial and decolonial debates and wanted to learn more and join the group, and

questioned whether the reading group should be open to those identifying as male or

white. To both groups I would answer that non-white spaces were crucial for building

solidarity for Black and people of colour;[102] further, it was a group decision, and at present

the majority of students felt that Black womxn and womxn of colour were most

discriminated and oppressed in society and therefore required an exclusive space to learn

and speak freely with each other. Despite my response, I empathised with both white and

[102] For an example of the argument supporting non-white spaces, see: Kelsey Blackwell, Why people of color need spaces without white people. *The Arrow,* 9 August 2018. https://arrow-journal.org/why-people-of-color-need-spaces-without-white-people/

male students' perspectives, sensing their need for solidarity, too, but unsure what I could do.

Consequently, I continued to raise the question of expanding to include white or male students to the reading group each week, but each week all the students rejected the idea; however, in the limited time the group had it was difficult to have a more detailed discussion about this topic. In addition, several students who attended were also engaged with exclusive non-binary Black and people of colour spaces outside the College: for example, several students in the group contributed to the magazine *gal-dem*[103] and the organisation Sisters Uncut.[104]

Student Union Intervention

As Term 2 began, the continued lack of institutional support for the W/NB POC Reading Group frustrated and angered several of the students who attended. Several participants were on friendly terms with the student union president (SUP) and informed them of the situation. As a result, the SUP contacted me to suggest advertising the group to gather more support and inviting me to contribute to a public panel discussion on decolonising art and design education that the student union was running as part of a series on events about decolonising College D. At first I was unsure whether to agree to the panel because as a recently appointed associate lecturer I was anxious whether this might jeopardise my employment contract. However, as it would be mostly students in attendance and two other speakers who had agreed to participate were people I knew who were

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[103] *gal-dem* describes itself as 'a new media publication, committed to telling the stories of people of colour from marginalised genders.' *Gal-dem*, Available at: https://gal-dem.com/about/ [accessed 5.2.22]
[104] Sisters Uncut is a British feminist direct action group that campaigns against cuts to UK government services for domestic and sexual violence victims. Available at: https://www.sistersuncut.org

researching ways to decolonise design, I decided to agree. To discuss the panel, the SUP and

I met in person, taking time to discuss the political and institutional structures in which

racism is embedded across the HEI sector, in particular discussing racist practices in art and

design and Eurocentric curricula. The SUP was a graduate of College D and supportive of the

endeavour to address the issue of Eurocentric curricula, and was keen to support the

reading group. We made plans for further interventions to put pressure on College D to

support the Reading Group and future plans for further events, such as a W/NB POC

Reading Grou*p* social event.

In response to the student-led campaign 'Why is My Curriculum White?' founded at UCL, many universities in the UK and beyond are urgently addressing ways to improve diversity on reading lists and course content. As student groups become increasingly international and culturally diverse, there is a need to reflect a wider global range of thinking to support student's theory and practice. In response to requests from [HEI name anonymized] students to address these concerns, the [HEI name anonymized] will be running a Black/Womxn and Non-Binary People of Colour Reading Group to create a space to have these discussions.

If you identify as Black/Womxn or Non-Binary Person of Colour please join in the conversation.

The group will meet on Thursdays from 12.30-1.30pm at [HEI name anonymised], with the first session on Thursday 23rd November. Do feel free to bring your lunch while we have conversations!

FIGURE 5. 15 STUDENT UNION EMAIL ADVERTISING FIRST W/NB POC READING GROUP

Prior to the panel discussion, in meeting 11 of the Reading Group, I sought agreement from the Reading Group for me to join the panel. I felt this was important to do because I was trying to establish a democratic and participatory process in which all participants should be consulted about any decisions made; everyone agreed it was a good idea because it would highlight the lack of support by College D for work to decolonise the curriculum. I was aware that my voice was being elevated to speak on behalf of the group and I was keen for a more polyvocal representation of the group on the panel so I asked if anyone else would like to join me, but no-one volunteered. Reflecting on our reading of *Borderlands* (Anzaldúa 1987), and how the author employed multiple voices in the text by using different languages and dialects, I suggested that participants might want to contribute to the panel by each writing an anonymous short, informal statement about the group that I could then read out, bringing a student perspective to the discussion. Two students sent the following statements and I read them out at the panel:

> Since being here at (*College D*) I have repeatedly watched my institution fail me. I have tried to utilize my position as a queer woman of color [sic] who has the privilege of generally high energy levels and an academic background in sociological discourse to speak out against the consistent sexism and racism that I and so many other students experience on a daily basis. These attempts, which I have positioned within the rhetoric of the institution, have been greeted with bureaucratic excuses, finger pointing, and disbelief. I now understand why so many people of color [sic] (especially women of color) at this HEI choose to retreat inwardly to their practices and focus on keeping their heads down to not cause a fuss about our treatment. We are paying too much money to be here and spend our time doing work FOR this

institution, which seems to only benefit (College D's) marketability. Feminism, diversity, race, and gender discussions are hot topics in the media right now and claiming those discourses are taking place here is clearly something (College D) is keen to project they "support". (Student Statement 1)

 I see our group as a safe space that I have found without looking for it. Something I have missed without being aware of missing it. Growing up in a white country and in between two cultures made it difficult to me to define my identity. Questions on where you belong, prejudices and injustice that you face can be confusing and let you float. Speaking to women with similar experiences and issues grounds me again. I feel that whiteness was imposed on me as a standard that I had to live up to. The emotional conversations we have and the literature we discuss help me to let go of that. I find it difficult to explain to people why the group is kept exclusive since there is no rational way of explaining this emotional topic.'

(Student Statement 2)

In advance of the panel discussion, the student union advertised the event with posters around College D with contributors' names. To my surprise, on the day of the event, a senior member of staff (SMS) contacted me for a meeting to discuss ways to support the Reading Group. Although we met after the event, in our meeting the SMS mentioned the panel and how I had disclosed that College D had not supported me during a public event. The SMS explained how they had been busy and there had been no need for me to publicise a lack of institutional support, as it had only been a delay. SMS agreed to pay me, locate a room for

weekly meetings and a budget for guest speakers. However, when I asked for a budget for refreshments, supporting the view that food facilitated discussion,[105] it was at first refused. We discussed this further and finally the SMS agreed.

5.4.3. Year 1, Term 3

Following the meeting with the SMS, in Term 3 the W/NB POC Reading Group became formalised as part of an optional extracurricular event advertised as 'W/NB POC Reading Group led by Tanveer Ahmed'. Despite my insistence on changing the text to 'co-facilitated by students and Tanveer Ahmed', the department still advertised the group as being 'led by Tanveer Ahmed'.

The Disruption of Planned Curricula

Now that I was being paid for my time and a room was booked for the W/NB POC Reading Group session, I was asked to submit a course outline, reading list and resources. I found this difficult because after we had finished *Borderlands* (Anzaldúa 1987) the group began to take turns in choosing what to read and were not following College D's institutional protocol of using library texts, but photocopying and sharing free texts that were available online. Furthermore, we were not always reading during sessions.

For example, twenty minutes into meeting 13, a student arrived late and appeared distracted, and then asked the group if they could talk about something that was not related to art and design, College D or issues around race and gender; everyone agreed. The student

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[105] See Maze et. al (2017, p.212) for a discussion on the role of food in community-building.

explained that they had experienced a housing crisis, and that they had become homeless. The student's landlord had confiscated their room key and belongings, rendering the student both homeless and without their belongings. They had spoken to the Student Support housing office at College D and reported the matter to the police, but they were unsure what to do next and were visibly distressed. Other students responded by listening and a few had specific advice about where to go for short-term lets or hostels.

As the group listened and responded, I could see how quickly time was progressing, but felt it was inappropriate to turn to the reading, although in a traditional class context I would probably have taken the student aside and spoken to them. As the student ate some food, they said they felt a little better as that they had not been eating or sleeping as all their energy had been focused on reclaiming their possessions. This discussion took up the remaining hour and the class ended. A few days later the student emailed me with this message:

'Hello Tanveer! Just wanted to let you know I got my stuff back just now! Thank you for listening and comforting today!!! Xx'

(Student email reproduced with consent)

After this class, I observed that an increasing amount of time was spent on student-led discussions focused on personal issues, with less time on the act of formal 'reading'. I continued to make attempts to ensure that some reading would happen but on several occasions the reading group classes took place with no reading being done. Sometimes this frustrated me because I had by now written a curriculum; however, it also made me question the content of the curriculum and what was being taught and learnt in this space.

Group Tensions

While the group was united in their racial and gender identity politics, this did not mean that the group was a harmonious cohort. Indeed, the group dynamics were undermined by a variety of tensions, and on several occasions, this would surface: for example, during a meeting one student showed an example of their current artwork during a discussion but an argument erupted when another student offered negative feedback on the work. On another occasion, during a discussion on racism, a Black home student raised the issue of class intersectionality, disclosing their personal struggle to enter higher education from a working-class background. Other participants, who were from outside the UK, and perhaps from more middle-class backgrounds, appeared to find this conversation uncomfortable, as the class was unusually quiet, and I wondered about the complexities of discussing class in this way. This home student seemed frustrated about other students' ignorance and another non-European student conceded that this was something she had never thought about; however, my impression was that the lack of consideration of class issues angered, and even disappointed, the Black home student even more.

Non-Expert Art and Design Guests

The budget allocated to the W/NB POC Reading Group included a fee for a guest speaker for each term. Rather than choose the guests myself, I spoke with the group to decide who to invite and received a long list of mostly queer Black and people of colour artists and designers. Significantly, the names suggested were often self-taught or community practitioners with little art and design industry experience: for example, slam poets, rappers, graffiti artists, community activists and DJs. These were artists and performers who were not widely recognised or known and did not conform to the traditional notion of a

celebrated artist or designer by College D; therefore they would not usually be invited to speak at the College as part of a traditional curriculum. These choices provided examples of how alternative non-Eurocentric forms of art and design informed these students' art and design knowledge, and significantly, shone light on the absences in the art and design canon currently referenced in the curriculum of College D.

Our first invited guest in Term 3 was a community artist who had been creating illustrations for anti-racist events: they were an untrained artist, who did this work as a hobby. The students made this choice, and the artist was happy to be invited to College D and run a drawing workshop. In contrast to the way drawing is traditionally taught in higher education in the UK, the artist brought a loudspeaker and played reggae music, and also brought fabrics into the room to protect the tables from being stained. This approach of caring for the furniture surprised me and the students, as paint stains are common in art and design HEIs. In addition, music is rarely played during drawing classes. Students appeared calm and concentrated on the drawing exercises that the artist directed and shared food with the artist at the end of the session.

5.5. Discussion and Reflections

This section examines how the two case studies, the Library Class and the Reading Group, can respond to my second research question, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* To do this I have examined the pedagogical strategies I employed in each case study to show the relationships between

educators and students *with* institutional spaces to help further explore the role of

decolonial feminist pedagogical praxis in HEIs.

Both the case studies presented in this chapter were built around the concept of a

'sociology of absences' (de Sousa Santos 2014), discussed in Chapter 1. The aims of the

pedagogical classes documented here were to expose how systems which privilege colonial

forms of knowledges are situated within a process of silencing (de Sousa Santos 2014, p.

157). To analyse the case studies, I returned to the concept of 'transitionality', one of the

pedagogical concepts proposed by the decolonial scholars Icaza and Vasquez that were

outlined in Chapter 1, because it offers a framework to analyse how university spaces can be

re-imagined and can contribute towards decolonising pedagogies (Icaza and Vasquez 2018)

(see Table 5.2).

I began by listing the pedagogical methods and strategies that each case study used,

which showed the interconnectedness between the roles that space, time and body politics

played in devising inclusive and anti-racist forms of pedagogy. Analysing these pedagogical

strategies, I was able to identify four key relational dynamics which would help to inform

decolonial feminist pedagogical methodologies, which are discussed in more detail below:

educator/student, educator/institution, student/student and student/ institution. These

concepts are then brought together in a final section to offer responses to my second

research question.

Educator/student and Educator/institution

The spatial contexts of non-traditional and non-classroom teaching spaces in the College,

such as the library and the canteen, enabled more equitable and relational forms of

teaching, resulting in a de-hierarchisation of my role as educator with students. While this shows the value of re-configuring institutional spaces within which to teach, it also raises further questions around the educator's relationships with other staff and students; Librarian A's important role in the Library Class showed that using an alternative teaching space also displaced my central role as educator, as did inviting a community artist who had alternative ideas for using the classroom based on community shared spaces in the Reading Group. Similarly, by creating a non-white educational space in College D, the relationships between womxn and non-binary students of colour and other white students were impacted when white students were prevented from joining; although, without speaking to the white students who tried to join the Reading Group, it cannot be clearly identified to what extent relationships were affected.

The creation of an exclusive non-white educational space based upon political identities re-conceived how the university traditionally constructs classes. Although it resulted in the exclusion of white students and male students, and was therefore limited in its reach, the W/NB POC Reading Group enabled Black womxn and non-binary womxn students of colour to interact with one another, share their challenges and build networks. This helped to build solidarity and empathy in the community of Black womxn and non-binary womxn students and provide a voice for marginalised student and art and design activity at College D. Furthermore, the use of a digital space, Slack, in the Reading Group presented an additional space in which students could interact simultaneously inside – and outside – College D, creating another avenue for continued dialogue.

Both case studies brought into question my role as an educator with expertise in fashion within a university space. As I began to collaborate with Librarian A and the Student

	A Library Class: Activity One and Two	*A Reading Group*	*Pedagogies of transitionality*
Pedagogical Methods and Strategies: Time/Space /Body Politics	Traditional hierarchies of educator leading the class were reversed as Librarian A introduced and led the first part of the class.	Online digital platform of Slack set up by student, resulting in more horizontal and dialogical forms of educator/student engagement and collective forms of pedagogy	**Educator/student**
	An aim to learn as co-researchers. This resulted in a horizontal form of learning in which we collaborated as co-accomplices to investigate racist and sexist bias in fashion together.	Collaboration on Student Union panel to include student voice alongside educator's voice.	
		Personal correspondence between educator and student using text messages.	
	Educator took on role of student as Librarian A led the beginning of the class	Student-led choices in reading materials and division of time in session between personal and educational content.	
	New relationship with Librarian A disrupting traditional educator hierarchies within College D	Collaborating with Student Union President (SUP) on a student union panel event at *College D*.	**Educator/institution**
		Inviting non-expert and community-based guests to teach sessions.	
	Display of students' work in the library offered an alternative space for pedagogical engagement with other students and staff within College D and re-	Limited understanding from College D for how to present an educator/student collaboration and the need to reproduce	

	envisioning the library as a space of creativity.	hierarchical educator led groups and advertise as 'W/NB POC Reading Group led by Tanveer Ahmed'.	
	Non-traditional classroom using the library space contributed to a more informal atmosphere in class.	Reading list Analysis compiled by Student X to highlight Eurocentric Reading Lists.	**Student/ institution**
	Students moved outside of their disciplinary boundary to use a non-disciplinary technique (collage) to synthesise theory and practice to encourage alternative directions	Collaborating with Student Union President (SUP) on a student union panel event at College D.	
		Non-white exclusive safe space in the institution for womxn/non-binary students of colour provided a voice for marginalised students and marginalised art and design concepts.	
	Students reflected on bias in classification systems by relating to their own identities and sharing lived experiences. Brought in non-expert approach to knowledge creation.	Students interacted with one another and shared their challenges, built networks. Sharing of food in group appeared to enrich and support student relationships and conversations.	**Student/student**
		Slack online digital platform facilitated some forms of dialogical exchange and student/student engagement.	

TABLE 5. 2 LIBRARY CLASS AND READING GROUP FRAMED THROUGH PEDAGOGIES OF TRANSITIONALITY (ICAZA AND VASQUEZ 2018

Union President (SUP), I realised how much knowledge they had, and began to question

why their expertise was excluded from the normal classroom settings. Instead, I began to

learn from both and re-think my relationship with College D. For example, displaying

students' work in the library enabled students who were more accustomed to writing to cross disciplinary boundaries and use visuals in their practice. However, College D had limited understanding of how to present an educator/student collaboration and the continued reproduction of educator hierarchy was perpetuated, as the group was advertised as 'led by Tanveer Ahmed', despite my requests to change this phrasing.

Student/ institution and Student/student

The use of a non-traditional classroom space in the Library Class contributed to a more informal atmosphere and allowed students to develop rapport with one another, encouraging dialogue and connections for students to share personal narratives. Similarly, the exclusively non-white safe space in College D for Black and non-binary womxn students of colour provided a voice for marginalised students and a space for marginalised art and design concepts to gain prominence. Students' lived experience was centred and alternative resources and materials were shared in class and online to foster new dialogues in art and design based on expanding and diversifying the canon of texts.

A common factor in these different relational dynamics is how they appear to centre intentional informal learning methods (Livingstone 2006; Harrop and Turpin 2013) which value the collective co-creation of liberatory pedagogies (Friere (2017) [1970]; hooks 2003) based around speculative, affective, imaginative, and tacit forms of knowledge-making (Mohanty 2003; Motta and Bennett 2018; Motta 2013; De la Cadena 2016; Verges 2021). Shaped through social interactions and knowledge-sharing practices, intentional informal learning is evidenced to some degree in both case studies and defined as 'any activity

involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge, or skill that occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria' (Livingstone 2016, p. 206)

It is important to note that the crucial characteristic of intentional informal learning is that it falls outside of 'conventional curricular forms of education' (Livingstone 2006, p. 206), and is seen as marginal to mainstream education model of formal learning (Bekerman et al. 2006). This was evidenced in the display of work in the library and the formal curriculum which I wrote for the W/NB POC Reading Group at College D, but which was mostly ignored in sessions; instead, self-directed tacit learning dominated, often focused on non-specialist and personal topics. Without the collective pedagogical strategy I initiated with students, it is doubtful whether the space could have implemented a self-directed pedagogy, facilitated through my role as educator and with significant partners, such as the Student Union President(SUP) and Librarian A.

While this analysis helped to identify the importance of the relationships between educators, students and the institution, I next wanted to further explore these findings to help me answer my research questions by situating these relationships within a pedagogical spatial understanding to help me answer my second research question.

5.5.1. 'Undercommons' Pedagogies

I further analysed the four emerging pedagogical concepts of educator/student, educator/institution, student/student and student/ institution, which helped me to identify two key themes which could characterise what a culturally inclusive fashion design education might encompass: non-hierarchical relationships and expanded learning spaces.

Both case studies drew on non-hierarchical relationships and expanded learning spaces to create a new pedagogical space which facilitated culturally diverse learning. For example, the role of non-traditional educators such as Librarian A and the community artist in the Reading Group were only possible in an alternative space such as the library and exclusive Black womxn and womxn of colour spaces and digital spaces.

I further pondered on the characteristics of this alternative in-between space, which seemed to show the value of combining a de-hierarchising approach to pedagogy with one that was informal. For example, despite some tensions within the W/NB POC Reading Group, the marginalized qualities inherent in a space dedicated only for Black womxn and womxn of colour appeared to facilitate a bonding between participants in ways that encouraged empathetic learning and teaching. Similarly, teaching in College D's library provided a more expansive physical and conceptual space to study design, in which students were able to create critical distance from their disciplinary specialism through a partial withdrawal from their everyday traditional forms of learning. These alternative learning and teaching spaces provided opportunities for students to research and critique the coloniality of design (Tlostanova 2017) and consider the epistemological foundations of their discipline. Thus, re-thinking the institutional role in devising these case studies showed that alternative curricula also required alternative spaces to think in counter-hegemonic ways and work towards a more plural understanding of art and design.
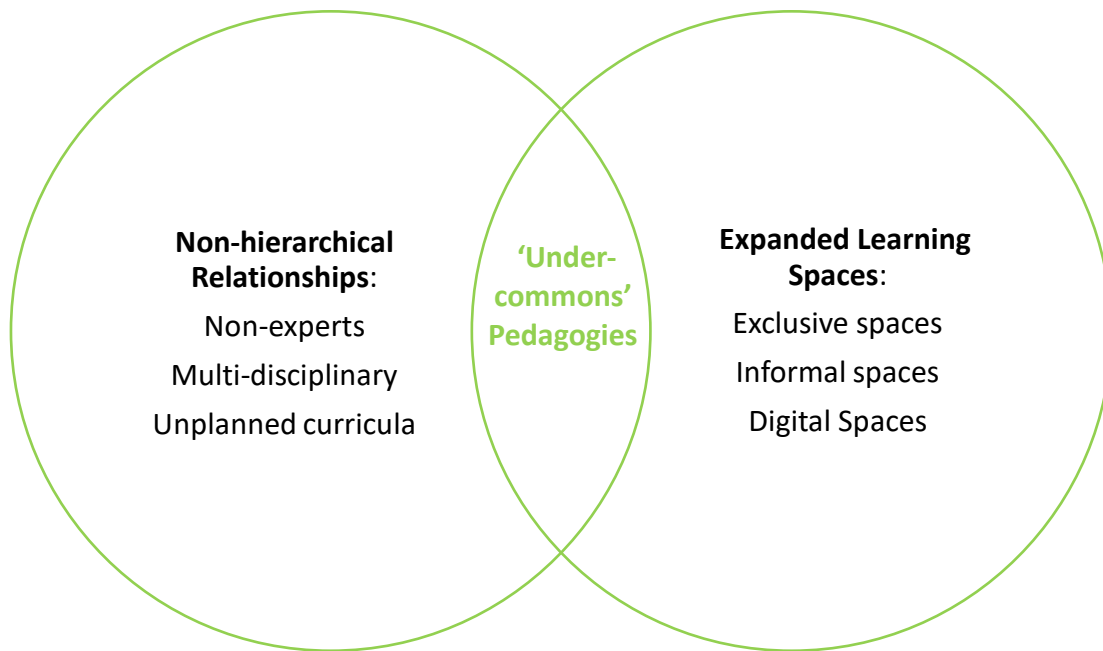
FIGURE 5. 16 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPACE, TIME AND BODY POLITICS IN DEVISING CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE FASHION DESIGN PEDAGOGY.

In many ways an in-between space such as I have described, one in which a culturally inclusive fashion design pedagogy could emerge, echoes the approach of the philosopher Fred Moten and the cultural theorist Stefan Harney's seminal activist pedagogical praxis of the 'undercommons' (Harney & Moten, 2013). The 'undercommons' is described by the authors as a conceptual space that exists for those excluded from common spaces and shared resources; it therefore becomes a space populated by members of marginalised communities, 'black people, indigenous peoples, queers and poor people' (Halberstam 2013, p.6). Harney and Moten stress how the undercommons in the university provides a space 'beyond teaching [...where] the commons give refuge, where the refuge gives commons' (Moten and Harney 2014, p.27). For these reasons, a number of studies have applied the concept of the 'undercommons' to pedagogy to illustrate the value in creating

alternative pedagogical spaces, especially in university settings (see Dennis 2018; Wash 2018; Manning 2019; White 2020).

While both case studies show the value of an 'undercommons' space as part of the project to create a culturally inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy, they also show how this can be an heterogenous, dynamic space for the critique of hegemonic design. Therefore, creating additional space in HEIs for culturally inclusive pedagogies would more fully recognise the relationship between the curriculum and the 'coloniality of design' (Tlostanova 2017) in relation to the university.

5.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown the value of devising culturally inclusive pedagogies through re-imagining institutional spaces in teaching and learning. My analysis has highlighted the importance that space, time and body politics play in decolonial feminist pedagogical strategies based around non-hierarchical relationships and an expanded view of pedagogical spaces in HEIs. To do this requires the facilitating of alternative spaces by locating non-traditional teaching spaces within the HEI. However, this requires strong relational bonds between educators, students and the institutions in which they work and learn together.

However, there were several challenges in both case studies in terms of which allies and partners can be assembled as part of a decolonial feminist design pedagogy and the extent to which the exclusive non-white space of the W/NB POC Reading Group, based on racial and gendered identities could support an inclusive college-wide curriculum. While I have not yet been able to identify whether exclusive spaces should be used for fashion design pedagogy, in this chapter I have shown the value of intentional informal learning as

part of the project to decolonise education. This research phase also shows that to decolonise teaching practices and spaces the challenge for the fashion educator and students will be to ask:

- How can educators and students co-create safe spaces together that negotiate difference?
- How can institutional teaching spaces be made safer and embed context and criticality in Eurocentric canons and curricula?

The next chapter draws these questions together to devise a potential framework for devising an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion and Conclusion: Towards a *Pluriversal* Fashion Design Pedagogy

This chapter reflects on how I have answered my two research questions by drawing on the empirical research undertaken in Chapters 3-5. This chapter is structured in three parts. To answer my first research question, *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogies in the UK?,* I will argue how representations of race and ethnicity have been racially hierarchised by drawing on the empirical analysis from Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. I then review my PedAr experimentation in Chapters 4 and 5 to answer my second question, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy?* I conclude this chapter by offering a tentative framework for a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy, drawing on decolonial feminist literature. The chapter ends with a discussion of the contributions of this study to the field of fashion design pedagogy, the limitations of this research and future research agendas.

6.1. Introduction

The starting point for this PhD research was to investigate how racism informs fashion design education by analysing racialised representations in the fashion design process and devising a decolonial pedagogical approach to teaching fashion design education in HEIs. Through case studies and a PedAR methodology, I have set out to identify the colonial and racist logic implicated in the fashion design process in education and explored ways to incorporate relational and situated contexts of fashion design into fashion design education by reorienting myself and students within the fashion design process.

The empirical research undertaken in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 showed the value of an alternative counter-hegemonic fashion design process through the creation of heterogeneous concepts of fashion based on counter-hegemonic, non-universalist and non-linear systems of fashion knowledge, engaging with local knowledge and local difference. Here, fashion design students and educators can learn from and with one another, to avoid exploiting marginalised and subaltern groups and fashion epistemologies.

I argue that the findings show how key design tactics operate to reproduce racism in fashion design education and how this insight can help educators to devise anti-racist fashion design pedagogy. Identifying how a colonialist and racist logic operates in the context of fashion education has been a key objective in answering my first research question and has led to findings which point towards new and alternative ways to teach pluralised forms of fashion design. In this chapter a framework for devising anti-racist design pedagogies emerges from my findings which makes the case for and contributes to the

longer-term project of de-linking from the colonialism of design in HEIs that is both theoretically informed and empirically grounded.

6.2. Silences in Fashion Design Education

In this section I set out to answer my first research question, *What are the representations of race and ethnicity in undergraduate fashion design pedagogy in the UK?* Central to this discussion chapter and the overall thesis has been the challenge of investigating racism in fashion design education: the problem has not been whether racism exists in fashion design education – there is ample evidence to support this hypothesis from, for example, the testimonies of lived experience from fashion commentators on social media, along with a growing number of calls by academics to decolonise design (Schultz et.al 2018), as discussed in the literature review in Chapter 1. Instead, the conundrum has been within the study of fashion design itself and the ways in which academic literature in the field of fashion design and fashion design pedagogy have, in general, remained silent and thus been complicit in overlooking racism in fashion for so long.

Indeed, my research methodology demonstrated the ongoing silences around racism in fashion design education, given the barriers I faced in trying to access sketchbook data (I was refused access to this material by 22 HEIs) through to the visceral silences experienced when issues of racism were raised at the symposium on race in art and design education at College D, discussed in Chapter 5. Silence has therefore been part of colonial and racist logic in fashion design education, as documented in this thesis, and this finding provides evidence for the existence of a racist fashion design process linked to colonial logic.

Therefore, I argue that to undo the coloniality of fashion design also requires the locating of racism in fashion design.

The exposition of this silence around *how* the coloniality of fashion design is reproduced in various sites, including fashion design education, is therefore long overdue. This silence also makes apparent how the fashion design process should be recognised as a site of struggle between contending regimes of values: multiple and intersecting normalising strategies that uphold racial hierarchies in fashion to suppress and render racism invisible, an example of the 'abyssal line' (de Sousa Santos 2014) in action.

The recognition of the process of silencing also enabled me to engage with silence as a pedagogical strategy to constructively question the Eurocentric fashion canon in my classes. For example, when asking students 'is the sari fashion?' to question the 'West and Rest' binary (Hall 2007) in Sari Class 1, I used the ensuing silence as a mechanism to bring attention to the hierarchies embedded in fashion design and how the educational process remains complicit in this. The silence in the classroom centred discomfort (Motta 2017) to both detect and critique hegemonic power relations in fashion discourse.

The literature on this silencing, discussed in Chapter 1, has been crucial to shed light on this topic and I have returned to de Sousa Santos' 'sociology of absences', which explores how

> the inquiry into the ways of colonialism, in the form of the colonialism of power, knowledge, and being, operates together with capitalism and patriarchy to produce abyssal exclusions, that is, to produce certain groups of people and forms of life as

nonexistent, invisible, radically inferior, or radically dangerous – in sums, as

discardable or threatening. (de Sousa Santos 2018, p.25)

De Sousa Santos further explains how the 'sociology of absences' is built on Eurocentric

knowledge through five important characteristics: 'valid knowledge, linear time, social

classification, the superiority of the universal and the global, and productivity.' (Santos

2014, 172-175). These themes are drawn upon in this discussion to show how the coloniality

of fashion design and associated forms of practice construct racialised and gendered

representations, presented in three sections: a dehumanising fashion design process, white

normativity in the fashion design process and dichotomous fashion design epistemologies.

6.2.1. A Dehumanised Fashion Design Process

In this section I want to draw attention to the way several findings from this thesis point

to how the fashion education system's use of certain design tactics dehumanises

marginalised peoples in the fashion design process. I will argue that my findings, as will be

discussed, show how racism is produced in fashion design education. Figure 6.1 illustrates

a summary of my findings, and the following sections show how four fashion design tactics

and associated forms of practice were shown to construct racist representations,

contributing to a dehumanised fashion design process: these are decontextualisation,

privileging whiteness, and homogenising cultural differences.
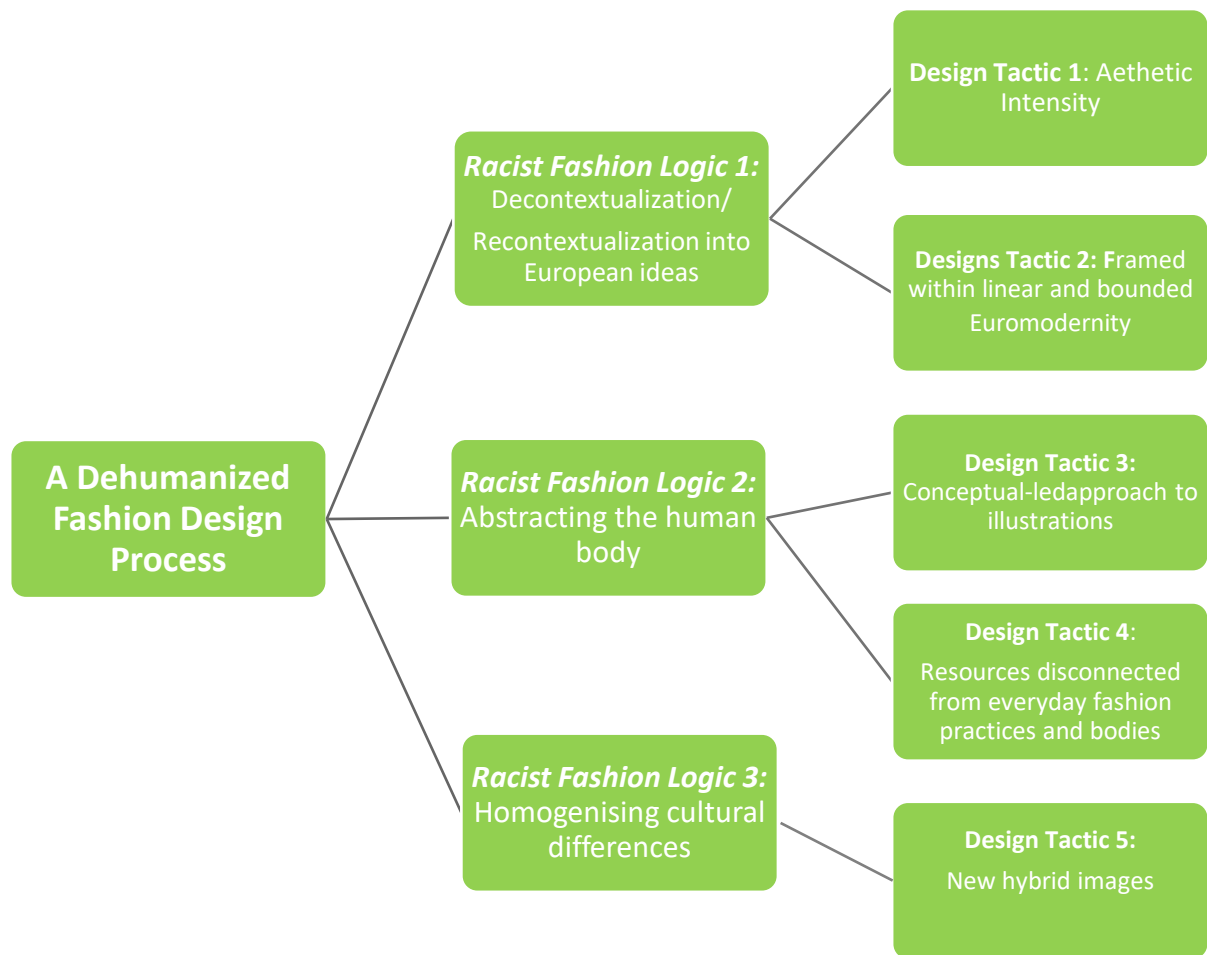
Racist Logic 1: Decontextualisation/recontextualisation

The findings of my analysis of the representation of race and gender in the curriculum,

fashion sketchbooks and pedagogical experimentation evidenced a tendency to employ

fashion techniques in which socio-cultural contexts were either absent or creatively

appropriated. This was achieved through a racist logic that privileged an aesthetics-led

design approach in which text or information was absent, cropped or downplayed; a key

characteristic of Eurocentric thinking is its 'inability to distinguish contexts' (de Sousa

Santos 2018, p. 252). This could be seen, for example, in Sari Class 2, described in Chapter 4: in the absence of context provided by Tutor B, a void was created in which students began to artistically manipulate fabrics but lacked any points of reference, which resulted in a mainly aesthetics-led fashion design process (see 4.10). Likewise, in sketchbooks where art and design techniques of montage were used for cropping or collage, new hybrid representations using marginalised fashion sources were created, yet they were disconnected from their original settings. This concurred with the conceptual fashion approach (McRobbie 1998, p. 48) with its focus on originality and experimentation through 'aesthetic intensity' (ibid, p.48).

The emphasis on aestheticisation in the fashion design process was shown through a multitude of two-dimensional visualisation activities, including drawing, illustration, trend research, design thinking, design development and creative technology, downplaying fashion's three-dimensional characteristics. As two-dimensional skills become prioritised in fashion – as evidenced in my content analysis of course curricula in Chapter 3 - so too does a fashion design process which encourages students to design *for* the body in ways which are disconnected from designing *on* the body; this further exacerbates the divide between Wynter's concept of Man (Wynter 2003) and an ontological design approach (Willis 2006) which includes viewing the whole person in order to move beyond the limitations of abstract, two-dimensional thinking.

The second design tactic employed in the process of decontextualisation/recontextualisation pointed to how the research and design process was one directional and framed within linear and bounded thinking that foregrounded supposedly progressive ideas of Euromodernity and Eurocentric superiority (Escobar 2017).

Not only was research carried out in uniform black rectangular sketchbooks in which students all worked in similar linear ways, but also the fashion design process was restricted to a linear step-by-step approach in which a final garment was always the outcome of the design process. Classes were also bound by temporal and spatial elements that related to the curriculum, classroom timings and the configuration of classroom furniture. The effect of traditional linear modalities in curricular approaches appeared to restrict the ontological dimensions of fashion design practices, such as including students' cultural heritage and beliefs in the classroom to explore the interconnectivity between the local and the global in fashion design (Leshkowich et.al 2003; Teunissen and Brand 2006; Paulicelli and Clark 2008; Fletcher and Grose 2012; Ling et al 2019; Cheang et.al 2021).Indeed, this was also evidenced in the curricular analysis presented in Chapter 2, in which only two undergraduate course descriptors offered global fashion perspectives as a module topic.

Racist Logic 2: Abstracting the Human Body

The abstract representation of the human body was evidenced in several ways in the fashion design process, most significantly by engineering the three-dimensional body into a two-dimensional form (to communicate the pattern-cutting process) This was evidenced in the use of particular art and design techniques in sketchbook design work, such as technical fashion flat illustrations of garments drawn in black and white, following a linear style (see Figure 3.11 and 3.12), that represent a fragmented body shape in two dimensions, and photographs of experimentation on the light beige-coloured quarter-scale mannequin in three dimensions (see Figure 3.12). None of the pages of the sketchbooks in the pilot study or sample in Chapter 4 showed fashion experimentation that had been carried out on a

human body form, and the techniques described were notable for the absence of a human head or feet.

Instead, the drawings and photographic experimentation presented in the sketchbooks showed fashion explorations that were usually shaped around a scaled-down version of a disembodied, abstract representation of a human form. The human form represented reproduced white privilege and gender norms through dominant binary conceptions of gender based on male/female, white ethnicity and normative body size. In addition, the use of the mannequin in Sari Class 2 showed how reliant students were on designing around a heteronormative body resource, using a mannequin as part of the fashion design process. In this way the mannequin was shown to physically symbolise an abstraction: a body disconnected from its head and limbs that cannot speak, express emotions or walk and has no historical or cultural context in terms of what a body is or does. Although the standardised bodies on a fashion catwalk can move, in the fashion classroom students are working with a lifeless form. Therefore, the findings showed how fashion design students are currently designing on a static, dehumanised form that has little to do with a living, moving and breathing person, detaching the body from the design process to create a disembodied fashion design process.

These examples pointed to the way in which a dehumanised fashion design process was the result of a design tactic based around a conceptually led design approach (McRobbie 1998) which centred on a disembodied and abstracted heteronormative body within the fashion design process. These findings support Carpenter and Mojab's concept of abstraction (Carpenter and Mojab 2017) creating a void for creative experimentation,

disconnected from human experience, and replaced with hegemonic Eurocentric concepts of body norms, marketisation and fantasy.

Design Tactic 3: Homogenising cultural differences

The third design tactic that facilitated a dehumanising fashion design process was the homogenisation of cultural differences in the fashion design process. This was demonstrated through an art and design technique that reworked secondary sources into new hybrid images using techniques of mark-making and juxtaposition. This process was generally enabled by using secondary sources that were then inserted into new, alternative contexts, modifying the original setting. The was identified as a dominant design approach in the sketchbook analysis, in which collage was applied to uncritically combine several images, usually neatly cut, with no information about the original sources. These were then incorporated into the rectangular white or black page of the sketchbook following a uniform and linear format. No sketchbooks were handmade, or larger than A3 size, to account for a more locally specific context or imagining.

Another example of the homogenising of cultural differences was displayed in Sari Class 2: one group re-worked the sari into the style of a European dress on a mannequin in multiple ways (see Figure 4.10). While these outcomes responded well to traditional expectations of fashion experimentation based on aesthetic criteria, it did however, exclude the cultural context of the sari, so that it was not clear where this garment had originated now that it had been creatively appropriated. Without relating the sari to its original context, the new re-worked design no longer responded to the diverse ways that constitute a sari's historical and regional context as a garment from the Global South, thus offering space for students to engage in a process of cultural appropriation.

A further strategy that permitted the homogenising of cultural differences was displayed through the classification system used in the documenting of fashion histories, as shown in the Library Class in Chapter 5. Here, non-European cultures appeared to be homogenised, based on the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system which creates a binary between the 'West and Rest' of the world (Hall 2007) in the library cataloguing system. As observed, books were physically grouped together on a shelf dedicated to global fashion, following the DDC system in which this shelf only presented books on the topic of non-European and non-Anglo-American fashion. For students attempting to locate fashion knowledge, this display embedded a cultural homogenisation of global fashion epistemologies according to the West/Rest binary (ibid 2007). This system has a significant relationship with the way students drew on mostly secondary fashion sources in the fashion design process in the sketchbook analysis and how research imagery was then uncritically collaged as part of this process. This was also echoed in the use of *National Geographic* magazines in the Library Class and the way that students reproduced coloniality in some of their book cover designs, such as 'Emerging Myanmar Fashions', which had initially used the colonial name of Burma (see Figure 5.9). Consequently, dominant Eurocentric fashion sources have the capacity to act as a structuring force, regulating and producing meaning by erasing culturally specific forms of difference.

These findings showed how cultural differences were homogenised in ways that produce forms of silent racism or forms of 'colour-blind racism' (Bonilla-Silva 2006, p.3) in which the socio-cultural contexts were uncritically merged. This was shown through a paradoxical design approach in which cultural differences were present but also undifferentiated, resulting in silences surrounding their cultural, global and local contexts of power and domination. This contrasts with other fields of design, which have encountered

this challenge of a dominant Western culture in design practice and have begun to devise

ways to design with cultural difference, such as addressing local specifics to challenge

cultural hybridity and cultural binary oppositions through 'respectful' design (Tunstall 2011;

2017; 2020; Reitsma et. al 2019) and drawing on the concept of cultural memory in design

thinking (Moalosi et al. 2020); however, to my knowledge, culturally specific approaches

have yet to be applied in fashion design pedagogy in HEI contexts, except in this thesis.

6.2.2. White normativity in the fashion design process

A second set of findings suggested ways in which white normative standards operated as a

process of silencing in the fashion design process. White normativity was not always clearly

visible in the fashion design process, as shown in the sketchbook analysis, but instead

contributed to the display of, for example, exoticised Black bodies (see Figure 3.14).

Furthermore, whiteness itself was hierarchised, with white able abstract-bodied forms

presented as universal in fashion illustrations (see examples of white female forms

objectified as hyper-sexual bodies (see Figure 3.16) or in passive positions (see Figure 3.17).

White normativity and processes of privileging, as discussed in Chapter 1, have been

described as achieving an objective view of reality through technologies of control that

reinforce white norms at the expense of non-white communities and their knowledge and

culture (Frankenburg 1993; Dyer 1997; Byrne 2006; Clarke and Garner 2010; Wekker 2016;

Bhopal 2018). Figure 6.2 summarises my findings that illustrate how white normativity is

formed through three key forms of racist logic that assimilate and control the fashion design

process underpinned by four design tactics, including illustration techniques in the fashion

design process and pedagogical strategies that include predominantly white teaching staff

(see Figure 6.2). Overall, my findings pointed to four key design tactics, detailed below, from three forms of racial logic: invisibility/ubiquity, processes of Othering and institutional educator-student relationships.

Racial Logic 4: Invisibility/ubiquity

My research process highlighted the pervasiveness of whiteness in fashion design education, which I found easier to identify from the perspective of a fashion design researcher than from that of a fashion design educator. This demonstrated to me how a white gaze (Dyer 1997; Garner 2007) shaped my role as a fashion design educator and may have been shaped by my Eurocentric design training (Fry 2017) it potentially shaped that of other fashion design educators, too, given that the only gatekeepers to enable access in my sketchbook pilot study and at College C were fashion design educators with Global South identities.

At first, I focused exclusively on non-white or non-Western/Anglo-American or non-Eurocentric imagery in my sketchbook analysis: this resulted in a surprisingly few examples, in only twelve sketchbooks, which demonstrated how I had not considered the category of white ethnicity in my research methodology. This oversight provided evidence of the dominance of white normativity within fashion cultures so that whiteness can appear invisible in the fashion design education process.

This shift in my perceptions as a researcher enabled me to recognise the dominance of white normativity in the sketchbook analysis – for example, the choice by students to draw on mostly European and Anglo-American themes and symbols and represent bodies
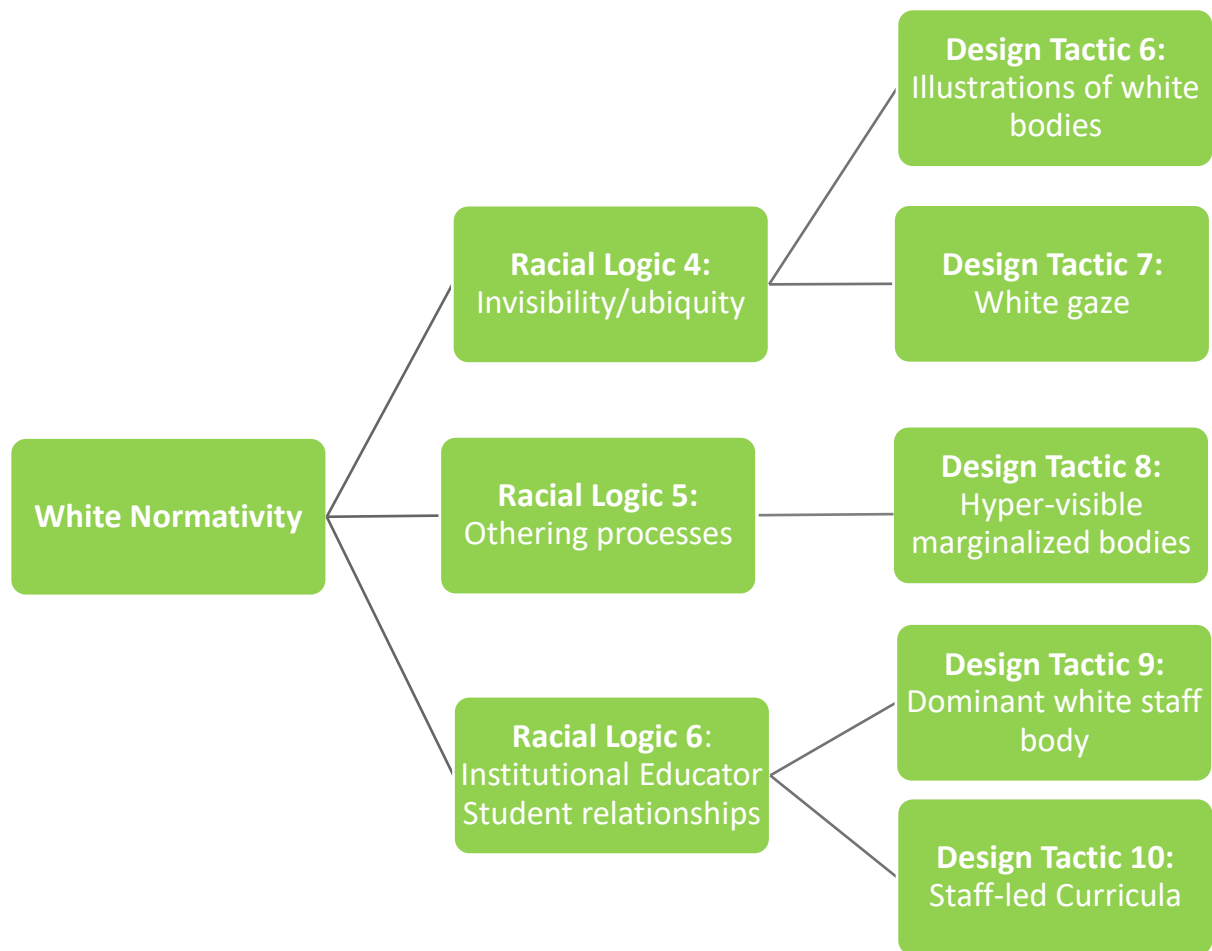
related to Eurocentric fashion cultures, such as those seen in the theme of 'Earthed' (see

Figure 3.17) which featured exclusively white female bodies. Furthermore, the practice of

fashion drawing involves leaving out flesh tones, presenting the white page and outlines of

bodies as default whiteness. In addition, the use of mannequins covered with light-coloured

fabric, an attempt to give flesh tones to the lifeless model but representing white skin,

reinforces a racial hierarchy that privileges white bodies. This dominance of 'white bodies' in

the shape of mannequins in the fashion classroom in Sari Class 2 was therefore another way to show how whiteness was normalised but rendered invisible.

Racial Logic 5: Othering Processes

I identified the way that a frisson was mobilised in the fashion design process (Craik 1994) in the sketchbook analysis, demonstrated by the use of exaggerated Orientalist representations of non-white bodies and forms contrasted with standardised and uniform white bodies. For example, Sketchbook D displays the image of a white semi-nude female figure with gold jewellery alongside a Black female figure covered in gold paint, which further demonstrates processes of exoticisation and Othering. Here, the white body is used as a mechanism to present a universal 'norm' against which attention is drawn to the Black exoticised Other.

One implication of this use of Othering processes in the sketchbooks was that it drew attention away from non-white bodies, further rendering the white bodies neutral and universal. Once more a range of mark-making, collage techniques and juxtapositioning were applied onto images in the sketchbooks, rendering some non-white bodies as hyper-visible, exacerbating differences and further embedding binary oppositional thinking and colonial logic in the fashion design process. Several examples of non-white fashion sources and representations were intensified by embellishment – for example, the use of images of First Peoples or Native American Indians with three-dimensional elements of beads and burnt paper, resulting in their representation as ahistorical and traditional, further amplifying their difference from contemporary white normative standards in fashion (see Figure 3.15).

Another set of findings from the analysis of the bookshelves in Library D evidenced the reinforcement of Orientalist narratives in the way that printed resources on fashion design naturalise Eurocentric and white fashion narratives. This was demonstrated by the vast quantity of books about European fashion in comparison to the small number of books about fashion from outside Europe. Furthermore, the grouping together and display of books on non-European and non-Anglo-American fashion cultures on the library shelves (see Figure 5.5) presented another way that Othering processes operated within a fashion design resource to teach that non-Eurocentric fashion cultures are intrinsically different from Western fashion culture.

Racial Logic 6: Educator-led curricula

In terms of my data and the way racist logic informed the curriculum, my findings pointed to the way pedagogical structures based on a traditional educator-led curriculum support and maintain white normativity. This is due to the predominantly white teaching staff[106] and their relationship with the construction of the curriculum. In Chapter 5's case study of the Reading Group, Student X's audit of their reading list for their course showed that the majority of texts on the list were written by authors in the Global North; although the gender balance of the authors was fairly equal, this perhaps showed white feminist theory in action, as the imbalance of racial diversity had been overlooked (Lugones 2010). However, this insight would have been less apparent to College D's educators because of

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[106] Although I had not undertaken an assessment of the race and ethnicity of the staff at College D, based on research in the area around the lack of staff diversity in art and design HEI sector, it can be assumed that the majority of art and design educators at College D identified as white (Richards and Finnigan 2015, p.4), at the time of this research.

both the white gaze in design education and the prevailing whiteness of the educators; and,

perhaps, a white feminist perspective (Zakaria 2021). White is used here not to denote skin

colour, but to describe the hegemonic 'objective' view of reality built on avoidance, in which

no educator had recognised the inherent bias in constructing the reading list – or if they

had, no decision had been made to do something about it until Student X raised the issue.

Furthermore, when Student X did raise the issue of the Eurocentric curriculum and

reading lists in the one-day symposium at College D, no member of staff volunteered to

help, again showing how the inherent pedagogical power imbalance between educator and

student can further support white normativity in the institution. Had a student-led

curriculum or more collaborative ways of teaching and learning been part of College D's

pedagogy in this instance, white normativity might have been addressed and challenged by

Student X's intervention. This example therefore showed how the asymmetric power

relations in a pedagogical approach can operate to reinforce white normativity in the

curriculum.

6.2.3. Dichotomous fashion design epistemologies
The third group of findings that relate to the silence and denial of racism in the fashion

design process points to the ways in which fashion design epistemology is organised and

practised along 'abyssal' divisions (de Sousa Santos 2014), creating dichotomies between

Eurocentric epistemology and 'anti-fashion' (Polhemus and Proctor 1978; Davis 1992;

Niessen, Leshkowich and Jones 2003;Stern 2004; Moors and Tarlo 2013; Hoskins 2014). The

result of this dichotomy (See Figure 6.3) was that the case studies evidenced how two

parallel design epistemologies were being constructed and used in tension with one another

in the fashion design process in HEIs. This asymmetric balance of power resulted in a

contested fashion design process built upon two opposing but interconnected fashion

design epistemologies, separate but related to one another through a hierarchical system.

Three forms of racist logic appeared to give licence to this dichotomous system in the

fashion design process: exclusion, absence and the appropriation of some subaltern

epistemologies by the dominant Eurocentric design epistemology through various design

tactics that will be outlined in the following sections.

Racial Logic 7: Excluded Design Epistemologies

Several of the findings indicated that, at different stages of the design process, Global South

and marginalised fashion epistemology appeared to be excluded from fashion design

education. This was in many ways no surprise to me, given my prior experiences as a fashion

design educator, and the dominant role of the Eurocentric fashion canon. However, I found

two key design tactics in use when addressing my first research question and investigating

the formation and mechanics of the design process that enabled design to reproduce and

maintain such exclusions. First, I noted how one finding related to the tendency for

secondary sources to be used as research materials as a design strategy in sketchbooks:

these were often presented with limited textual information. This lack of original authorship

prompts concerns around the validity and reliability of the source from which the image was

taken, raising questions over authenticity. Further, some secondary sources can be highly

biased in comparison with primary sources and raise issues of representativeness; this could

be seen in the use of the 'mug shot' images of Black men in the sketchbooks that drew on

offensive stereotypes of Black communities and criminality (see Figure 3.13). No

information, such as written texts or details of the original sources, was given to identify where these images came from or who created them; however, the impression when they were grouped together played to enduring anti-Black stereotypes and tropes of Black people.

Related to this use of secondary sources was another design tactic which involved the use of photography as a dominant mode in the research process. While I asked students to use photography to record their design experimentation during Sari Class 1 and Sari Class 2, in contrast photography was used as part of the research process in sketchbooks and shaped a conceptually led design approach (McRobbie 1998), using multiple design techniques to re-work the images. The history of the asymmetric power relations between photographer and subject (see Sontag 2001) can exacerbate the passive qualities of the subject in photographic representations, further objectifying and enabling a reliance on stereotypes and tropes. While photography can be used to empower communities, the use of secondary photographic sources that prevailed in the case study resulted in an additional layer of subaltern oppression and marginalisation of forms of knowledge; for example, the sketchbook pilot study in Chapter 3 showed postcard photographs of the Ancient Egyptian mummies from the British Museum, but omitted any references to the colonial gaze that inhabits such institutions and collections. Had the student translated this theme in a different way by visiting Egypt or collaborating with someone who knew about Egyptian culture to learn at first hand about the specificities of the contemporary context surrounding this subject matter, how might the fashion design process have been different? Delving deeper, how might an understanding of power relations be central to the understanding of racial logic in the fashion design process?
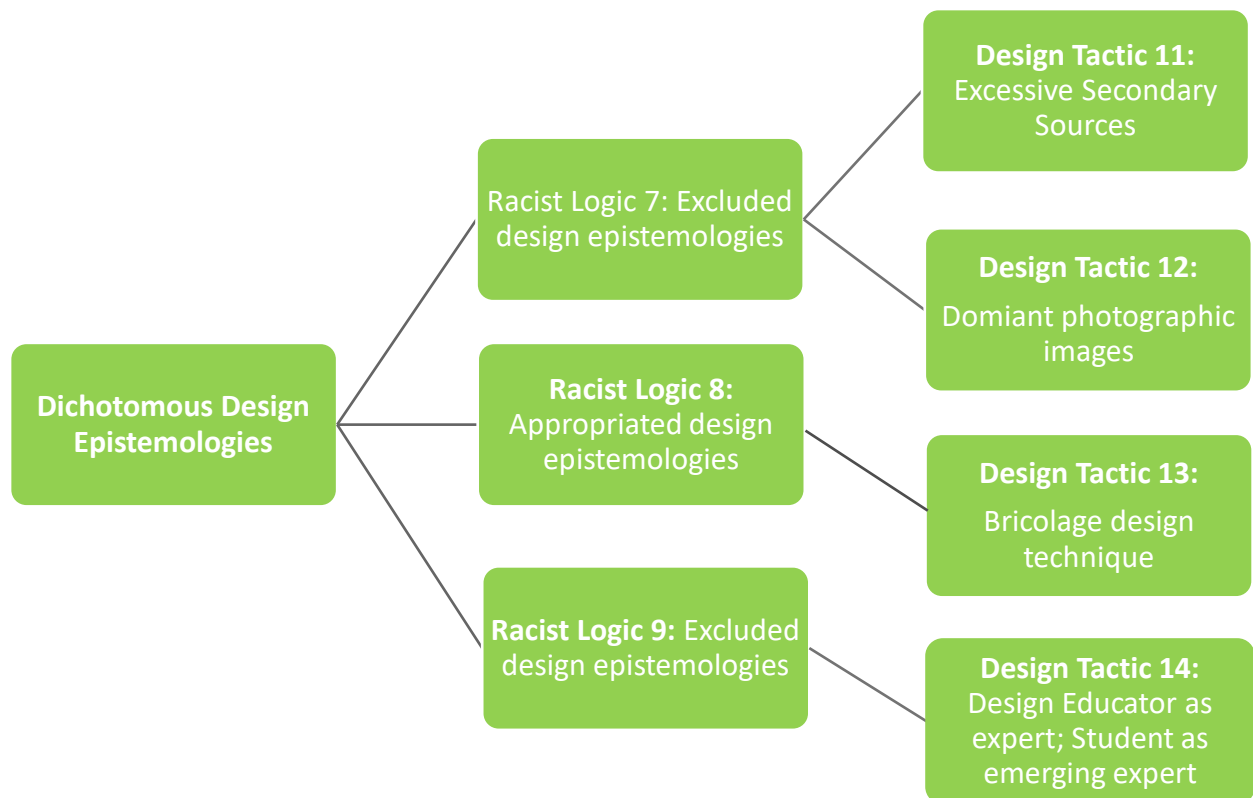
Racist Logic 8: Appropriated Design Epistemologies

Related to the issue of exclusion, another set of findings shows how dichotomous fashion

design epistemologies emerged from the racial logic of appropriation used to imitate, steal,

take inspiration from, borrow or copy as part of the fashion design process. Without lapsing

into a simplistic binary opposition between cultural appropriation and cultural authenticity

(see Green and Kaiser 2017), the findings focused more on the prevailing lack of criticality in

the way power relations are presented in the fashion design process, reflecting abyssal

divisions (de Sousa Santos 2014). This lack of criticality was supported through a design

approach based on bricolage, a term employed to describe using 'whatever comes to

hand'[107] and which involves combining a diverse range of elements as part of the fashion

design process.

For example, in the 'All About Love' class, three examples of student groupwork

presented aesthetics-led experimentation that privileged the manipulation of texture,

colour and shape to create their designs. This approach combined a fluid mix of concepts,

but these examples demonstrated a fashion design process that lacked context and which

appeared to play down the original source of the ideas. Instead, the focus was on the

outcome and the techniques employed to re-mix the ideas rather than giving a fuller

consideration to the context of the user or the concepts employed; this led to an uncritical

appropriation of ideas.

Racial Logic 9: Excluded Design Epistemologies

The third and final theme that also informs the practice of dichotomous design

epistemologies in fashion design education is the exclusion of subaltern and marginalised

design epistemologies in the fashion design process. This was shown by the extensive use of

secondary sources in the sketchbooks that meant, by default, that fewer primary sources

were included as part of the research process. This reliance on secondary sources resulted

in the prevalence of Eurocentric fashions and only a small number of sketchbooks showing

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[107] 'Bricolage', *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bricolage

non-Eurocentric fashions in the sketchbook analysis, leading to a predominantly Eurocentric fashion pedagogical process.

Looking across the findings, a key design tactic that contributed to this approach related to the traditional structures of design pedagogy, in which the design educator teaches from an expert position and thereby initiates a pedagogical process in which the student is positioned as an emerging expert as part of the design process. My pedagogical experimentation was informed by a traditional education-led curriculum; however, in Sari Class 2, the Library Class and the W/NB POC Reading Group my role as the 'expert' was called into question. Although these attempts to create dialogical pedagogical spaces (Freire 2014 [1968] hooks 2001) to which students could also bring their own experiential knowledge – for example, a student showing traditional Thai draping approaches in Sari Class 2 – most students remained confined by tha institutional structure or deferred to my status as educator, as happened in the Reading Group. The result of this was a lack of student-informed design knowledge or instruction in the classroom, further emphasising the absence of a non-Eurocentric fashion canon in the classroom, echoing the concept of 'epistemicide' (de Sousa Santos 2017) in fashion, in which marginalised fashion knowledge was obliterated.

6.3. Restoring 'Wholeness' in the Fashion Design Process

In this section I now turn to answer my second research question, *What pedagogical approaches could be devised to support more culturally diverse ways to design in fashion design education?* by discussing the findings from my PedAr experimentation in Chapters 4 and 5. Responding to the findings from my first research question, about the silences

around a hegemonic, fragmented and disembodied racist fashion design process in fashion design education in the UK, this second part now discusses ways to re-embody and reconstruct fashion design around a process of 'wholeness' (hooks 1994; 2003) that challenges the lack of context in which fashion is created around the universalist 'ethnoclass Man' (Wynter 2003, p.260).

To answer my second research question and re-embody the fashion design process in fashion design education, I turned to the concept of 'wholeness', a counter-hegemonic strategy by Black and women of colour feminists writing on the topic of love-politics (hooks 2000; Nash 2011; White 2021). In the context of education, a 'vision of wholeness' (hooks 2003, p.179) emphasises the classroom as a space for 'whole human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world' (hooks 1994, pp. 14-15). This pedagogical approach deeply resonated with me during my PedAR research phases by guiding me to utilise marginalised and excluded knowledges as a mode of agency in the fashion classroom. The concept of 'wholeness' has directed me towards a path of self-reflection in which I have been able to immerse myself more fully as part of the fashion design process. Doing this has enabled me to re-evaluate my role as a fashion design educator, responding to the view that design education 'is delivered mostly by educators who themselves have not been adequately educated.' (Fry 2017, p. 29).

My findings argue that for fashion design educators and students to devise more culturally diverse ways to design requires the reorienting of the fashion design process by embedding three core approaches: relationality, collaboration and interdisciplinarity. Combined, these elements help to initiate a process of fashionalization (Niessen 2003) to restore an alternative anti-fashion design process and provide a counter-hegemonic
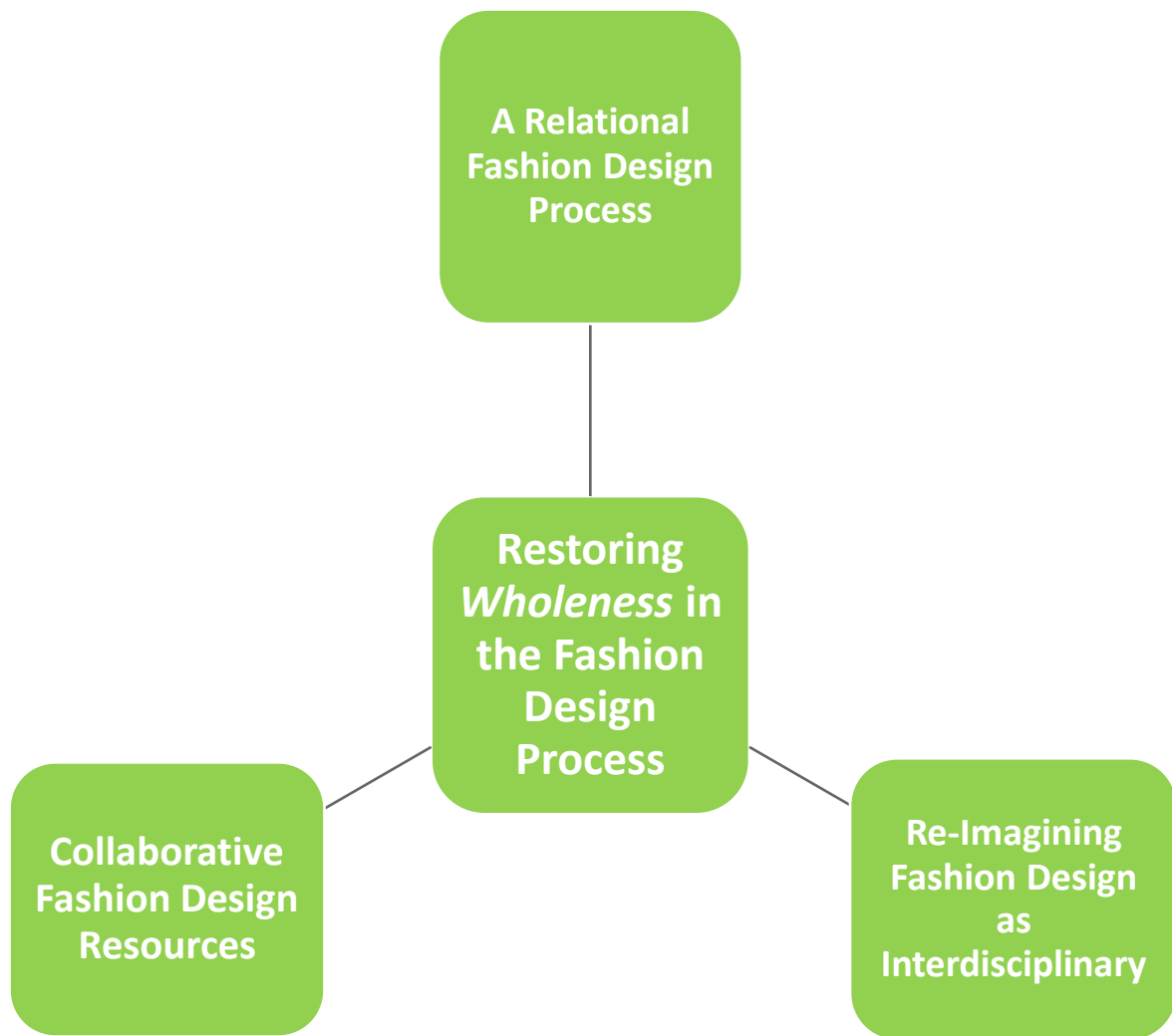
FIGURE 6. 4 RECENTRING WHOLENESS IN THE FASHION DESIGN PROCESS

fashion design pedagogy. Embedding these approaches within the fashion design process would help to rethink fashion *away* from colonial and racist logic and *towards* people's – students, educators and marginalised people's – lived experiences as a means to expose the colonial and racist logic that structures fashion design. This approach would encourage a more relational and humanistic approach to fashion: designing with people's racial, cultural, and gendered differences to include *everybody's* everyday fashion practices (Buckley and Clarke 2017).

These themes are further elaborated as part of this discussion that sets out to consider how the coloniality of fashion design worked through three key design strategies and associated forms of practice to construct racialised and gendered representations, which I outline in the following sections. Echoing Willis' (2006) notion of ontological design, here I argue how including both the 'wholeness' of the fashion design educator and the student might lead to new collaborative forms of fashion design practice and pedagogy. Three key findings will be discussed in the following sections: a relational fashion design process, collaborative fashion design resources and re-imaging fashion design as interdisciplinary.

6.3.1. A Relational Fashion Design Process

This section demonstrates how some of the empirical findings from my PedAR research in Chapters 4 and 5 point to curricular strategies that can help to regain the concept of wholeness in the fashion design process by re-orienting fashion design making towards the relational (Icaza and Vazquez 2018, p. 130) by situating fashion within everyday fashion practices (Buckley and Clarke 2017). These pedagogical strategies show the value of ordinary and vernacular, everyday forms of fashion, alongside forms of scholar activism, to help to re-focus ethical and anti-racist issues in the fashion design process. Indeed, de Sousa Santos, in his review of epistemologies of the Global South, emphasises how the majority of different forms of knowledge in the world, and those which hold most value for global majority peoples, are based around oral, local and artisanal knowledge (de Sousa Santos 2018, p. 297).

Exploring the concept of 'everyday life' (see de Certeau et al. 1998; Benjamin 2002 [1982]) in design contexts is not new (see Manzini 2015; 2019; Gaskins 2019); however, it remains novel and under-researched in fashion design. Design historians and scholars Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clark explore overlooked 'ordinary, or routine' fashion systems (Buckley and Clarke 2017, p. 7) to persuasively argue for the recognition of everyday fashion practices in fashion studies:

> the everyday is hard to locate, difficult to know, and outside of traditional fields of knowledge demands an alternative approach when dealing with a subject such as fashion so as to sidestep fashion's distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities. (Buckley and Clarke 2017, p.9)

The authors point to specific everyday sites which have been overlooked in fashion discourses, such as the street, the wardrobe, the sewing box and cultural rituals. In many ways, by centring myself and embedding my social fashion narratives more fully into the fashion design process, my thesis has argued for the incorporation of discourse associated with the streets where I come from, my family's wardrobe, thinking about the tools in the sewing box that are used to make fashion and sharing the religious rituals that embody my identity.

In this way my findings show how using my fashion experience in the classroom opened a dialogical space in the curriculum that enabled me as educator, as well as others, such as Librarian A and students from the Reading Group, to explore their relational context, rather than an abstracted epistemology. By rethinking and re-making fashion *away* from fashion's colonial systems, the fashion design process could, in these

ways, move *towards* alternative heterogeneous fashion design narratives shaped through a process of fashionalisation (Niessen 2003). These curricular strategies demonstrated a number of ways in which extensive connections might be established and sustained through locally specific understandings in order to enable the decolonising of fashion design education (Bedford 2020; Barry 2021) by students *and* educators. For this reason, relationality has been an important practical decolonial strategy for marginalised communities, such as indigenous Aboriginal groups in Australia (Tynan 2021) who work with their communities so that 'relationships do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality' (Wilson 2008, p7). This shows how embedding relationality within the fashion design process requires both alternative fashion design epistemologies and alternative curricula. To initiate this process, exposing my role as a woman of colour fashion design educator has been pivotal.

My relationship to teaching fashion design

A key set of findings showed that to devise a fashion design process that makes wholeness central to the fashion design process requires the educator to recognise their positionality and relationship with fashion within the curriculum to counter coloniality in design (Tlostanova 2017). In contrast to the way I had taught fashion design for over twenty years, in which my personal identity and fashion narratives were absent both in the fashion classroom and the teaching materials I used, during this research I began to learn that to expose the coloniality of fashion design first required me to recognise and value

my worth as a woman of colour fashion designer and include the postcolonial/ Othered fashion voice (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2008, p14) in my teaching.

For example, teaching Sari Class 1 and Sari Class 2 showed the value of a using a curriculum that foregrounded non-Eurocentric, tacit fashion knowledge by using a living Global South fashion resource in the form of my mother's saris. Introducing students to alternative examples of anti-fashion through saris enabled students to interact with one another: some of them were able to share their relationship with unstitched cloth and physically embody and wear a non-Eurocentric fashion garment. While I did question how another fashion design educator, especially a white fashion design educator, might devise a similar curriculum, key to this approach was embedding interactions and relational fashion networks using anti-fashion in class; thus another fashion educator could locate and use their own fashion narratives in a similar way to expand and embed more culturally diverse forms of fashion. This showed the importance of locally specific pedagogical approaches and how the work to bring a pluriversal fashion agenda into education is dependent on multiple factors, especially the fashion design educator themselves.

Thus, my PedAr research showed that to re-construct fashion design first required me to reconstruct myself. By rejecting dualist concepts of the self, and re-centring *my* 'everyday' concepts of fashion, I gave agency to culturally specific experiences that had been excluded from fashion, and in this way I began to recognize how '[b]odies speak to us. Your body might tell you it is not coping with what you are asking; and you need to listen. You need to listen to your body. If it screams, stop. If it moans, slow down. Listen.' (Ahmed 2017, p.111).

Listening to who my body is and sharing my vulnerabilities enabled me to listen to my students and explore the context of the central body being designed for in fashion design education. This recognition of the 'self' also facilitated a space to open up and counter the dehumanising fashion design process. This approach of centring the race, space and body politics of the educator and student echoes recent shifts in design education towards centring the positionality of both educator and students in the design classroom (Noel 2020) and acknowledging the indigenous lands and colonial history of the educational institution.[108] Both the 'All About Love' class and the Reading Group showed the vulnerabilities of both educator and students – for example, presenting images of myself in a hijab in my class and facilitating student-led discussions focused on pastoral issues in which students were able to disclose personal and intimate information rather than focusing solely on traditional curricular content, as happened in the Reading Group.

These alternative networks of counter-design and pedagogical cultures showed the interconnectedness and complexities of people's lived experiences and appeared to encourage a more relational and human approach to design pedagogy: designing *with* people's differences to include a multiplicity of voices and experiences. It is only through doing this that a reorientation of fashion design towards a more ethical and political practice can be achieved. For fashion design to learn from, rather than exploit, marginalised and subaltern groups it must create and offer spaces in which heterogeneous concepts of fashion can thrive and flourish.

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[108] See the work of First Peoples and Native American graphic designer and educator Sadie Red Wing: httpps://www.sadieredwing.com

6.3.2. Collaborative Pedagogical Resources

A further set of findings suggested ways in which the resources used in fashion design education could be re-oriented towards a fashion design pedagogy that is informed by a more culturally diverse approach. This was evidenced through a more collaborative pedagogical process in which a number of different stakeholders in HEIs, including students, non-lecturing staff, community artists and unions, could embed resources into the fashion design process. For example, the work of the community artist for the W/NB POC Reading Group provided non-traditional art and design educational resources such as tablecloths and reggae music, expanding beyond Eurocentric art and design traditions. This showed students a more informal approach to art and design making and brought in different criteria, such as a respect for the table that they drew on, tacit forms of art practice and providing an empathetic design process for students.

Such an approach questions the conditions required to make unlearning coloniality in fashion design possible: what resources are required to build a culturally diverse, plural and expanded set of shared fashion design knowledge? These findings showed the limitations of my role as educator and the need to collaborate with others to create alternative sets of pedagogical resources based around subaltern fashion knowledge. This process involved not only building the curriculum, but also providing emotional and pastoral resources.

My PedAR research aim, to explore ways to work towards a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy, required more than simply acknowledging colonial pasts in the curriculum: to decolonise the fashion design process required the use of a multiplicity of resources to

devise design practices to create a dialectical space between students, educators and other HEI stakeholders (Freire 2014 [1968] hooks 2001)

However, delving deeper into the findings showed that critical to this understanding of building collaborative fashion design resources was the need to attend to the discourses of power and knowledge in both the discipline and the study of fashion design. Without this contextualisation, such as in Sari Class 2, my collaboration with Tutor B uncritically reproduced the appropriation of fabric manipulation because there was a lack of context to challenge the hierarchical design tactics that enable cultural appropriation to occur. Furthermore, exposing how power operates in pedagogical spaces involved providing emotional resources too, such as the support network for discussing personal issues in the W/NB POC Reading Group, meaning that less time was devoted to traditional forms of education. This showed that to re-humanise fashion design education required me to de-hierarchise my role as the expert in the classroom to facilitate a non-hierarchical, collaborative pedagogical and fashion design process, which is discussed in more depth below.

De-hierarchising my role as educator

Several findings showed how my role as fashion design educator was dependent on several other factors, involving the contribution of others and recognising institutional roles in the pedagogical process. De-centring my role as educator played an important role in establishing a space to facilitate, through an informal educational approach, a dialogical space to decolonise the pedagogical design process. For example, in the Reading Group,

without initial support, the informal institutional spaces, such as in the canteen and non-timetabled classrooms played an important role in enabling space for subaltern voices to emerge.

In addition, my PedAR research showed that pluralising the curriculum required more than an individual endeavour on my part as educator; instead, the input of students, non-lecturing staff and the student union supported the collective endeavour to unlearn the coloniality of fashion design. This showed the value of shared expert knowledge, such as that provided by Librarian A's important role in the Library Class. I had no prior knowledge of the DDC system and how the mechanics of this worked in the library to privilege Eurocentric forms of fashion design epistemology. Librarian A's alternative feminist book display showed possibilities for alternative, counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge production that are absent from many traditional curricula. Similarly, bringing in a community artist to teach in the Reading Group showed alternative ideas for using the classroom based on communally shared spaces. Another kind of support was shown by the Student Union President at College D and their capacity to drive change in the institution by inviting me to speak at a public event. These examples of support from non-lecturing staff showed the potential of using alternative teaching spaces to create resources for pedagogical change and a way to displace the central role of educators in the educational process.

Furthermore, learning from and with students, such as finding out how to drape cloth in traditional Thai style from a student in Sari Class 1, created additional subaltern anti-fashion resources for teaching fashion; this was only possible because a space was created for classroom experimentation, in this case reconfiguring furniture and creating

both a physical and dialogical space. This approach contrasted with the continued use of the mannequin as a Eurocentric fashion resource in the 'All About Love' class, which maintained and reproduced heteronormative fashion values. Therefore, the creation of alternative fashion design resources required a shift in my role as the expert educator, to foster the creation of new pedagogical spaces led by and with marginalised groups to challenge universalist design principles and practices.

6.3.3. Re-Imagining Fashion Design as Interdisciplinary

A final group of findings that have helped me answer my second research question pointed to the limitations that specialist disciplinary boundaries presented in exposing coloniality in fashion design and in devising culturally diverse ways to design fashion. At first, I looked through my findings to locate what strategies worked best for expanding the curriculum beyond the racial hierarchies embedded in Eurocentric fashion; however, my results did not appear to point clearly to what a culturally diverse curriculum might encompass. While it was clear that the results of my PedAR showed the value of expanding the curriculum through Global South resources and exposing hierarchical and epistemological normative thinking, my results also showed gaps in what a culturally diverse pedagogical process might be.

The limitations in the curriculum related not to *what* was being taught, but *how* it was being taught by specialist educators and *where* it was being taught in a traditional and boundaried classroom space. Despite basing a curriculum around decolonial feminist perspectives in my PedAr experimentation, limitations emerged that related to educator-led

methods of teaching and the institutional structure; these limitations showed the need for a reconceptualisation of both educational content *and* methods of teaching fashion pedagogy. For example, adopting Mohanty's pedagogical strategy 'The Feminist Solidarity or Comparative Studies Model' (Mohanty 2003, p.242), which aims to encourage dialogue between students and fashion design educators, resulted in a tendency to adopt a tokenistic pedagogy in relation to pluralism and diversity For example, in Sari Class 2 students were able to foreground fashion aesthetics because of Tutor B's failure to contextualise textile techniques, and some students in 'All About Love' used the institutional structure to locate mannequins to work on and so reproduce heteronormative fashion design.

In contrast, my findings from the Reading Group focused less on curricular content and more on the interconnected pedagogical practices and dynamics of art and design praxis in the context of decolonial feminism and its relationship with the institution. Up to this point my PedAr experimentation had not sufficiently considered the role of the institution as part of a decolonial feminist approach to education. However, my findings from the Reading Group showed a pedagogical process that was assembled and framed around multiple and interdisciplinary art and design perspectives, producing heterogenous forms of art and design praxis. Thus, I began to see that experimenting outside of the fashion design process allowed me to move beyond simply revising the process: I began to consider what a radical departure from fashion altogether might mean.

My experiments with an' undercommons' space (Moten and Harney 2013), described in Chapter 5 reflected the view of the journalist and employment rights campaigner Tansy Hoskins, who has explored the capitalist and patriarchal roots of fashion design manufacturing, production and consumption and calls for a revision of the entire

fashion design system (Hoskins 2014); such thinking calls into question whether fashion design pedagogy should even remain in the HEI classroom, and who should be teaching it.

My findings therefore respond to calls for the project to decolonise to be radical, rather than creating an approach that simply reforms current pedagogical models (Schultz et.al 2018). In such an approach, decolonising design is shaped by a pressing need to re-think and re-form the very foundations of prevailing design epistemology, so that 'decolonizing design involves more than just amplifying interests and concerns that have been marginalized within Design Studies' dominant discourses' (ibid 2018, p. 23). While this is an important approach, decolonising design also involves challenging the dominant forms, conventions, grammar and language through which knowledge about design is expressed and enacted in ongoing research and design work. In other words, it is a *radical* rather than reformist project, organised less around a struggle for the inclusion and representation of difference and marginality within colonial forms and more around 'the unsettlement and destabilization of forms – diffused, naturalized, and habitual – that instil colonial relations of power.' (ibid 2018).

Exploring the boundaries and margins of the discipline of design has become useful to design theorists (Fry 2014) and design educators (Abdulla 2018) challenging modernity/coloniality, who argue that 'knowing where you are designing, or are going to design, is always geopolitical' (Fry and Kalantidou 2014, p.6). Anthropologist Arturo Escobar expands upon this in his seminal article 'Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise' by stressing the need for 'another space for the production of knowledge, another way of thinking*, un paradigma otro*, the very possibility of talking about "worlds and knowledges otherwise"' (Escobar 2007, p.179).

A New Non-Eurocentric Fashion Space

An important insight that was evidenced in both the Library Class and the Reading Group was how they provided unique spaces for students to assemble and collectively identify patterns and intersections across different disciplinary boundaries. Such spaces helped me to locate new alternative dialogical space *and* informal educational processes, discussed in Chapter 5. These non-traditional informal pedagogical approaches provided both physical and conceptual spaces to create a new non-Eurocentric decolonial feminist education process in art and design that pluralised art and design praxis. Consequently, as Eurocentric epistemology became de-centred, a space opened to discuss subaltern and marginalised forms of art and design. The value of these alternative spaces was that they displaced the Eurocentric and traditional canon, resulting in a new conceptual learning space in which no single art and design canon dominated.

Although for the Reading Group the focus was not on the fashion design process, by centring knowledge and power, instead of normative Eurocentric art and design discourse, an alternative political and democratic space was created. These new spaces used informal learning to embed and encourage more student-student and student-educator connections. This was evidenced, for example, by centring affect in learning, such as laughter, tensions and whispering to create dialectical connections and collectively see the links of coloniality between different art and design processes. The question which emerges from these (or similar) contexts is how interdisciplinary approaches to fashion design in HEIs could create an alternative non-Eurocentric fashion epistemology through a new fashion space, which I will discuss in the next section by tentatively proposing a new framework to decolonise fashion design pedagogy.

6.4. Towards a Framework for a Pluriversal Fashion Design Pedagogy

This section returns to the aims and objectives of this thesis and presents a new framework that responds to *both* of my research questions by exposing and intervening in the silences that support the reproduction of racism in fashion design education. This study has set out to investigate how an alternative fashion design pedagogy, one that emerges from the subaltern – those who have been excluded and marginalised – and their knowledge generated from the margins of the modern/colonial world system might generate an alternative, culturally diverse process in fashion design education.

At the core of this PhD study lies an understanding of how 'lived', embodied experiences are situated and localised, so that the '*how* and *what* we think are indivisible from *where* we think' (Fry and Kalantidou's italics) (Fry and Kalantidou 2014, p.6); in other words, 'the corporeal, fleshly, material existence of bodies is deeply embedded in political relations' (Harcourt, Icaza and Vargas 2016, p.20). Moreover, this PhD journey has been one in which I have learnt to mobilise my embodied role as a woman of colour fashion educator in the fashion design process.

Questioning the centrality of the normative fashioned body in fashion design education has shown how a hegemonic de-humanising fashion design process, shaped by colonial logic, reproduces thinking that reflects the Cartesian mind/body separation (Grosfoguel 2013) and dominates fashion design education.

In particular, Sylva Wynter's category of the 'Human' and the role of the over-represented Western human figure, the 'ethnoclass Man' (Wynter 2003, p.262), discussed in Chapter 1, has repeatedly been evident in my findings as a mechanism to exclude subaltern and marginalised forms of anti-fashion from the fashion design process. Designing fashions

around a universalist concept of 'Man' (ibid 2003) has been demonstrated through the empirical data to privilege a racist design process that excludes, appropriates and subordinates marginalised peoples and fashion cultures from the Global South, reducing the rich diversity of cultural difference to stereotypes and tropes.

A recurring theme from my PedAR findings has been the value of realising a process of 'visibilizing the invisible-ized' (Reyes 2019,p 6), an approach elaborated upon by social justice educator G.T Reyes, who argues that the project of working towards equality in education requires intersectional thinking that reconnects aspects that have been excluded, enforced by the dominant colonial logic at work in education: 'those parts of our human whole that have been separated and severed – values, selflove, identity, history, culture, purpose, and connection with ancestors, community, and the earth.' (Reyes 2019, p 5).

For me, this process of making racist logic visible has meant returning to decolonial feminist theory that postulates the intersections of colonial, racist and patriarchal thinking in society. Drawing together the findings from the empirical research undertaken in this discussion chapter has shown how the study of fashion design and the academic literature in fashion have both enabled racism to be reproduced in fashion design education through a process of silencing. Table 6.1 reflects on the relationship between the racist logic evidenced in my findings and the characteristics required to devise a culturally diverse fashion design pedagogy by drawing on decolonial feminist pedagogical thinking.

This new conceptual framework for a pluriversal concept of fashion design provides an answer to both of my research questions based around four significant pedagogical stages that expose and disrupt the silences in the fashion design process that currently support the reproduction of racism in fashion design education, summarised in Figure 6.4.

Racist Logic in the Fashion Design Process	Counter-Hegemonic Decolonial Feminist Fashion Design Pedagogy
Racist Fashion Logic 1: Decontextualisation/ Recontextualisation into European ideas	*Situated and local-centric design*
Racist Fashion Logic 2: Abstracting the human body	*Heterogeneous bodies*
Racist Fashion Logic 3: Homogenising cultural differences	*Plural cultures*
Racial Logic 4: Invisibility/ubiquity	*Decolonial contexts*
Racial Logic 5: Othering processes	*Exposing whiteness*
Racial Logic 6: Institutional educator-student relationships	*Dialogical spaces*
Racist Logic 7: Excluded design epistemology	*Culturally Embedded design*
Racist Logic 8: Appropriated design epistemology	*Dialogical forms of design*
Racist Logic 9: Destroyed design epistemology	*Collective epistemology*

TABLE 6. 1 COMPARING RACIST LOGIC IN THE FASHION DESIGN PROCESS TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ANTI-RACIST DECOLONIAL FEMINIST FASHION DESIGN PEDAGOGY.

The table shows how responding to racist logic through situated and locally centred forms of fashion can shape decolonial, heterogenous and plural fashion cultures in fashion design education. Identifying how racist and colonial logic operates in the fashion design process both responded to my first research question and informed my PedAR methodologies and my research design.

Looking across the combined empirical results that showed how re-humanising the fashion design process was necessary to counter its dehumanised design process has opened up space for me to devise new approaches to teaching and learning culturally

diverse and anti-racist fashion design. This alternative non-Eurocentric fashion design process critically questions cultural differences *and* exposes hegemonic racist hierarchical fashion concepts in fashion design education. The findings show how specific pedagogical stages and curricular approaches foreground decolonial feminist fashion pedagogy and by doing so provide spaces of education to devise an anti-racist fashion design pedagogy.

The first step of *de-hierarchising the educator in the student-educator relationship* is to enable a process in which the educator is de-centred, which enables a new pedagogical approach and space to open up in which specific cultural and social contexts can be central. Without this stage of democratising the role of educators and students, there is an ongoing risk that students might continue to draw on the Eurocentric canon and exclude or appropriate marginalised fashion cultures in their aesthetics-oriented fashion forms, thus maintaining the tactic of decontextualiaation/recontextualisation, as identified and discussed in Chapter 4.

This initial stage of providing a pedagogical process based on equality between educator and student here, as part of the wider research aims to decolonise, has also been stressed by Marxist feminists, who contend that different forms of oppression cannot be overcome unless there is recognition of the structural inequalities that society is built upon (Carpenter and Mojab, 2017). By implementing a first stage based on equality in fashion design education and broader art and design discourses and locating racist logic, a second step of *re-conceptualising fashion design within colonial thinking* is enabled. Acknowledging the issues underpinning cultural and institutional bias and how the taxonomy of fashion design epistemology is constructed is, I argue, is essential in enabling students to create new dialogical spaces to explore counter-hegemonic fashion design processes.
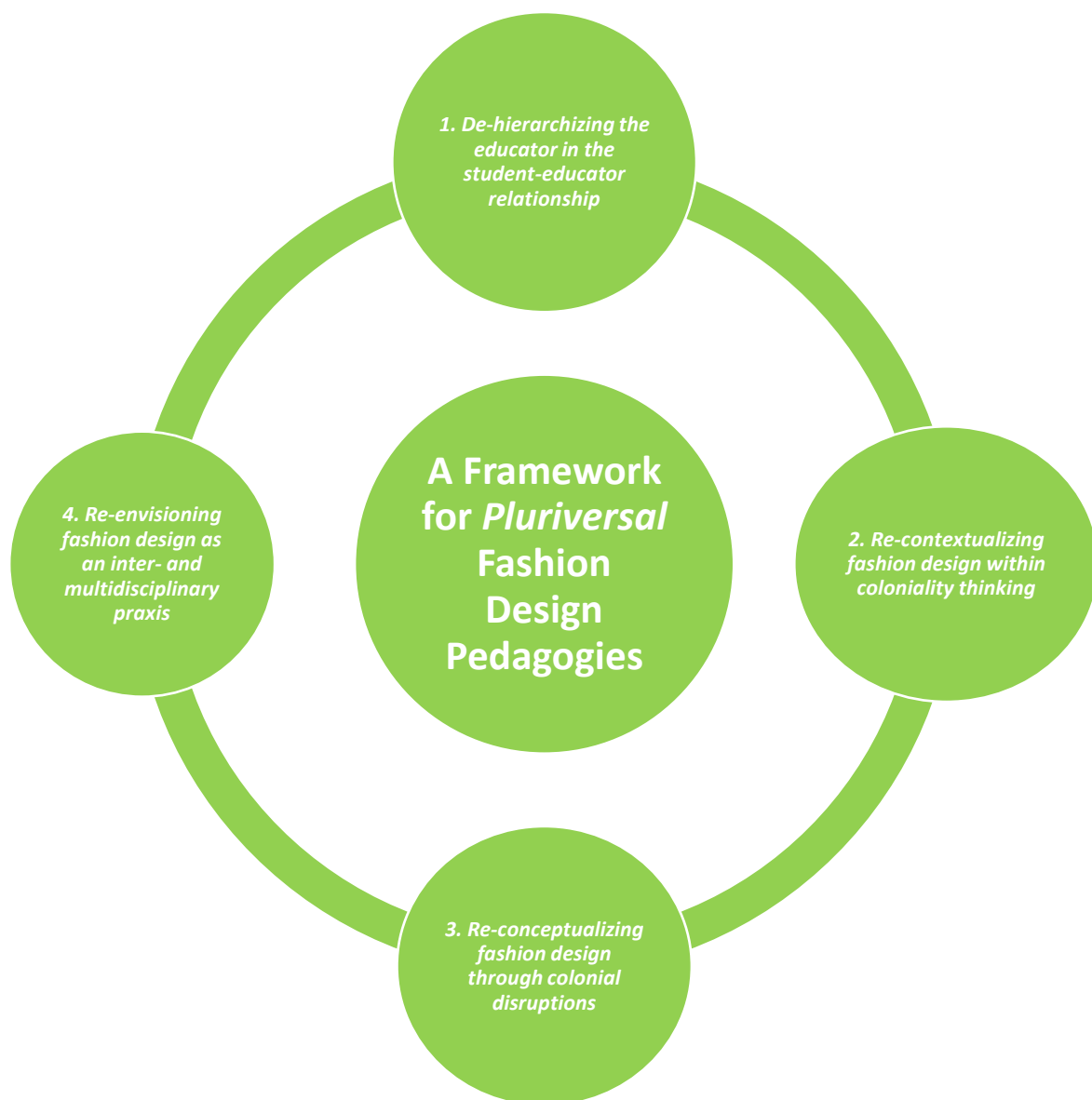
FIGURE 6. 5 A FRAMEWORK FOR A *PLURIVERSAL* FASHION DESIGN PEDAGOGY

Therefore, it is only *after* identifying how colonial thinking operates in fashion design that a third stage of *re-conceptualising fashion design through colonial disruption* can be investigated. Here, I argue that without both previous steps any attempt to decolonise fashion design risks exacerbating the existing power imbalance that dictates who is, and

who is not, allowed to speak, which can result in tokenistic and superficial gesturing based on diversity initiatives (Ahmed 2012).

These stages lead to a final process of *re-envisioning fashion design as an inter- and multidisciplinary praxis* in which the displaced and de-centred fashion design process gives ways to a re-thinking of fashion design by drawing on different forms and traditions of fashion from multiple contexts across different temporal and spatial modes. The outcomes here would be able to centre cultural diversity, anti-racism and decolonial agendas in infinite configurations, as shown in the Library Class: the use of words such as 'expanded' and 'big' underpin the creation of plural design practices (Escobar 2017; de la Cadena and Blaser 2018; Kothari et.al. 2019).

However, this framework only partly accounts for the role of the institution, and, further, neglects the global context of the educator and consequently does not fully answer Research Question 2. Therefore, there is further work needed to make sense of the global and political spaces where fashion design education takes place and how this relates to fashion's relationship with race and racism. In this way this framework requires iterations to further theorise the concepts of space, race and gender within fashion design pedagogy to reflect on *what* the relationship between fashion design pedagogy and the institution is: *where* fashion design is taught and 'about the space of that happening, and how that matters' (White 2021, p.376). Future research agendas will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

6.5. Contributions to the field of fashion design pedagogy

In this section I further elaborate on the dimensions of decolonial feminist fashion design education that have emerged from this research and that relate to:

1. The spatial and temporal aspects of fashion design education

2. The art and design techniques employed to reproduce racist logic in fashion design education

3. What should count as fashion epistemology in fashion design education

4. The resources that should, or need, to be made as part of a fashion design education

5. The relationship between the fashion design educator and the fashion design student.

I have explored these themes in my thesis research and in this section I discuss how my thesis results and findings provides five key original contributions to knowledge in the field of fashion design pedagogy: Identifying a gap in the academic literature on fashion to address racism in fashion design; systematic analysis of the field of undergraduate fashion design education in the UK; empirical evidence of racism in the fashion design process in fashion design education; advancing an 'activist-scholar' methodology through PedAR, and a framework for a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy.

Identifying a gap in the academic literature on fashion to address racism in fashion design

The literature review in this thesis provides original contributions to the field of fashion design pedagogy by bringing together literature from the fields of fashion design *with* decolonial literature, critical race theory, critical pedagogy and decolonial feminist thinking

which has not, to my knowledge, been done before. This has generated new insights for the field of fashion design education that identifies how racism operates through fashion design and argues that this means that racism is reproduced in fashion design education. This gap in the fashion literature showed not only that racism has been overlooked in this field of literature – or, where it was acknowledged, there was bias and little attempt was made to address this – but specifically that further research was needed to understand the mechanics of *how* racism operates in fashion design pedagogy.

Systematic analysis of the field of fashion design education

A second original contribution from this thesis is how it provides an overview and metanarrative through which to understand the undergraduate fashion design sector in the UK through a systematic content analysis research into undergraduate fashion design pedagogy which has, to date and to my knowledge, not been undertaken before. This new research provides empirical data and results based on the academic year of 2017-2018 that show key insights into the dominant pedagogical paradigm in use in the sector during this period, which can to some extent be used to generalise across the sector.

The results showed how specific art and design visualisation techniques dominate the curriculum and pedagogical processes, resulting in the de-prioritisation of three-dimensional fashion praxis in the fashion design process. This important and original finding helped me to make links with decolonial feminist theory and apply intersectional thinking in fashion design education to counter the domination of two-dimensional art and design techniques as part of the fashion design process.

Empirical evidence of racism in fashion design education

This thesis has produced empirical evidence from undergraduate fashion design students' sketchbooks and from the fashion history section in a library related to its classification system to show firstly that racism is reproduced in the fashion design education sector and secondly that certain design techniques and tactics enable racist logic to operate in the fashion design process. Generating empirical data is necessary in the field of fashion design education where, to date, no research on the processes of racist logic have been undertaken, so that the wider fashion design education community can learn how certain pedagogical processes are implicated in reproducing racism. As no research into racism in the fashion design process has been undertaken in a large sample, these results and findings are significant for the field of fashion design pedagogy and the wider process of racism more broadly in the art and design sector.

Advancing activist-scholar methodologies in fashion research methods

My identification as a woman of colour researcher has played a significant role in my choice of research methodology throughout this thesis. Due to the lack of access to sketchbook data I had to re-think my research methodology in relation to the institution, and this resulted in my adoption of militant research methods (Russell 2014) as part of my PedAr, an original contribution in the field of fashion research methods (Kawamura 2014). My research as co-facilitator of the W/NB POC Reading Group therefore offers new and novel approaches to fashion research methods to advance approaches that challenge traditional universalist research methods. In addition, my adoption of an activist-scholar methodology using a decolonial feminist approach brings an original contribution to the field of decolonial

and militant research methodology (Russell 2014) by arguing for the need to embed the researcher's role more fully into the research process to encourage a more subjective methodological research process. This original contribution to decolonial research methods demonstrates novel ways to address silences relating to white normativity as a controlling tool in research processes.

A framework for a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy

My framework for a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy shows an original contribution to the field of decolonising design pedagogy, as well as fashion design pedagogy, by highlighting the co-dependency and interrelatedness of racist and colonial logics *with* design pedagogy. These new pedagogical insights in the field of fashion design show the value of relationality, collaboration and alliances as ways to forge alternative liberatory spaces in HEI institutions with allies who want to do this work. The framework shows that to expand beyond a Eurocentric design canon first requires an exposition of the way that racist and colonial logic operates in the canon; the value of this approach is that it could also be applied in the pedagogy of other fields of design. The framework shows how implementing an interconnected four-stage process in fashion design pedagogy has the potential to build towards a creative alternative non-Eurocentric and counter-hegemonic pluriversal design process in fashion design education.

6.6. Final Reflections

To conclude this chapter, I reflect on the limitations of the research undertaken in this thesis and discuss a future agenda for research on racism in fashion design education and culturally diverse and anti-racist fashion design pedagogy. The most significant outcome of this research has been that it has generated both new empirical evidence that pinpoints exactly how racist logic operates in the fashion design process *and* has explored alternative decolonial fashion design pedagogy which can be shared and disseminated with colleagues in fashion design education and more widely in the field of academic fashion design and with fashion designers. Prior to these results, no research on the topic of racism in the design process in fashion design education had, to my knowledge, been undertaken.

However, it must be noted that the research in this thesis cannot, of course, claim that all fashion design processes have a colonial heritage or logic. In this thesis I have argued that it is the hegemonic paradigmatic fashion design process in fashion design education in HEIs in the UK that fails to acknowledge how fashion design education has been formed as a discipline from a colonial heritage and with enduring colonial and racist logic, despite my personal experience of teaching fashion design in various HEIs in the UK that both helped me to hypothesise that racism is reproduced in fashion design education and provided the impetus to undertake this PhD research journey.

While the research in this thesis has shown the value of applying decolonial feminist thinking to fashion design pedagogy as part of the project to both expose and challenge racism in fashion design, this research cannot conclusively assert that racism is consistently reproduced in every undergraduate fashion design department at every HEI in the UK. In addition, my decolonial feminist pedagogical approach of embedding my identity as a woman of colour fashion design educator more fully into the research process to both

question the Eurocentric fashion design canon and de-hierarchise my role as fashion 'expert'

resulted in a lack of consultation with the views of other fashion design educators. Without

undertaking research with fashion design educators, I cannot identify whether other fashion

design educators will be excited to do this work.

Thus, even with the empirical evidence presented in this thesis that shows how racist

logic in fashion operates and presents ways to creatively de-centre the Eurocentric fashion

design canon, work needs to be continued around *who* to build alliances with in the project

to devise anti-racist fashion design curricula and resources. Consequently, to convince other

fashion design educators to address the racist logic underpinning the white normative art

and design techniques which dominate in fashion design education will be complex. The

powerful factor of whiteness in the field of fashion design which renders racist and colonial

logic in fashion invisible to the majority of educators who, at the time of writing, tend to be

white, will be a continuing challenge.

This means that there are some actions that could potentially be taken at an

institutional level that could bring this research more fully into debates on decolonising

curricula in art and design education – for example, by sharing this research with the Council

for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD)[109] whose strategic plans for the next three

years centre on equality, diversity and inclusive forms of art and design education,[110] and at

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[109] CHEAD is the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) and representative body for the art, design, creative media, and related disciplines in higher education. Its aim is to advance the development of the art and design community in higher education.
[110] See the CHEAD Strategic Plan 2020/21-2025. Online at: https://chead.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CHEAD-strategic-plan-graphic-design.pdf [Accessed 8.5.22]

policy level with ongoing work at the British Fashion Council[111] (BFC) to diversify fashion by engaging with the fashion industry and government.

While this PhD research was limited by both the scope and time-frame of study, so that I was unable to undertake research in a wider range of HEIs, it shows that a framework to implement a pluriversal fashion design pedagogy could support new projects and syllabi in existing fashion design departments. However, this means that such plans will continue to remain within current paradigmatic definitions of fashion if they are to remain within HEIs, and alternative fashion design educational spaces will be overlooked.[112] Consequently, until a new module or undergraduate BA in Anti-Racist Fashion comes into being, for now this framework supports stand-alone project briefs only, neglecting to effect systemic change.

Overall, my research shows that my hypothesis that I was witnessing racism created as part of the fashion design process by students in fashion design education was valid. This perspective shows that there is a need, and that there are possibilities, for alternative polyphonic and multivocal forms of fashion that are situated, creative and collective and have the potential to reverse the current hegemonic direction of fashion so that the un-fashionable and anti-fashion becomes the norm.

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[111] The British Fashion Council (BFC) is a not-for-profit organisation set up in 1983 with the role of strengthening British fashion both within the UK and abroad. See www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk and see the *Diversity and Inclusion in the Fashion Industry Report, 2022.* Online at: https://www.britishfashioncouncil.co.uk/uploads/files/1/J037890%20MBS%20Diversity%20in%20Fashion%5B 40%5D.pdf).

[112] A range of alternative non-HEI fashion education examples is in A. Abbadi (2017) 'Future Fashion Education' ,*Address*: www.addresspublications.com/future-fashion-education/. [Accessed 31.10.2017]

6.6.1. Limitations of the research

Lack of previous studies in the research area

The lack of previous studies of racism in fashion design education impacted upon my choice of research methodology because there was no foundation on which to build this study. This may have contributed to a lack of access to data due to sensitivity around the subject, which meant that I was unable to locate data from several institutions for my research into sketchbooks. Further, with no current anti-racist curriculum in practice in fashion design education I had to creatively explore new ways to experiment with Global South fashion resources and non-Eurocentric fashion resources to co-create new pedagogical processes.

Pace of change in the field of decolonising design and education

My PhD research began in October 2014, when the landscape of decolonising education that emerged from Cape Town University, South Africa (Kwoba et. al 2018) was still a fringe movement in the UK HEI sector. However, since then the move to decolonise education has become mainstream in the UK context (see Gopal 2021; Moosavi 2022), with a growing body of literature supporting the need for institutional change (Bhambra et. al 2018; Sperlinger and McLellan 2018). This means that both my literature review and research undertaken in this PhD between 2017-2020 may already have become superseded by others, or there may be other similar research with access to more recent data than that which was examined here. Although my thesis research presents valuable insights into the historicity of fashion design education and the need to pay close attention to what has gone before, the pace of change may mean that new initiatives to decolonise fashion education may already be taking place in the UK and beyond.

Replicating the study

Several limitations of this thesis research relate to how the research was undertaken by embedding myself as a woman of colour fashion design educator into the fashion design process in fashion design education and the extent to which such an approach or study could be replicated by another researcher. Consequently, this could mean that this research and findings could be skewed or biased or are also limited by my gender and social class. However, as I discussed in Chapter 3, this research has set out to argue for the need for a more subjective research process so I would recommend against another educator attempting to replicate this study; instead the framework should be used in a researcher's own context to reflect their own personal and political identity.

Global and regional differences and sample size (Sketchbook Study)

Although my initial plan for data collection in Chapter 3 was to locate students' sketchbook work from different geographical locations in the UK, I was unable to do so. Furthermore, I was unable to undertake my PedAr research in different regions in the UK. Both factors mean that I might have generated different sets of data if I had been able to undertake my research across the UK. Although I argue that the findings may have been similar even if I had been able to access more regional data: in Chapter 3 the hegemonic fashion design process is shown to be similar throughout the HEI sector in the UK.

Furthermore, due to several restraints resulting from undertaking this study in one region in the UK – although it was across four HEIs – the sample size may have been too small and basing my study on a larger sample size could have generated richer results. However, due to the time constraints of this study it cannot therefore claim to account for aspects of regional variations in fashion design education in the UK.

6.6.2. Future Research

There are three main agendas for future research that emerge from my thesis research that build on institutional change, decolonial feminist methodology and the decolonising of fashion design practice.

Decolonial Feminist Methodology

First, future research prompted by this thesis will build on the Black, Asian and minority ethnic B.A.M.E communities of women that I have made links with as part of this PhD: for example I presented a paper at the Women of Colour Europe conference, Berlin in 2018. The ongoing marginalisation and underrepresentation of racially minoritised women academics in the HEI sector (see Rollock, 2020) is a growing field of study that my research methodology, discussed in Chapter 3, responds to. My aim is to contribute to the field of decolonial feminism by adding to the project to challenge universalism and whiteness in research methodology and to undertake qualitative research on racism.

Future research to decolonise institutions

A second area that my research will be valuable for is the HEI sector, as it offers specific and practical ways for anti-racist pedagogical praxis that reflects how the higher education sector has been responding to the Black Lives Matter campaign and the drive for anti-racist pedagogy in the last two years. There have been several HEI initiatives in the UK that have set out recommendations for decolonisation of education in the HEI sector (see, for example Liyange 2020) which primarily focus on the need to decolonise course curricula, improve pedagogical praxis, train staff and support students. Furthermore, the majority of HEIs are now providing in-house anti-racist initiatives, such as the Challenging Racism

Project, started in 2021 at The University of Kent, that sets out seven strategic objectives to implement anti-racism across the university.[113] This shows the rapid change in the awareness of racism in higher education and in education more broadly. Against this backdrop, my research can be further developed to support both institutional strategic plans for decolonisation and specific projects within art and design departments in HEIs, such as establishing new research centres and writing new syllabi.

Indeed, in my last year of PhD study, in 2021, I was appointed by Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, as a senior lecturer in fashion design focusing on race with an aim to further decolonial and anti-racist fashion design agendas in the curriculum. This is, to both my and my colleagues' knowledge, the first role of this kind in the UK[114] and reflects a shift towards embedding racial understanding into design, as some US HEIs[115] have been doing over the last year. In this role I have been building on my PhD research to create anti-racist fashion design pedagogy by teaching classes on the Indian sari blouse, rectangular pattern-cutting techniques, local-centric fashion design concepts and oral traditions in pattern cutting; staff training on issues related to cultural appropriation and running a fashion and race equality committee; working across college to create a student-led space to discuss racism in design called Noisy Silences, and working as the academic lead on the first fashion and race conference in the UK in collaboration with the Fashion Academics Creating Equality group (FACE).[116]

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[113] See: *Antiracism strategy*, July 2021. Canterbury: Kent University
https://www.kent.ac.uk/governance/downloads/strategy/Antiracism-Strategy.pdf [Accessed 12.7.22]
[114] I have been appointed alongside five other lecturers in design with a focus on race in different departments across Central Saint Martins, including jewellery, textiles and design.
[115] See, for example, at Rhode Island School of Design: RISD (n.d.), 'RISD Welcomes New Hires Focused on Race and Decolonization' . Rhode Island School of Design, https://www.risd.edu/news/stories/risd-welcomes-race-in-art-and-design-faculty-members
[116] See: https://www.weareface.uk/face-summit

Decolonising fashion design practice

A third way that the research in this thesis can build future research agendas in fashion design is to develop the ongoing work to embed the Global South fashion resource of the sari as a garment in hegemonic fashion design discourses to disrupt hierarchical racial binaries in fashion. The aim would be to embed a further interconnectivity in fashion resources, especially in relation to the fashion design process and the tools and resources used to implement this. Historically a wide range of forms of unstitched garments have always existed (Burton 1973), and developing their use as part of the design process in fashion design education would encourage more space to create a relational design practice to disrupt the binary thinking embedded in fashion between temporal and geographical relationality. To develop these research agendas, I intend to apply for research funding to further explore unstitched cloth as a form of fashion design praxis.

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Wynter, S. (2003) 'Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation: an argument', *The New Centennial Review*, 3(3), pp. 257-337.

Young, A.M., Battaglia, A. and Cloud, D. L. (2010) 'Disciplining the scholar activist: Policing the boundaries of political engagement'. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 96(4), pp. 427-435.

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Appendices

A<small>PPENDIX</small> A. 1 S<small>KETCHBOOK RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET</small>

The Design Group, Department of Engineering and Innovation

Sketchbook Research:

How are cultural differences used as design inspiration in fashion design?

Information for participants

PhD Researcher

Tanveer Ahmed

Part-time PhD student, The Open University

Lecturer, Istituto Marangoni and The Open University

Tel: 07956162251

E-mail: tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk

Research Supervisors

Dr.Nicole Lotz and Dr.Renate Dohmen, The Open University

Dr.Mathilda Tham, Goldsmiths College, University of London

What is the purpose of the study?

The study aims are to investigate how fashion designers draw inspiration from different cultures as part of their design process. This research will be conducted by analyzing the work of emerging designers (fashion design students) to understand how cultural difference is used in the fashion design process. The project will then use this research to help develop a range of resources to support cultural awareness in the fashion design process.

Why have I been selected to take part in this research and what will it involve?
The research involves gathering a sample of sketchbook work from fashion design students in the U.K. To take part you will need to give your consent for your sketchbook work to be photographed and analysed as part of this research; this work may be reproduced for research purposes later. All work will be anonymised.

What will the research involve?
Fashion students who agree to take part in this study will have a selection of their sketchbook work photographed for research purposes only and all work will be anonymised, no images will reveal my name or the higher education institution.

Confidentiality and security of information
All information collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you, your institution and your tutors will have names removed to protect identities The data will be stored securely to comply with existing National Data Protection Laws and codes and will be stored for up to five years after the end of the PhD study (2025-26). Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to your personal information.

The findings of the study
Analysis of the design work and carried out in this study will take some time to complete (at least a year as this is a part-time PhD study). If you have any questions about the research during this time, or after the study has been completed, you can of course do so. If you are interested in the results of the study please email for further information.

What to do if you have questions or concerns
If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation in this research, please contact the researcher Tanveer Ahmed by email (tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk) or telephone (07956162251) to discuss this. In the event that you are not satisfied your concern has been adequately addressed, you can also contact the research supervisor, Dr. Nicole Lotz nicole.lotz@open.ac.uk

Your question or concern can also be referred to an independent body: Research Ethics Coordinator at The Open University, quote HREC (Human Ethics Research Committee) reference number: HREC/2016/2332/Ahmed and email Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you. If you are happy to take part you will asked to sign an informed consent form to show you have given your permission to take part in this study. You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. The deadline for withdrawal is 2025-26.

What next?

Please feel free to ask any questions before you sign the consent form. When you have read this information and you agree to take part in the research, please tell the researcher and sign the informed consent form.

The Design Group, Engineering and Innovation

Consent form for persons participating in a research project:

How are cultural differences used as design inspiration in fashion design?

Name of participant:

Name of principal investigator: Tanveer Ahmed

1.   I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me.
2.   I understand that my participation will involve photographing work from my sketchbook, and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement, including reproduction for research purposes.
3.   I acknowledge that:

    a.   the possible effects of participating in this research have been explained to my satisfaction;
    b.   I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project without explanation or prejudice and to request the destruction of any data that have been gathered from me during the study period of 2016-2020. After this point data will have been processed and it will not be possible to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
    c.   the project is for the purpose of research;
    d.   I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
    e.   I have been informed that with my consent the data generated will be stored securely and will be destroyed five years after PhD completion (2025-2026)
    f.   All data from me will be anonymized in any publications arising from the research;
    g.   I have been informed that a summary copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I request this.

In order to comply with GDPR regulations, please indicate whether you consent to the following element of the research that will be released into the public domain:

I consent to photographs taken of the pages of my sketchbook being used for research that will be released into the public domain (Photographs will be anonymised. No images will reveal my name or the higher education institution.)

□ **yes**   □ **no** (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings   □ **yes**   □ **no** (please tick)

Participant signature: Date:

Participant's email:

PhD Researcher: Tanveer Ahmed

Contact: tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk

Analysis and Strategies of Contemporary Fashion   Term 1 2015/2016

Unit Title/code: **Pre-Collection/31PC3001**

Course: **BA (Honours) Fashion Design**

Meeting time: **Mon 5.30-8pm**

Tutor: **Tanveer Ahmed**

Course description:

What are the real issues facing fashion in the future? How do you see your role as a future designer in fashion? What ethical challenges are contemporary designers grappling with?

These and many other questions will form the basis of eight sessions. The course will explore topics such as representations of fashion in the media, fashion as a political tool, global production and consumption, body size and issues of sustainability. The final session will culminate in you designing your own fashion manifesto outlining your view of your role as a future fashion designer.

Keywords: **Experimental Visual Research, Fashion Futures, Technical Explorations, Contemporary Debates in Fashion, Sustainable and Ethical Fashion**

Course outline:

The course will introduce you to key debates in contemporary fashion with examples of fashion practitioners exporing the challenges of fashion today and tomorrow.

Throughout the 8 sessions, students will be introduced to a variety of cases, theories, topics and key issues organized around broad themes; *Sustainability and Ethics, The Role of the Designer, Political Fashion, Gender and Media*, *Technology and Innovation* followed by more in depth discussions on cases and research possibilities.

Assessed outcomes:

You will be expected to:

- Read weekly texts and websites in preparation for each session
- Contribute to class discussions
- Expand research by incorporating examples of design practices into your research book

- Compile a document containing bibliographical references and images to support your research book.

WEEKLY OUTLINE – READINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Each week will include a text to read and a website or exhibtion to look at. Students will be encouraged to use these as a basis for further explorations and research.

WEEK 1 Oct 5th

What are the real issues facing fashion in the future?

Reading: (handed out during session for group reading)

Williams,D. 2015. *Why Fashion Needs A New Direction*. U.S: Huffington Post available at http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/dilys-williams/sustainable-fashion_b_8171400.html

Website: www.textiletoolbox.com

WEEK 2 Oct 12th

What is your role as a designer?

Reading: Excerpt: "Why is Designing Difficult?" from Jones, J.C. 2014. "What is Designing?" in Brody & Clark (Eds) Design Studies: a Reader, U.K: Bloomsbury

Website: http://designmuseum.org/exhibitions/designers-in-residence-2015-migration

WEEK 3 Oct 19th

How can Fashion be Political?

Reading: Lucy Orta in Thompson,J and Sholette,G. (Eds). 2004. The Interventionists – Users Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life. U.S: MIT

Website: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/disobedient-objects/

WEEK 4 Oct 26th

Representations in Fashion: from size zero to genderless fashion.

Reading: Selection of excerpts from Hoskins, T. 2014. Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion U.K: Pluto Press

Website: https://www.prote.in/en/briefings/androgynous-zones

WEEK 5 Nov 2nd

What is the role of technology in future fashion design?

Reading: Quinn,B. 2014. 'Hussein Chalayan, Fashion and Technology' in Brody & Clark (Eds) Design Studies: a Reader, U.K: Bloomsbury

Website: http://www.fashionspacegallery.com/exhibition/digital-disturbances/

WEEK 6 Nov 9th

Global Fashion: New Urban Tribes?

Reading: Aly,R. 2015 'How the hijab – and H & M – are reshaping mainstream British culture'. The Guardian 28th September 2015

Website: Access new H &M advert via http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11898632/HandM-advert-features-first-Muslim-model-in-a-hijab-finally.html

WEEK 7 Nov 16th

Smart Fashion; Future Fashion?

Reading: Excerpt from: Jefferies,J. "Fashioning the Future: The Traveling Self". 2013 in Querformat, Number 6 Transcultural Fashion Dressed Up!

Website: http://www.drapersonline.com/ecommerce/

WEEK 8 Nov 23rd

What is your Manifesto of Fashion?

Reading: Balla, G. 1914. The Antineutral Dress, A Futurist Manifesto in Stern,R. 1992. Against Fashion, Clothing as Art, 1850-1930. U.S:MIT

2017/2018

CAMPUS campus / campus	**Anonymised**	
COURSE corso / cours	**Fashion Design year 3**	
SEMESTER semestre / semestre	**1**	
TEACHERS docente / enseignant	**Anonymised and Tanveer Ahmed**	
SUBJECT materia / matière	**Analysis and Strategies of Contemporary Fashion**	**code:** codice / code
NUMBER OF CLASSES PER WEEK: 1 numero di lezioni per settimana / numéro de leçon à la semaine		

READING LIST

Fashion references: Tanveer

1. Root, R. A. 2014, 'Powerful tools: Towards a fashion manifesto', International Journal of Fashion Studies1: 1, pp. 119–126 available for free download http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/intellect/infs/2014/00000001/00000001/art00007;jsessionid=1a7up1v14sq6q.alice
2. V&A *Disobedient Objects* exhibition: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/disobedient-objects/
3. Hoskins, T. 2014. *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion* U.K: Pluto Press
4. Brighton Museum *Fashion. Cities, Africa* exhibition: http://brightonmuseums.org.uk/brighton/what-to-see/fashion-cities-africa/
5. Gaugle,E. and Titton, M. (Eds), 2014. Alternative Aesthetic Politics. Vienna: Sternberg Press
6. https://alagarconniere.wordpress.com/
7. Hebdige,D., 1979. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. U.K: Methuen
8. Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts): http://www.iniva.org/about_us

Textile references:

1. *Braddock Clarke, Sarah E and Marie O'Mahony, 2005, Techno Textiles 2, Thames and Hudson.*
2. *Howard, Constance, 1979, The Constance Howard Book of Stitches, Batsford.*
3. *Kendall, Tracy, 2001, The Fabric and Yarn Dyer's Handbook, Collins and Brown*
4. *McDonough, William and Michael Braunart, 2002, Cradle to Cradle, North Point Press.*
5. *Quinn, Bradley,2009, Textile Designers At the Cutting Edge, Laurence King Publishing.*
6. *Rivers, Victoria Z, 1999, The Shining Cloth, Thames and Hudson.*
7. *Wada, Yoshiko,1983, Shibori, Kodansha International.*
8. *White, Palmer, 1987, The Master Touch of Lesage, Chene.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: MANIFESTO

Origin of word **Manifesto**: mid 17th century: from Italian, from *manifestare*, from Latin, 'make public', from *manifestus* 'obvious.

WHAT WILL BE THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU WILL FACE AS A FUTURE DESIGNER IN FASHION? THE COURSE WILL ADDRESS ETHICAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION SUCH AS REPRESENTATIONS OF FASHION IN THE MEDIA, MODEST FASHION, CULTURAL APPROPRIATION, BODY SIZE AND ISSUES OF SUSTAINABILITY. THESE DEBATES WILL BE COMBINED WITH EXPERIMENTATION IN TEXTILES TO HELP YOU DEVELOP YOUR RESEARCH IN FASHION. THE COURSE WILL CULMINATE IN YOU DESIGNING YOUR OWN FASHION MANIFESTO OUTLINING YOUR VIEW OF YOUR ROLE AS A FUTURE FASHION DESIGNER.

THE COURSE WILL COMPRISE OF WEEKLY DEBATES, DISCUSSIONS AND WORKSHOPS ON CONTEMPORARY THEMES IN FASHION DESIGN; AND, A SERIES OF CREATIVE TEXTILE WORKSHOPS. THE DEBATES WILL CRITICALLY QUESTION FASHION DESIGN PRACTICES TO RAISE NEW PERSPECTIVES AND APPROACHES TO FASHION DESIGN. THE TEXTILES ELEMENT WILL FOCUS ON EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS TECHNIQUES AND WILL INVESTIGATE STITCH, EMBELLISHMENT, FABRIC MANIPULATION, DYEING ETC. THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMBINED APPROACH IS TO STIMULATE IDEAS, RESEARCH AREAS AND CONCEPTUAL THINKING, RELATING YOUR PRACTICE IN RESPONSE TO CONTEMPORARY DEBATES IN FASHION.

SUBMISSION ON DATE TBC:

*   A **fashion manifesto** presented in 'book' format: your manifesto can address one of the topics covered (sustainability, race, gender, fashion activism or future fashion), a combination or something else. The 'book' should be professionally presented and include a record of relevant class work (illustrations, textiles samples, visual research, personal photographs).
*   Textile samples: a minimum number of 4-6 samples.
*   **List of references** (Harvard referencing)

Learning Outcomes:

1. Develop new and divergent materials, processes and technologies for fashion design.
2. Consider and argue a position for the design output within the context of ethical, sustainable and representational issues.

SCHEME OF WORK

Term 1	
Lesson	**Content:** <u>Fashion Design / Level 5</u>

Lesson 1: 9/10/17
 	
Earth Matters!
 	
Week 1: All BA's - 2.45-5.00 & 5.15-8.00
	Title: *Earth Matters!*
	
	(Note to students: Bring in an old/discarded garment e.g jeans, jacket)
	
	Content: This session will introduce the course and the project brief. The workshop will focus on how sustainability in fashion has the potential to transform fashion design practices and culture. For example, we will look at issues related to zero waste in design, the role of repair in fashion and conspicuous consumption.
	
	Keywords: repair, hacktivism, re-use, recycling, lifecycle of garments, consumer care, disposal.
	
	Activities:
	  1. 'Fashion is Dead' manifesto by Li Edelkoort
	  2. Project brief: - personal fashion manifesto
	       - Trend tablet
	       - Personality and your own thoughts
	  3. Group reading
	  4. Experiment with textiles: re-making garments.
	  5. Documenting process, recording process (drawing, illustrations, photographing).
	
	Directed study tasks: (homework): Continue developing garment and documents as part of textile book.
	
	Source non-Western fabric for next lesson, Un (fashion). For instance, African, Indian, Chinese etc.

Lesson 2 : 23/10/17 ***Un (Fashion)*** Week 3: All BA's - 2.45-5.00 & 5.15-	**Title**: *Un (Fashion)* **Content:** This session focus on debates around race, ethnicity and fashion including a visit to The Stuart Hall Library. **Keywords:** cultural appropriation, stereotyping, west vs non-western fashion, fashion media, global south.

8.00	**Activities:**
	1. Introduction: what is/is not fashion?
	2. Library visit – historical and contextual research
	3. Experiment with textiles from beyond the west: saris, shalwar kameez, 'African' fabrics, etc
	4. Documenting process (drawing, illustrations, photographing)
	Directed study tasks: Prepare for Week 3 by collecting scraps of fabric that inspire you.
Lesson 3 **6/11/17** ***Revolutionising Fashion?*** Week 5: All BA's - 2.45-5.00 & 5.15-8.00	**Lecture Title: *Revolutionising Fashion?*** **Lecture Content:** *How can Fashion be Political?* This session will address how fashion can be socially responsible and introduce examples from activists –both contemporary and from the past - with a particular focus on feminist movements, LBGT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) groups and genderless fashion designers. **Keywords:** inequality, the fashion industry, gender, subcultures, modest fashion, fashion advertising. **Activities:** 1. Introduction to fashion designers resisting 'fashion' 2. Group discussion personal manifesto 3. Group reading 4. Experiment with textiles inspired by patchwork: flags, banners, Constructivist costumes, Tracey Emin artworks 5. Documenting process (drawing, illustrations, photographing) **Directed study tasks:** Prepare for Week 4 by watching the film The Next Black. Bring fabric and ideas that reflect your view on the future fashion.
Lesson 4 **20/11/17** ***Manifesto: Redefining Fashion*** Week 7: All BA's - 2.45-5.00 & 5.15-8.00	**Lecture Title: *Manifesto: Redefining Fashion*** **Lecture Content:** This session will address new trends for the 21st Century: What do *YOU* think is important in future fashion? You will bring your research to a conclusion by applying your vision to your textile developments. **Keywords:** smart textiles, folk fashion, genderless fashion, hippie modernism, philanthro-capitalism. **Activities:** 1. New movements in contemporary fashion design 2. Group reading 3. Experiment with textiles inspired by future fashion.

	4. Documenting process (drawing, illustrations, photographing) **Directed study tasks:** (homework): Students will continue to compile their project books and complete class work for final submission.

Fashion Class:

How are cultural differences used as design inspiration in fashion design?

Information for participants

PhD Researcher

Tanveer Ahmed

Part-time PhD student, The Open University

Lecturer, Istituto Marangoni and The Open University

Tel: 07956162251

E-mail: tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk

This research is carried out as part of an AHRC Design Star funded PhD undertaken at The Open University.

Research Supervisors

Dr.Nicole Lotz and Dr.Renate Dohmen, The Open University

Dr.Mathilda Tham, Goldsmiths College, University of London

What is the purpose of the study?

The study aims are to investigate how fashion designers draw inspiration from different cultures as part of their design process. This research will be conducted by analyzing the work of emerging designers (fashion design students) to understand how cultural difference is used in the fashion design process. The project will then use this research to help develop a range of resources to support cultural awareness in the fashion design process.

Why have I been selected to take part in this research and what will it involve?
The research involves looking testing out new ways to experiment with fashion design in higher education.

What will the research involve?

Fashion students who agree to take part in this study will take part in a fashion class which will involve students uploading photographs showing class experimentation onto Facebook. These photographs will then be used by the researcher for research purposes only. This study will last for one term.

Confidentiality and security of information

All information collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you, your institution and your tutors will have names removed to protect identities The data will be stored securely to comply with existing National Data Protection Laws and codes and will be stored until the end of the PhD study (2020). Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to your personal information.

The findings of the study

Analysis of the design work and interviews carried out in this study will take some time to complete (at least a year as this is a part-time PhD study). If you have any questions about the research during this time, or after the study has been completed, you can of course do so. If you are interested in the results of the study please email for further information.

What to do if you have questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation in this research, please contact the researcher Tanveer Ahmed by email (tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk) or telephone (07956162251) to discuss this. In the event that you are not satisfied your concern has been adequately addressed, you can also contact the research supervisor, Dr. Nicole Lotz nicole.lotz@open.ac.uk

Your question or concern can also be referred to an independent body: Research Ethics Coordinator at The Open University, quote HREC (Human Ethics Research Committee) reference number: HREC/2016/2332/Ahmed and email Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk,

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you. If you are happy to take part you will asked to sign an informed consent form to show you have given your permission to take part in this study. You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What next?

Please feel free to ask any questions before you sign the consent form. When you have read this information and you agree to take part in the research, please tell the researcher and sign the informed consent form.

APPENDIX A. 6 FASHION CLASS INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

The Design Group, Engineering and Innovation

Consent form for persons participating in a research project:

How are cultural differences used as design inspiration in fashion design?

Name of participant:

Name of principal investigator: Tanveer Ahmed

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me.

2. I understand that my participation will involve reproduction of my photographs on the class Facebook page and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement, including reproduction for research purposes.

3. I acknowledge that:

   a. the possible effects of participating in this research have been explained to my satisfaction;
   b. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project without explanation or prejudice and to request the destruction of any data that have been gathered from me until it is anonymized. After this point data will have been processed and it will not be possible to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
   c. the project is for the purpose of research;
   d. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   e. I have been informed that with my consent the data generated will be stored securely and will be destroyed by 2020 (PhD submission date);
   f. If necessary, any data from me will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from the research;
   g. I have been informed that a summary copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I request this.

I consent to my workshop photographs being used for research   □ **yes**   □ **no**
             (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings   □ **yes**   □ **no**

Participant signature: Date:

Participant's email:

PhD Researcher: Tanveer Ahmed

Contact: tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk

MA (Course Anonymised)

Re-imagining fashion herstories/histories: *'Pluriversalising'* Fashion History in the (College Anonymised) Library

STEP 1: Use one of then sampling methods (Rose 2005, p. 57-58) outlined below to select 10 fashion history books:

- *Random:* number each book from 1 onwards and use a random table to pick out a significant number of books to analyse.
- *Stratified:* choose subgroups that already exist such as books published from a certain time frame such (1990s); a topic like accessories; publishing house.
- *Systematic:* select every third or tenth or nth book.
- *Cluster:* Choose groups at random and sample from them only.

STEP 2: Fill in quantities in each square for each of the following categories (continuing to devise new categories when possible). Add notes too.

Category:				**TOTAL:**
Book Publisher Location	**Global North:** North	**Global South:** South		
Date of book	**Pre-1973** Pre-1973	**Post-1973** Post-1973		
Author's Background: Gender/sexuality/class	**Male:** Male **Sexuality:** **Class:**	**Female** Female **Sexuality:** **Class:**	**Unknown** Unknown **Sexuality:** **Class:**	

Author's Background: European/US, Asian, African, Middle East South American, Australian	European/US European/US	Asian Asian	African African	
	Australian European/US	Middle East Middle East	South American South American	
Illustrations/Photographs (Pick the first ten images you see in each book)	Stereotypes	Passive Females Active Females	Passive Males Active Males	
Book Content: Which fashion location is the content related to European/US, Asian, African, Middle East South American, Australian	European/US European/US	Asian Asian	African African	
	Australian European/US	Middle East Middle East	South American South American	

Any Other Categories?

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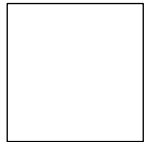..
......

STEP 3: What is absent? Are there categories of …………… that are absent? What are they?

....

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Reading Group:

The role of cultural difference in art and design education

Information for participants

PhD Researcher

Tanveer Ahmed

Part-time PhD student, The Open University

Lecturer, The Royal College of Art and The Open University

Tel: 07956162251

E-mail: tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk

This research is carried out as part of an AHRC Design Star funded PhD undertaken at The Open University. This project has been reviewed by, and received a favourable opinion from, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee, reference HREC/2016/2332/Ahmed.

Research Supervisors

Dr.Nicole Lotz and Dr.Renate Dohmen, The Open University

Dr.Mathilda Tham, Goldsmiths College, University of London

What is the purpose of the study?

The study aims are to investigate how fashion designers draw inspiration from different cultures as part of their design process. This research will be conducted by analyzing the work of emerging designers (art and design students) to understand the role of cultural difference in teaching and learning in art and design education and testing out new ways to teach cultural difference.

Why have I been selected to take part in this research and what will it involve?
The research involves testing out new ways to experiment with teaching and learning in art and design higher education.

What will the research involve?

Student who participate in the reading group and agree to participate in this study will be contacted for an 'interview' which will take the form of a conversation. This conversation will be transcribed and used for research purposes only.

Confidentiality and security of information

All information collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you, your institution and your tutors will have names removed to protect identities The data will be stored securely to comply with existing National Data Protection Laws and codes and will be stored for up to five years after the end of the PhD study (between September 2025-26). Only the researcher and supervisors will have access to your personal information.

The findings of the study

Analysis of the interviews carried out in this study will take some time to complete (at least a year as this is a part-time PhD study). If you have any questions about the research during this time, or after the study has been completed, you can of course do so. If you are interested in the results of the study please email for further information.

What to do if you have questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation in this research, please contact the researcher Tanveer Ahmed by email (tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk) or telephone (07956162251) to discuss this. In the event that you are not satisfied your concern has been adequately addressed, you can also contact the research supervisor, Dr. Nicole Lotz nicole.lotz@open.ac.uk

Your question or concern can also be referred to an independent body: Research Ethics Coordinator at The Open University, quote HREC (Human Ethics Research Committee) reference number: HREC/2016/2332/Ahmed and email Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk,

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you. If you are happy to take part you will asked to sign an informed consent form to show you have given your permission to take part in this study. You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What next?

Please feel free to ask any questions before you sign the consent form. When you have read this information and you agree to take part in the research, please tell the researcher and sign the informed consent form.

APPENDIX A. 9 READING GROUP CONSENT FORMS

3.1The Design Group, Engineering and Innovation

Consent form for persons participating in a research project:

How are cultural differences used as design inspiration in fashion design?

Name of participant:

Name of principal investigator: Tanveer Ahmed

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me.
2. I understand that my participation will involve analysis of my 'interview', including reproduction of a transcription for research purposes.
3. I acknowledge that:

   a. the possible effects of participating in this research have been explained to my satisfaction;
   b. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project without explanation or prejudice and to request the destruction of any data that have been gathered from me during the study period of 2016-2020. After this point data will have been processed and it will not be possible to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
   c. the project is for the purpose of research;
   d. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   e. I have been informed that with my consent the data generated will be stored securely and will be destroyed five years after PhD completion (between September 2025-2026)
   f. All data from me will be anonymized in any publications arising from the research;
   g. I have been informed that a summary copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I request this.
   h.
   I consent to my quotes used for research that will be released into the public domain (quotes will be anonymised. No quotes will reveal my identity or the higher education institution.)

□ **yes**   □ **no**

(please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings   □
yes   □ **no**

(please tick)

Participant signature: Date:

Participant's email:

PhD Researcher: Tanveer Ahmed. Contact: tanveer.ahmed@open.ac.uk

LESSON PLAN

Date: Wednesday 28th February 2018

Tutor: Tanveer Ahmed

Time: 11.15-1.45

Time	Activity
11.15 -11.25	Tutor Re-cap: Fashioning Exotica: Cultural Appropriation, exoticism, orientalism.
11.25 – 11.40	Introduction to today: What examples of fashion collaborations from the commonwealth show did you bring in? Class discussion.
11.40 – 12.00	Video clip – Fashion and Capitalism, Tansy Hopkins
12.00 – 12.20	Activity: In pairs, make a list of five sites where you see capitalism operating (problematically?) in the fashion industry-chain, from education to consumers. Then discuss, what are the implications of these examples for you as a designer? Group discussion of everyone's list.
12.20 – 12.40	'The True Cost' film trailer Who makes our clothing?/ Livia Firth Can Sustainable Fashion be beautiful? Stella McCartney/The True Cost
12.40 – 12.50	In pairs, make a list of future fashion: Hyper capitalism scenario versus post capitalism – group discussion
12.50 – 1.00	Break
1.00 – 1.20	Article 1: Excerpt from 'A Good job well done? Richard Sennett and the new work regime. In Praise of Ordinary Work by Angela McRobbie in Br Creative. (2016) and Article 2: Fashion Micro Enterprises Discussion: What do you plan to do after your MA?
1.20 – 1.35	Examples of designers working in new initiatives: • ARTISAN WORK: Adriana Santacruz • ALT FASHION:Brighton Fashion Week • CO-OPS:Makerversity • ALT FUTURES: Utopian Fashion Somerset House • RESOURCES: Textile Toolbox

	• ACTIVIST: Labourbehind the label / Traidremade • Giana Gonzalez
1.35– 1.45	Anti-Fashion: Defining our fashion! Sharing our new resources list

LESSON PLAN

Date: Wednesday 25th October 2017

Tutor: Tanveer Ahmed

Time: 11.15-1.45pm

Time	Activity
11.15 -11.25	Tutor Re-cap: Inequality in fashion and the dominance of Western narratives. Stereotypes in fashion. Edward Said animation.
11.25 – 12.00	Discussion: Exotic fashion: fashion diaries presentations
12.00 – 12.30	Week 3: Fashioning Exotica P/P
12.20 – 12.50	Article 1: Fashion Theory: Fashion and Orientalism, Letter from the Editors and Dorinne Kondo in interview with Nirmal Puwar Article 2: Excerpt from Introduction of The Postcolonial Exotic by Graham Huggan
12.50 – 1.00	Break
1.00 – 1.20	Video of 'China Through The looking Glass' at The Met, NYC, 2015: http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2015/china-through-the-looking-glass/video Activity: write down examples of stereotyping/exoticism/orientalism and also examples of positive cultural appreciation Excerpt from 'Orientalism Re-Fashioned: 'Eastern Moon' Reflecting on 'Western Waters'Reflecting back on the East China Sea by L.M.H. Ling
1.20 – 1.35	Examples of designers resisting stereotyping etc in fashion : • Afrofuturism: http://africanfutures.tumblr.com/archive • Africa Utopia – Southbank – People's catwalk • Beyonce: Hollywood Bowl • CATWALKS: http://www.okayafrica.com/news/new-york-fashion-week-nyfw-africa-diaspora/

1.35 – 1.45	Next week: New Alternative Economies:

Re-imagining fashion herstories/histories: *'Decolonising'* Fashion History in the (Anonymised) Library.

Thursday March 1st, 9.30am-12.30pm.

The British Library HOUSE 2014, Yinka Shonibare

"Coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday."

Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007, p243). 'On the coloniality of Being' in *Cultural Studies* Vol. 21, Iss. 2-3, 2007

Inspired by Yinka Shonibare's installation at Brighton Museum's Old Reference Library which makes visible the cultural influences of colonisation, we will question the role of coloniality in fashion history. The morning will be split into two parts: the first will focus on deconstructing prevailing narratives in fashion history; the second part will aim to curate a new and possibly 'decolonised' fashion history section within the RCA library.

Following a short introduction to the history of library classification by RCA librarian Cathy Johns, we will work in pairs to analyse how fashion history is presented in the library: to what extent does race, gender and class influence which fashion histories are and are not told?

Through the actions of re-curating and 'decolonising' fashion histories, we aim to reflect on and evaluate our attitudes to coloniality in fashion history. How can we re-imagine new critical fashion herstories/histories viewed from an intersectional perspective?

Voices: Expanded Reading List

Sara Ahmed, feministkilljoys (blog): https://feministkilljoys.com/

Sara Ahmed, O*n Being Included*, Duke University Press, 2012

Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters*, Routledge, 2000

James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro*, Raoul Peck (ed.), Penguin, 2017

Mary Beard, *Women and Power: A Manifesto,*Profile, 2017.

Robert Bernasconi, 'Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race', in Robert Bernasconi, ed., *Race*, Blackwell, , 2001.

Robin Bernstein, "Dances with Things Material Culture and the Performance of Race." *Social Text* 27.4 101 (2009): 67-94.

Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, 1994

Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, Leticia Sabsay (eds.), *Vulnerability in Resistance*, Duke University Press, 2016

Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*, Headline, 2014

Teju Cole, *Known and Strange Things*, Faber & Faber, 2017

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the world and me*. Text Publishing, 2015.

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* 2nd edition, Routledge, 2000.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, *On Intersectionality: The Essential Writings of Kimberlé Crenshaw*, New Press, 2015

Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, Random House, 1981

Angela Y. Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, Haymarket, 2016

Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Duke University Press, 2004

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Penguin, 2001

Fumiko Enchi, *Masks*, Atlantic Books, 1983

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pluto Press, 2017 (New Edition)

Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors*, Beacon Press, 1997

Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Duke University Press, 2010

Roxanne Gay*, Bad Feminist*, Corsair, 2014

Lewis Gordon, 'Theory in Black Teleological Suspensions in Philosophy of Culture', in *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, Volume 18, Number 2, Spring/Summer 2010, pp. 193-214.

Jack Halberstam, *Trans*,* University of California Press, 2018

Stuart Hall, and Paul Du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity,* Sage, 1996.

Stuart Hall, "New ethnicities." *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (1996): 441-449.

Janet Halley & Andrew Parker (eds), *After Sex? On Writing Since Queer Theory*, Duke University Press, 2011

bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2000

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, Routledge, 1994

Audre Lorde, *A Burst of Light: and Other Essays*, Dover Publications, 2017

Audre Lorde, *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*, Silver Press, 2017

Manning Marable, *Beyond Black and White*, Verso 2016

Achille Mbeembe, *On The Postcolony*, University of California Press, 2001

Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics*, Routledge, 1991.

Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Visual Culture Book*, 2015.

Peter Park, *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon 1780–1830*, SUNY Press, Albany NY, 2013.

Raengo, Alessandra. "Black Matters." *Discourse* 38.2 (2016): 246-264.

Stella Sandford, *Spontaneous Generation: The fantasy of the birth of concepts in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Radical Philosophy Issue 179, 2013.

Rebecca Solnit, *The Mother of All Questions*, Granta, 2017.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?" *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (1988): 21-78. http://abahlali.org/files/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Politics of Translation.' In Gayatri Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993. http://www.pierre-legrand.com/16spivak.pdf

Alison Page Watts, *Volatile Things: Haunted Object Biographies and Transnational Identity Formation in the Black Atlantic*. Diss. University of Georgia, 2011.