Situated Empathy:
Construct the theoretical discourse addressing the empathetic motivations shared by fashion design for sustainability, and the potential of Socially Engaged Buddhist Ethics to inform design practice.

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgment has been made, the work is of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or part, to qualify for another academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Susan Thomas
3 March 2011
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# Table of Contents

Declaration ii  
Acknowledgments iii  
Summary xiii  

## INTRODUCTION

**Introduction**  
- The Beginning of the Research 2  
- Research Design and Methodology 3  
- The Bridging Intention 5  
- Tipping Point 6  
- A Paradoxical Industry 7  
- An Industry Without Responsibility 7  
- Absence of Fashion Contributing to Design for Sustainability 8  
- Addressing Sustainability 9  
- Merit and Importance of the Research 10  
- Research Aim 10  
- Scope 11  

**Literature review** 11  
- Fashion Industry and Sustainability 12  
- Other Sources 15  

**Reports** 16  
- Sustainability Texts 17  
- Empathy Writings 19  
- Buddhist Ethics and Socially Engaged Buddhism Writings 20  
- Overview of the Chapters 20  

**Conclusion** 21  

## THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN CONSTRUCTING FASHION DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

**Introduction** 26  

**Fashion Journalism is not ‘Realistic’** 27  
- Language Confusion 29  
- Owning the Language 30  
- Historical Overview 31  

A Fashioned Lexicon
Ecology and Eco-Fashion 34
Fair Trade 34
Ethical 36
Green 37
Greenwash 38
Environmental 39
Organic 39
Provenance 40
Recycled 40
Sustainability 41
Labelling 42

Conclusion 44

SEARCHING FOR ETHICS, EQUALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Introduction 48

Functions of Fashion 48

Roles and Realms Within the Industry 50
Haute Couture 54
Prêt-à-Porter 54
The High Street, Chain Stores and Multiple Store Retailers 56
Time and Fast Fashion 58

Opportunities for Ethical Behaviour in the Fashion Industry 59
Personal, Professional or Corporate Response 60
Drivers for Responsibility 61
Inequality, Responding with Philanthropy and Altruism 62
Ethical Response 64
Appreciating the Potential for Fashion Industry 65

Conclusion 67
### SOURCING ETHICS AND ATTRIBUTING VALUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying the Terms</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morals</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing Ethics for Sustainability</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing Ethics in the Industry</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Life via Empathy: Environment, Humanity, Animals</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverence for Animal Life</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability and Buddhist Synergies</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origins of Buddhist Philosophy</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situating</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life, ‘The Other’ and Rights</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing Buddhist Ethics</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Four Noble Truths</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinaya and śīla and The Eight Fold Path</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precepts</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Engaged Buddhism</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright (Intellectual &amp; Cultural)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Property</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NEGOTIATING CONTEMPORARY SUSTAINABILITY THINKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Sustainability Writing and Theories</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability and the Environment</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Impact and Sustainability</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Rights</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion and Sustainability</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL)</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Design Phase 107
The Production Phase 109
The Pre-Purchase Phase 111
The Post Production and Consumption Phase 112

Reflections on Making a Sustainable Industry 113
Possible Applications of Ethics Within the FD/PL 114
Contributing to a New Reading of Fashion Design for Sustainability 114

Conclusion 114

SEEKING THE SOCIAL AND SENTIENT IN SUSTAINABILITY AND FASHION PRACTICE

Introduction 118

Readings of Sustainability 120

Ethical Issues Relating to Sustainability 122
in the Fashion Design/Production Loop: Version Two 122

Property 123
Property: Intellectual Copyright 123
Cultural: Copyright and Property 124

Exclusivity 125
Sizeism (Sample & Production) 125
Ageism 126
Sexism 126
Racism 127

Labour, Social Justice and Global Equity 127
Child Labour 127
Sweatshops 128
Outworkers 128
Social Justice and Global Equity 129
Animal Rights as a Sustainability Issue 130

Environment and Its Place in the Impact Hierarchy 130
Impact Hierarchy 131

Conclusion 132
**THE ROLE(S) OF EMPATHY**

**Introduction**

**Empathy, Equality and Fairness**
- Empathy
- Equality
- Fairness and the Australian Milieu

**Designer**
- Empathy as a Designer Tool
- Empathetic Design Methodologies
- Role of the Consumer/User

**Other Potentialities of Empathy**
- Corporate
- Empathy in the Supply Chain
- The Planet and its Inhabitants

**Conclusion**

**DESIGN AS PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**

**Introduction**

**Rationality**
- Design Has Been About Rationalism
- Fashion and Rationality
- Rationality, Sustainability and Philosophy

**Engagement, Service and Surrender**
- Designing as Problem Solving - Social Engagement as a Design Rationale

**Engaged design**
- Service
- Surrendering or Suspending the Creative Self to Dogma, Branding or Ego
Religion to Philosophy
- Socially Engaged Buddhism: Enacted Philosophy 168
- The Socially Engaged Buddhist Intention 170
- Principles for the Engaged Buddhist Fashion Designer 171

Conclusion 175

THE CONCLUSION

Introduction
- Connecting and Working in Concert 182
- Lack of Fashion Design for Sustainability Texts 182
- Revisiting the Research Questions and Aim 183
- Confusion and Lack of Depth in Language 183
- Lack of Life Cycle Analysis from a Designer’s Perspective 184

Need for ethical behaviour and responsibility
- Design as Social Engagement 184
- Empathy as Integral to the Holistic Sustainability Response 185
- Need for Different Hierarchies 185
- The Role of Empathy and Equality 186
- Untenable Option: Philosophy can Direct Design Intent 187
- Fear of Religion 187
- Characteristics of a Philosophy-Inspired Response 187
- Synthesis of Principles 188
- Pursuing Other Philosophies or Religions 188
- Design as a New Buddhist Sub-Field 189
- Changing Context of Practice 189
- Transferable Skills 190
- Impact and Contribution of the Research 191

References
- Trade Shows, Exhibitions and Fashion Events 192
- Reports, Conferences and Papers 192
- Books, Articles, Publications, Glossaries 194
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURE 1. WELL FASHIONED TOWARDS OUR ECO Fashion FUTURE – EXHIBITION POSTER/FLYER CRAFTS COUNCIL UK 2006. 33
FIGURE 5. LAUNDRY PAL - IPHONE WASHING LABELS APPLICATION. HTTP://ITUNES.APPLE.COM/US/APP/LAUNDRY-PAL/ID305814009?MT=8 43
FIGURE 9. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DRIVERS FOR D4S (HEADINGS ONLY) DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY – A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING ECONOMIES UNEP 2006 P.27 HTTP://WWW.D4S-DE.ORG/MANUAL/D4SCHAPTER02.PDF 62
FIGURE 13. ENACTORS OF ETHICS (IN THE FASHION INFRASTRUCTURE) 76
FIGURE 17. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTH HTTP://EVENTBLOG.RO/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2010/11/PRODUCT-RED.JPG 82
FIGURE 21. CHANEL’S KARL LAGERFELD, FEATURED KORAN VERSES EMBROIDERED IN GREY PEARLS SPRING 1994. HTTP://FLOBROOKS.MYBLOG.ARTS.AC.UK/PAGE/2/ 101
FIGURE 40. A SHAKER ARMED ROCKER WITH ORIGINAL SEAT MT. LEBANON, N.Y. AND A SHAKER BOX-MAKER (PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, 1935).
HTTP://WWW.CHARLESMULLERANTIGUEN.COM/PRODUCTS.ASP
HTTP://WWW.WEBSTERS-ONLINE-DICTIONARY.ORG/DEFINITIONS/SHAKERS?CX=PARTNER-PUB-0939456759359744%3AV0DD91-TDL3&COF=FORID%3A8&IE=UTF-8&O=SHAKERS#822

FIGURE 41. NAZI COUTURE; LUCIEN LELONG DRESS FROM 1937.
HTTP://WWW.MIMIFROUFRU.COM/SCENTEDSALAMANDER/2008/11/ARTICLE_ON_LUCIEN_LELONGS_HERI.HTML

FIGURE 42. VENERABLE ROBINA COURTIN LIBERATION PRISON PROJECT AND GRAFTON PRISON MEDITATION GROUP.
HTTP://WWW.LIBERATIONPRISONPROJECT.ORG/

FIGURE 43. THE FASHION DESIGN/PRODUCTION LOOP: VERSION TWO (STAGES & THE RESULTING ISSUES)

FIGURE 44. DESIGNING USING EMPATHY – A PILOT SET OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A SOCIALLY ENGAGED DESIGNER

FIGURE 45. BURQINI™ / BURKINI™ DESIGNER AHEDA ZANETTI FORAHIDA PTY LTD.
HTTP://WWW.BURKINI.COM/

FIGURE 46. TERRA-PLANA-JACK-RECYCLED-SHOES-WORN-AGAIN-COLLECTION.
HTTP://WWW.BESPORTIER.COM/ARCHIVES/TERRA-PLANA-JACK-RECYCLED-SHOES-WORN-AGAIN-COLLECTION.JPG

FIGURE 47. AMISH QUILTING (US), SHAKER CHAIRS (SHAKER MUSEUM AND LIBRARY IN OLD CHATHAM, N.Y. USA) AND A QUAKER BONNET (UK).
HTTP://WWW.AMISHHANDQUILTING.COM/MOREINFO.HTM
HTTP://WWW.BOSTON.COM/TRAVEL/BLOG/MOUNT%20LEBANON%20PRODUCTION%20CHAIRS%20LO
HTTP://WWW.QUAKER-TAPESTRY.CO.UK/ABOUT-THE-TAPESTRY/COLLECTIONS/

FIGURE 48. SECOND YEAR FASHION DESIGN PROJECTS 2010 - MIA ZELINSKI’S (PERMISSION PROVIDED) WORK FOR DISASTER (FLOOD) (PHOTOGRAPHER SUE THOMAS).
Summary

The reading of design for sustainability is terminologically manqué in the generalised environmental usage when addressing the ethical decisions and practice specific to fashion industry production; their impact on the planet and its current and future inhabitants. If fashion designers have been attempting to provide responsible stewardship for the planet there would seem to be a disparity between intent and result, and an absence of engagement both philosophically and practically. It is possible to question whether designers are capable of a more philosophical contribution, yet the sustainability rationale specific to their practice has not been fully challenged in fashion, or the core definition contextually examined from the fashion designers’ perspective. The argument acknowledges the lack of fashion design for sustainability texts, and the confusion of and requirement for a depth in language relating to sustainability and fashion. Furthermore, it is proposed that the current interpretation of sustainability does not address the holistic aspects of and benevolence inherent in sustainability as theory and practice; nor reflects the empathetic response. To inform the discourse, a life cycle analysis from a designer’s position is undertaken; the roles of empathy and equality are explored and the need for ethical behaviour and responsibility identified.

It is hypothesised that the ethics within design for sustainability theory and practice, and their current applications do not serve the long term fashion industry, humanity, and other species, which raises the question where other ethics and belief systems may be sourced. The thesis explores the synergies that Buddhist ethics share with sustainability, inclusive design, environmentalism, human rights, animal rights, and social justice, and in so doing constructs new parameters for participants in the Fashion Design/Production Loop (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005) to identify where and how philosophy can guide their reflection and response.

A consideration of different hierarchies is undertaken; pursuing other philosophies or religions as drivers for response; questioning whether Socially Engaged Buddhism and the ethics inherent in the practice offer potential guiding principles. The thesis addresses potentiality and scope for a simple, holistic, generous and engaged design response. The concept of a philosophy-directed response is considered enabling contemplation of the synergy of principles, and reflecting on design as a new Buddhist sub-field. The hypothesis proposes that there is a changing context of practice, and that empathy is integral to the holistic design for sustainability and social engagement response; recognising the transferable empathic skills within engaged design.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

Haute Couture houses present their collections twice a year in Paris; similarly, prêt-à-porter ranges are shown in Paris, New York, Milan and London. Ready-to-wear shows also happen in many of the world’s major capitals from Toronto, Hong Kong and Mumbai to Rio de Janeiro and Melbourne, usually once or twice a year, whereas fashion stores receive drops (small ranges) of new seasonal garments every week to two weeks. These garments are worn, laundered, discarded and depending on their condition, and (depending on their worth) finish their life in a second-hand store, or in a container ship to be sold in developing countries, or as landfill with an ‘afterlife’ of at least several decades. This is in startling contrast to the image portrayed in international print and digital media which is colonised by fashion icons and celebrities, pre-supposing that there is little understanding of the reality of the fashion and clothing industry; its environmental and social impact nor the measure of social justice and global equity in its production. Advocacy groups around the world regularly pillory global sportswear companies like Nike, but for fashion designers to be questioned as to their motivations, and more specifically, their ethical base is extremely rare.

The research topic for the thesis originated from the realisation that there were no constructive reasons, nor valid arguments for the fashion industry to be working with such low expectations in regards to the environment and human rights. Moreover, there was a disassociation between sourcing fabrics in concert with a desire to utilise low environmental impact processes together with, a concern for labour specific and human rights. Social consciousness was perceived as distinct from the growing awareness of and discussion relating to environmental impact. Within the traditional and digital media in 2001, there were highly voluble and active anti-sweatshop campaigns being waged against global clothing companies, particularly those making sportswear. The perception appeared to be that when endeavouring to design responsibly to address the environment, it was a philosophical response. In contrast, however, when examining labour and human rights in the fashion industry, it is perceived as political awareness, or advocacy and the disparity serves as a cogent reminder of the perception of a distinction between the two issues. This prompts the question: should designers act on their consciences regarding the perceived separate topics, what would they address and where would they begin?

In pursuing a sequence of self-reflection, a three-tiered question would arise: if a designer has the intention to contribute via fashion design for sustainability, what would be sustained, why and how? The answer from a fashion designer in the developed world at the beginning of the decade would have been that the planet is what needed to be sustained. Following on, the general opinion would be that it would be achieved by the selection of natural or organic fibres which may involve fair trade. On reflection however, this was a narrow, myopic option in regard to the many areas where the fashion industry could enrich, restore, include, and provide support in terms of production; in the supply-chain, as well as merchandising and marketing, and disposal. Furthermore, the former perspective ignored the breadth and depth of creative, analytical problem-solving and ethical resources available to designers and the diversity of thinking and practice in comparison to other design areas.

Researching the topic enabled further understanding of inclusive design, and recognition of the intentions shared with sustainability. It can be argued that the many damaging issues which were part of the established fashion industry and its business nexus could be addressed in inclusive design, which is in turn, part of a holistic (Tischner and Charter 2001 p. 137) sustainable design response (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005). It is possible to question whether fashion designers are capable of more, and as evidenced from the regular exposés of use of fur, child labour, copyright theft, it seemed that the sustainability rationale in general is neither fully challenged, or engaged. Yet there was scope for a simple, holistic, generous and capacious design response (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005). Furthermore, when questioning the modus operandi of the fashion industry, there could also be an interrogation of what exactly sustainability was, and what it could mean if universally adopted by design practitioners, and by the fashion/textile industry in general.
The Beginning of the Research

The precipitating factor for the commencement of the research was the philosophical inadequacy of the current rationale of the fashion industry, and to question if properly addressed, what it could offer for the future. The major impetus of the fashion industry is to pursue the commercial dictum; to make money expediently for the shareholders, and not the consequences of production both locally and abroad. Prior to beginning a critique, it is essential to acknowledge a primary impetus behind the fashion industry: the widespread genuine pleasure and connection among the public, relating to looking at and wearing the garments. Furthermore this way of being is encouraged and legitimised in contemporary advertising and general media which drives their accelerating consumption.

The secondary factor initiating the research was the interpretation of design for sustainability as environmentalism manqué, within the fashion industry which sidestepped the other issues, during and after fashion industry production and consumer use, and the impact on the planet and its current and future inhabitants. Earlier in 2001 Ursula Tischner and Martin Charter noted within their field of product design that; Companies are particularly struggling with the implications of the ‘soft side’ of the sustainable agenda (e.g. social and ethical issues) as an integrated business sustainability agenda is yet to be developed. (Tischner and Charter 2001, p. 21) Neither did it address a holism and benevolence inherent in sustainability; nor reflect a compassionate response. The final factor in the section and a guiding principle for commencing the research was questioning the driver(s) behind sustainability. In trying to understand sustainability; the underlying purpose (which drove that intent) became crucial to addressing how it could be achieved, and if it could be of use to designers, and the industry in toto. From reading the literature and teaching, to enable utilisation the comprehension of the individual internal motivation for sustainable design became imperative. Externally there are many pressing drivers: dwindling resources expensive transport, consumer awareness and international standards, however these had not constituted widespread deeper change to design for sustainability in the fashion area. Why would a designer bother before legislation, professional ethics, job requirement, what could be the earliest most intimate driver? Consequently, a Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005) a form of Life Cycle Analysis was mapped and examined to identify specific stages where the designer could make choices for ethical (sustainable) outcomes. The deeper drivers of design for sustainability beyond fear of legislation and the perennial ego appeared to progress in an arc, from empathy via ethics, to a sustainability response. It was this part of the research (empathy via ethics) which linked the other aspects together, and pointed to a deeper meaning behind the motivation. Therefore, it was clear that to understand the situation analysis, reflection and speculation on the origins of the motivation to sustainability were necessary.

Research Design and Methodology

For several reasons research by thesis as a methodology was chosen over project and theoretical analysis was selected rather than qualitative or quantitative case studies. Because after a preliminary literature search it was decided that a thesis could advance the discourse, by providing future fashion researchers with a contextualised hypothesis, arguments, philosophies and theories to challenge, refute, extend, and develop. It was determined that practice; that is designing and making garments at this stage would not provide enough depth of insight or breadth discourse or permanence.

Therefore as the field was underdeveloped; theory was needed. There was little writing relating to the specifics of ethics within the fashion industry from a designers perspective; acknowledging their responsibility within the supply chain and the life cycle of a garment. Moreover, to be able to establish the synergy, and formulate the link between sustainability, fashion and Socially Engaged Buddhism would have been difficult via case studies. It was decided that it would be more effective to explore the concept theoretically, and pursue the theoretical ramifications than to pause, and maybe limit the exploration by sourcing and processing case studies. However the method is acknowledged as a potentially valuable area of postdoctoral research relating to the hypothesis.
The research was initiated when teaching sustainability to fashion students and needing to fully understand the topic. Two things became clear regarding the state of the research; in 2001 there was very little writing or research concerning fashion and sustainability in English (or translated) by fashion practitioner or academic. Firstly, fashion practitioner voices were needed to contribute to the theoretical discourse. Traditionally, fashion designers do not write, or theorise; they design, cut and make. The hypothesis was formulated to question the expectation that fashion designers just ‘do’: rather than question, reflect and theorise as they design, and afterwards. In addition fashion was rarely mentioned as part of the design disciplines working towards sustainability. Clothing was cited in the discourse for examples of environmental fibre choices; recycled soft drink bottles, or organic cotton, whereas fashion was cited as extremes of waste; unsustainable and unethical behaviour. Secondly, when teaching it became clear not all the students (as well as industry professionals) were interested in sustainability, which prompted questions relating to how and why people embraced designing for a sustainable outcome. Within the field at that time there was no discourse relating to ethics within the fashion industry from a designer’s perspective; acknowledging responsibility for their decisions. Furthermore by establishing a link to a deeper set of values the cognitive dissonance experienced, expressed but not identified by many contemporary designers and industry stakeholders could be addressed.

Essentially the design of the research was predicated by the lack of relevant information. Therefore it was necessary to gather from other disciplines and sources. Consequently the first methodology was a broad comparative analysis of existing literature; critiquing the established theoretical foundations. The research methodology would fit into Yuniya Kawamuras' definition of 'secondary analysis'; it is an analysis in part of other researchers and authors work (2011). Kawamura wrote:

… some of the existing information can be qualitative, in the form of words or ideas. Such information can be found virtually all kinds of human communication, such as books, magazines, newspapers, movies, speeches, and letters, among others. (Kawamura 2011 p. 108)

In addition the research could be described as ‘social research’ as he explained:

… the purpose of social research is to check the validity of existing theories about people and society and also to produce information that describes our lives and to develop new theories, that explain how our lives are influenced by varied social and external forces. (Kawamura 2011 p. 19-18)

Furthermore, it conforms to the definition of ‘exploratory research’ (Phillips and Pugh 2005):

The research work will need to examine what theories and concepts are appropriate, developing new ones where necessary, and whether existing methodologies can be used. It obviously involves pushing out the frontiers of knowledge in the hope that something useful will be discovered. (p. 51-52)

Finally, they also identify other types including ‘testing out research’, thus the research appears to be a combination of both:

In this type of research we are trying to find the limits of previously proposed generalisations …The amount of testing out to be done is endless and continuous, because this way we are able to improve (by specifying and modifying, clarifying) the important but dangerous, generalizations by which our discipline develops. (p. 52)

Later in the research time-plan – 2008 – fashion scholars began to emerge within the field. By then two other related research topics had surfaced: both were equally puzzling. Firstly, there was little discussion regarding the deeper motivators for sustainability, and secondly although mentioned in some literature ethics were not explained or contextualized; there was dearth of writing regarding ethics and practical design. Often supply chain practice was reported as ‘unethical’, but specific ethics were not referenced or sourced.
It was at this juncture that the secondary analysis broadened; drawing on practical or applied ethics. Following the thread of enquiry, reflecting on the motivators for sustainability and ethics; empathy appeared a viable source. In parallel ethics and empathy were researched and their applicability, and accordingly the potential hypothesis began to come into view. Furthermore the research aim and subsequent questions for the hypothesis gained more focus. Thus far the methodology had proven successful in collecting information, and it explores the need for a theoretical underpinning, and exposed synergies with applied ethics, comparative religion and philosophy. It was at this stage that the literature relating to empathy began to reveal a latent connection with Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist writing. By connecting fashion, Buddhism and ethics the literature trail became rich but unpredictable. Because of the unexpected depth of the synergies between sustainability, ethics and SEB there was potent speculative question to be answered; what if? The unanticipated triangulation situated fashion design practice in a very different context: ego-less design, inclusion, empathising with the other. Consequently the hypothesis became more intriguing, complex and gained momentum. By critiquing the established theories a reflective speculative theoretical discourse had emerged. Accordingly, the research concluded with the construction a proposition for an alternative paradigm of fashion practice; sourcing, formulating and contextualising the theory and guidelines for application.

The Bridging Intention

At its inception approximately ten years ago, the research topic was initially to be an analysis of the fashion industry, searching for sustainability and ethics, specifically Buddhist ethics, whilst looking for synchronicities and useful practical applications. Then as now, sustainability as an issue and research area was still growing in its applicability and interpretation in regard to fashion design and manufacture, and thus presented rich areas for further enquiry. Similarly, ethics and fashion as a topic were perceived as both paradoxical, very contentious and again with little (if any) enquiry in the area. The excesses in regard to the presentation of fashion; fabrications, marketing and participant behaviours are often extreme; likewise production labour conditions and environmental impact have been perceived as negative and unethical. Although design for sustainability in other design disciplines has entailed rethinking certain aspects of sourcing and disposal; applying ethical guidelines may appear to be more censorious and disruptive. Undoubtedly, ethics hint at a deeper meaning; referring to moral questioning, and traditionally, have a religious connotation, which in this case, is unjustified; as the research is a philosophic, (not religious) enquiry. The research proposition to include ethics based on the observation of, and reflection on the choices and the consequences of design practice and enactment in the clothing industry, may have been considered a risk, or possibly even foolhardy. To substantiate and situate the proposition, it is useful to contextualise how ethics and specifically Buddhist ethics, impact on the research.

Since the fall of the World Trade Towers in New York in 2001, it has been noticeable internationally that there has been a broader interfaith dialogue (including ethics), in particular the Abrahamic faiths have been part of public discourse; their individual and shared perspectives. In addition, there has been a growth of publications, both academic and populist: books, magazines, newspaper columns and television series’, addressing ethics in modern life coupled with the rising profile of philosophers in the public debate: for example Alain de Botton, Richard Dawkins, Peter Singer, Raimond Gaita and John Armstrong. In the last five years, ethics have entered more roundly into the public and academic design discourse from both the designers’ perspective and that of the ethical consumer/user. Within industry, manufacture (as a result of environmental and social awareness) and legislation, topics of debate include corporate social responsibility (CSR); ‘The Three E’s’ (Economics, Environment and Ethics), the ‘Three P’s’ (Profit, People and Planet), and ‘Triple Bottom Line’ (Economic, Environmental and Social), all of which have an ethical component, largely unspecified or challenged.
The final area proposed for research was Buddhist ethics; which could be perceived as potentially the most controversial area. The research proposal presents a challenge to perceived rational discourse due to the inclusion of Buddhist ethics and practice within fashion design practice, and the fashion industry. Moreover, the prospect of the topic(s) being researched from a fashion perspective could be considered as an affront to the research discipline of ethics, because of the widely held characterisation of fashion as frivolous and transitory. Thus, the prospective topic and resulting research could have been considered as not having a ‘home’ academically and the corresponding appropriate gravitas, merit and rigour. The posited interrelationship may also have appeared far-fetched and unlikely to be proven. Notwithstanding this historic antipathy, an intriguing element of the research has in fact, been the pronounced synergies, and also discovering and exploring the new connections that rest in both the proximity and tensions. Fashion and Buddhism seem the antithesis to one another both in terms of philosophy and outcome; which is perhaps the location of another perceived oxymoron. Furthermore, it may be the locus of its attraction and challenge as a topic; the apparent polarity of intent; yet it would be a narrow reading of the potential of the research topic. There is a tension and energy that lies within the proposition which both attracts and repels, and consequentially requires closer scrutiny. Therefore, it is hypothesised that the proposed comparative analysis of literature, ideas and current practice will provide an understanding of the situation, and the ensuing ideas and information will be harnessed both theoretically and practically by designers and other stakeholders within the FD/PL (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005). The line of argument appeared highly speculative for sometime, until particular threads of academic writing, largely from the Buddhist studies discipline in the United States, began to emerge. However, later in the research, books (Benedikt 2007, Fry 2009) were published addressing design practice as an enactment of a philosophical understanding.

**Tipping Point**

A tipping point (or perhaps milestone) occurred within the research with the discovery of small piece of writing by Edwin Datschefski called *The Four Noble Truths of BioThinking*. It is a speculative comparison between the four noble truths of *biothinking*, (a form of sustainability thinking) and The Four Noble Truths: the core tenets of Buddhism. However, of more pertinence to the research are the comparisons with the Eightfold Path of Buddhism; Buddhist philosophical principles for living, and of Datschefski’s principles regarding sustainability. He constructed a table of the two sets of principles on his *‘Biothinking’* webpage (Datschefski 2001) perhaps as a light-hearted parody, yet looking at the sustainability principles aligned with the Buddhist principles it was clear there are startling similarities, which called for further threads of connectivity to be identified and arguments mapped. From the perspective of the research direction, the comparison was extremely significant in providing a crucial instance for the research of the synergy between Buddhism and sustainability. These supplied both an endorsement, and a slender legitimisation of the research direction, in addition to an unintended encouragement.

The significance of Buddhism within the research should be addressed at this point: it is interpreted as philosophy (not a religion with one god), but as a philosophy observed, and formulated by a man. Therefore, it is not read here as a faith. As there is no suspension of discernment, or absence of proof, there is an emphasis on the logic, and the practicality of the philosophy in action. Belief could apply with a small ‘b’, because a follower can believe Buddhist precepts, but not ‘belief’ per se with its religious connotations. Finally, ‘spirituality’ has a dictionary meaning as a noun for ‘spiritual’, the particular meaning ‘spiritual’ which has resonance with the research is as follows: ‘… (of the mind etc.) refined, sensitive; not concerned with the material’ (Thompson et al.1995). Yet it can be used in general discourse as a euphemism for a ragbag of beliefs, from fairies to shamanism, which references the negative aspects of a ‘buffet-like’ approach to selecting beliefs; supporting the definition of non-material elements referencing the spirit and soul. These definitions sit oddly with an industry which is ephemeral but not mysterious, and is driven by fast deadlines, pricing and a powerful expectation of profit. To situate the research and its intent, the industry itself requires closer examination.
A Paradoxical Industry

From the caravans transporting fabrics along the Central Asian Silk Road in the Eleventh Century, to summer sales in outer Melbourne's Chadstone shopping mall in the Twenty-First Century, the fashion industry has always been a global network of desire, fabric construction and garment production, pleasure, delight, and profit. In 2006 at the Institute of Manufacturing at Cambridge University, Julian M. Allwood, Søren Ellenaek Laursen, Cecilia Malvido de Rodriguez, and Nancy M. P Bocken wrote that the global fashion industry employed 26.5 million people; in Australia 51,600 people were employed in the fashion sector according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS Cat. No. 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force -2007). As the industry is currently established,1 the bulk of clothing in the developed countries of the Northern Hemisphere is manufactured in the developing countries of the Southern, as a general rule. The journeys of fibre, yarn, fabric, ideas and garments encircle the world, and bind countries and strangers together (Diviney and Lillywhite 2009). The processes involve fibre growth, production, fabric construction and treatment; garment manufacture, post-purchase laundering, and end disposal which pollute rivers, land, endanger humans and animals, cause them to suffer, and utilise finite energy sources. It is not a distant embarrassment; Australia enjoys the pleasures of an innovative fashion culture with dedicated fashion weeks and festivals, and the shame of outworkers sewing for Australian labels earning on average AUD$3.602 and as little as $2 an hour (Diviney and Lillywhite 2007). Yet wearing the products can enable the consumer/user to feel good; empowered, included, desirable, and for some individuals and many companies, it is highly profitable: US$1 trillion worldwide (Allwood et al. 2006). However, many fashion industry workers (locally and globally) remain underpaid, intimidated, and sometimes sexually abused; unable to support their (often distant) families, working in unsafe conditions for long hours and unable to freely associate (join a union) (Raworth 2004, Chung 2008). With an industry employing such a large workforce with entrenched behaviors, further analysis and reflection will provide further insight into these conditions and their connection to the fashion designer.

An Industry Without Responsibility

Nike received a great deal of negative attention for subcontracting their production to companies with records of infringing, or ignoring labour and human rights. In a radical change of approach, Nike published their first public Corporate Social Responsibility for 2004 Report online in April 2005, along with a list of all their current international suppliers including addresses, and an apologetic letter from the then founder and Chairman of the Board3; Philip H. Knight, in which he identified that Nike had made mistakes in their policy regarding subcontracting:

“We’ve been fairly quiet for the past three years in Corporate Responsibility because of the Kasky lawsuit. So we’re using this report to play a little catch-up and draw a more complete picture … The second chapter began with critics bringing working conditions in underdeveloped countries to the attention of the world. After a bumpy original response, an error for which yours truly was responsible, we focused on making working conditions better and showing that to the world (A Message from Phil Knight, p. 4, 2004) (Nike 2005)

At the time it was a surprising, but long overdue response because Nike had pointedly avoided addressing the consumer/user’s expectation of ethical behaviour. Paradoxically, although embroiled in the labour rights arena, the company had been addressing sustainability in terms of design (Suzuki and Dressel 2002), delegating these issues as their subcontractors’ concern. The disassociation between both sustainable design and manufacture, and also environmental concerns and labour (and animal) rights is echoed throughout the industry. Much of sustainability literature addressing design investigates the minutiae of environmental impact and design methodologies, but it makes few links to, or comments on human rights, animal rights, and social justice; previously these areas were perceived as separate, and without commonalities. It was heartening to read the column Social/ethical issues (from Table 6.1) (Tischner and Charter 2001 p. 128), which has fair trade support for the local economy and conditions of work and gender equality. These pointers were for product designer. Yet the list is unusual in that social is often read as refereeing almost exclusively to the consumers needs.
In the past, exploitation and pollution were perceived as management, or subcontractors’ issues, which may be the case in part, but not in its entirety. It occurred in an industry where designers are lionised, can be celebrities; earn fabulous salaries and create, diffuse and license their concepts through clothing, accessories, bedding homewares and hotels. However, it would seem fashion designers are not required to be responsibly for their designs, actions, or reflect on the long term ramifications of their industry. As previously discussed, the management of large sportswear brands and their accountability was pursued through websites and the popular press, yet designers have not been perceived as part of the problem, their role has been mostly sidestepped. It should be noted that larger branded organisations and sportswear companies traditionally do not promote, nor name their designers. Yet the anti-fur debate seems to have been the only issue of conscience laid at the designers’ door, for example the issue of copyright theft; in the case of Armani when accused of copyright infringement by Antoni and Alison in 1992/3 (Tredre 1993). Choices made by a designer in the design and toileing (fabrication) stages have ramifications throughout the life-cycle of the garment and, more significantly, on the planet and animal eco-systems (including humans) both now and in the future. The impact of designer’s choices has been acknowledged in architecture and industrial design, with the consequence that practitioners and companies have begun to address the area both practically and theoretically. The paradox is that both architecture practices and industrial design companies are not targeted with the same degree of virulence by activist campaigns via media, internet, or physical protest. In fashion design, a regular target for critique, there has been little response or comment from either within the fashion industry or from fashion scholars and this is overdue.

Absence of Fashion Contributing to Design for Sustainability

Until recently, there has been a notable lack of fashion design for sustainability discourse particularly from a designer’s perspective (published in English), and an absence of a critical framework, or clear parameters. Neither has there been a fashion dialogue on the matter; individual designers and the occasional company have (briefly) taken up the debate and often moved on, and used a wide variety of terminology in their rationale. Indeed, a few fashion scholars and academics have written papers for disparate conferences and journals but until recent times, there has been an absence of fashion and sustainability conferences. However, somewhat paradoxically, the terms environmentally responsible clothing, ethical fashion and slow fashion have appeared with growing regularity in popular media over the last few years. There have been few authoritative fashion based voices in the discourse. Yet, since sustainability became an issue in other areas of design, fashion has been rarely included, except as a negative example of undesirable trends, accelerated consumption and consequential disposability. An initiative for the fashion designers, fashion scholars and the industry might be to consider the overall sustainability of the planet, and review the industry and its practices from that viewpoint. There is a change of tide occurring. Fashion design and sustainability publications are gradually appearing; the unions are supporting fashion design education regarding human and labour rights (Fashioning an Ethical Industry in the UK) and Fairtrade is working with organic cotton suppliers. Support is beginning to be provided through writing from international academics and scholars reporting on educational projects and research and peak bodies for example UNEP. Programmes of undergraduate and postgraduate study are now offered in the UK, USA, Aotearoa - New Zealand, and Australia, addressing ethical fashion, labour and human rights in the supply chain. Furthermore, there has been a growth of interest in local and international government bodies and NGO’s. These are indicators of the willingness for design for sustainability to become an aspect of the fashion design discipline. Nevertheless, before launching it on the fashion discipline and industry, it would be valuable to scrutinise what sustainability means and how well it fits with the fashion industry, which is labyrinthine (both exposed and concealed); as Kate Fletcher wrote explaining the system:

*Producing fashion and textiles involves one of the longest and most complicated industrial chains in manufacturing industry. The conversion of raw textile fibre to finished fabric and final product draws on labour, energy, water and other resources and cumulatively makes a high-impact sector … Further, it is linked to a litany of labour abuses including poverty*
Addressing Sustainability

Due to the breadth and extent of the fashion industry, there are opportunities in its processes for both benefits to be gained, and considerable harm to be done. Thus, if sustaining the environment (with its current and future inhabitants) is one of the main purposes of sustainability, sustaining some of the practices within the current fashion industry could prove entirely counterproductive. Yet, as mentioned, since sustainability became a design issue with its locus in other design areas, fashion has rarely been included in the discussion, other than as example of undesirable trends and consequential disposability. Within the industry human rights violations in the labour conditions, and disregard for the welfare of the workers, cruelty in animal farming and euthanizing persist. The past readings and applied interpretation of sustainability is too narrow for stakeholders of the fashion industry; the planet and its inhabitants. If sustainability for fashion links the social with the environmental, it could be argued that in its most holistic interpretation and outcome, sustainability is concerned with maintaining, restoring and advancing its subject in the most benign and holistic realisation. Accordingly, fashion would also seek to sustain intellectual and cultural property, so often ‘borrowed’ without permission during the design and toileing process. Furthermore, ethical behaviour in design and production in regard to labour and human rights would be a prerequisite for sustainability. It should be noted that this is a broader conceptualisation than the usual interpretation; when social relates to the needs of the consumer, rather than the economic, physical and emotional wellbeing of the growers, workers, and their community. Likewise it would no longer be tenable to employ caveats of ageism, sexism, sizeism, and racism in recruitment, design conceptualisation, production and promotion, nor condone wasteful disposal.

To achieve a new reading of sustainability and a different perspective regarding the current fashion industry, enquiry is necessary. There has been an absence of philosophic reflective analysis and questioning by fashion designers and industry, about why, what, and how they are making. So, although relatively new to the experience, it is timely for the fashion discipline, industry and the practicing designers to consider what sustainability means, and how it may be enacted. The lack of challenge or discussion of the motivation implies that it is difficult to engender a design for sustainability response. Acknowledgement and reflection on the deeper impetus of the sustaining intention is required: for example, will fashion replicate an industrial design or an architecture response? To mobilise a response within the industry, it is first necessary to understand what sustainability means (revisiting past definitions and possibly building new ones) moreover, to enable it to occur it is essential to identify the philosophical drivers for wishing ‘to sustain.’ Because it is perceived that for the drivers to be longstanding and likely to change the drivers would have to be internalised and durable. There is a need to search for a driver behind the motivation to help, to be useful, ‘do good,’ or behave ethically. Ethics within the commercial environment of the developed countries of the Northern Hemisphere are usually sourced from a Judeo-Christian societal infrastructure. The diverse moving global locations of the fashion industry support looking beyond the Abrahamic faiths as guides, as there are alternatives, which may be both more appropriate and useful, to avoid postcolonial imposition.

Could there be a philosophical guide or codes of ethics which are germane; with a deep reverence for life (in all its forms), associations with peace, having resonance with the global workers, and reference a contemporary stream of theory relating to ethics in action? In all these aspects, Buddhism, specifically Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB) has an expanse of resources to offer. Of primary relevance to the research is the analysis of the core motivators in both Sustainability and Buddhism: which indicate a potential synergy of ideals, intent and practice. Before the analysis begins, it is important to question the worth of the research - a posit that in essence asks: why bother?
Merit and Importance of the Research

Analysing and questioning the fashion industry processes and design imprimaturs from an ethical perspective offers a chance to radicalise the industry from within. By encouraging designers and the related industry stakeholders to reflect on and question their philosophical motivations, there is a stronger likelihood of both engaging more responsibly in the design process in the future, and also continuing to challenge design and industry processes, behaviours and expectations. Ethical reflection could provide a creative innovative alternative to the usual driver of ego via design. The result could be the consolidation of long term embodied practice and discipline norms, rather than a short term reaction to company-specific corporate social responsibility policies, or geographically defined legislation. Designers, who have been educated and are sensitised to the outcomes of their choices, are then able to make informed, reflective empathetic decisions as their ethics (personal, professional and corporate) dictate. It is proposed that at the core of Sustainability is an ethical response; there has been little writing about the practical and philosophical background regarding ethics in fashion design practice.

The deficit has meant there has not been the intellectual space for practitioners, scholars and other stakeholders to reflect, and philosophically question the intention and consequences of fashion design practice as it currently functions. For example, if designing clothing with a beaded motif for a High Street chain store, a student designer should know that to achieve the low price expected by the consumer, due to the time intensive nature of the handwork, the offshore embroiderers may not be paid a living wage for their work. Or, the choice of organic cotton for a garment may address in part the social and environmental concerns related to growing, but, through laundering (washing, electric tumble drying and possibly ironing), the garment further impacts on energy resources post-production (Allwood et al. 2006). The impetus and methodologies at the many levels of the industry need to be rethought beyond a number crunching exercise, and deeper investigation is necessary to achieve more nuanced and profound approaches to the methodology and consequent problems. Choices made in design practice could spare, nurture and enrich the planet and its inhabitants, and inculcate ethics as a design practice expectation. Furthermore, reflective decisions could change lives of workers, consumer/users and other planet dwellers, now and for the future.

Research Aim

The research aim, therefore, is to suggest a new, reflective broader reading of sustainability, initially within a fashion context; and establish a connection between the empathetic response innate to both design for sustainability and Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB), and speculate on a philosophical engagement via design for sustainability. To address the aim, the following research questions have been posed:

1. How do the ethics embedded within the Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005) and sustainability design theory, and their current applications serve the fashion industry, humanity, animal welfare and the planet?

2. What is the source of the drivers for ethical behaviour and ethics in sustainability?

3. What is empathy, and its place within Buddhism?

4. How can Buddhist ethics potentially offer guiding principles for fashion design practice and the fashion industry?

What does Socially Engaged Buddhism specifically offer a fashion designer seeking to design with empathy?

This thesis will question whether the current interpretations of sustainability design theory fit fashion. In addition, it will discuss how well the current ethics serve, or engage with either FD/PL participants, or sustainability design theory parameters. The research explores the synergies Buddhist ethics share with sustainability, inclusive design, environmentalism, human rights, animal rights, and social justice, and it will construct new parameters for the designers and other stakeholders of the FD/PL.
Scope

The aim of the study is to review sustainability from a fashion design practice perspective, and explore the motivations and implications inherent in designing for sustainability, as design discourse from a designer’s perspective, not design practice per se. Because of the breadth and speculative nature it was decided not to pursue the topic as case studies as it was determined that the hypothesis had to be initially situated in thinking and theory, prior to application as post doctoral practice. It will be limited to recent sustainability theory principally focussing on fashion design and when necessary industrial design. Information relating to the fashion (not clothing) industry will be sourced principally from English speaking countries in the Northern Hemisphere, but also Australia. The philosophy will be chiefly contemporary English language Western constructs relating to ethics in practical application and Buddhism, referring to engagement. As mentioned earlier, Buddhism will be dealt with as a philosophy, not as a faith or a religion. Furthermore, the writing relating to Buddhism is situated in, but not limited to Mahayanan Buddhism, and mostly to Western writings. The research hypothesis and reflection occur from being situated on the fringe of a variety of disciplines and research threads: fashion design practice, sustainable design discourse, ethics, and faith in application, social justice, Buddhist studies, corporate social responsibility and comparative religion. The questions and propositions will be addressed and explained through reflective analysis of the motivators and applications of design for sustainability, and Buddhist ethics as they could relate to the fashion industry. Within the discourse, it is posed that a designer has three positions: private individual (personal), artisan designer (professional), and corporate designer (professional). A new reading incorporating the ethics of Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB) will be proposed for the fashion industry, from a designer/practitioner’s perspective. Because the research and reflection emanates from a different philosophical perspective, consequently it will take risks and will pose unusual propositions. To appreciate where the discourse sits, the related literature needs to be examined, evaluated and explained.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly literature relating specifically to fashion design and sustainability mirrors the newness of the discourse to the discipline, as there are few publications in English. The principle four texts were all published in an approximate time frame of the last thirty-six months. The dearth of theory sources reflects the three origins of language used namely; fashion, sustainability or environmental theory, (which may overlap with supply-chain sourcing), and Buddhist ethics. Recently, a coordinating point for research into the area has been provided for scholars of fashion and sustainability by Kate Fletcher’s book: Sustainable Fashion and Textiles – Design Journeys (2008). The thinking prefaced in her earlier writing for journals and book chapters has developed providing further arguments and an overview of the issues intrinsic to the fashion industry, whilst highlighting their breadth and complexity. Another recent publication Eco-Chic – The Fashion Paradox (2008) written by Sandy Black functions effectively in parallel with Fletcher’s work, providing varied profiles and further visual context. Fletcher references the environmental, but presents the arguments and data particular to fashion design and offers strategies and methodologies. These two British publications are matched by two North American texts, different in that they are both collections of essays: Sustainable Fashion: Why Now?: A Conversation Exploring Issues, Practices, and Possibilities (2008) authored principally by fashion academics, and the other, FutureFashion White Papers (2007) has been collated from a wide variety of industry figures, participants and observers. Academic literature from the United States relates to fair trade, social responsibility, values and corporate compliance as information for buying and merchandising, with little or no directions or guidelines for designers. Prior to these publications, fashion design practitioners and the industry have had to adapt and co-opt sustainability arguments and theories from product design and architecture design writers, such as Jonathan Chapman, Elio Manzini, Edwin Datschefski, William McDonough, Ursula Tischner, Martin Charter and Victor Papanek. The three areas of the research for the thesis have their relevant corresponding publications. To initiate the literature review, fashion is the first area and thus the logical starting point.
Fashion Industry and Sustainability

Fashion design publications have come late to sustainability theory and practice. It could be posed why is fashion different, why does the discipline and industry not borrow guidelines, why does it merit different guidelines from other disciplines and industries? Fashion as a design and industry discipline is different because of its circuitous complicated supply chain; low tech nature of aspects of production, extensive subcontracting, speed of change, and the exclusion of major sectors of consumer/users (the large, the small, the mature, and the differently-abled). Finally, it is an industry which infatuates and is infatuated by contemporary popular media. Designers and the fashion industry exist under the exacting scrutiny of 24 hour popular media, they court attention are lionised and adored, and vilified. Mistakes or oversights are not trade paper information; they are content for celebrity websites, twitter feeds and national newspapers. Therefore it is posited that there is a necessity for fashion sustainability theory and practice.

Fletcher’s book is a cornerstone to the current fashion and sustainability discourse, particularly out of the United Kingdom. It taps into contemporary research, but more importantly, draws on it to support her own theory and vision for the sector. Fletcher’s previous writing gave indications of a growing grasp and insight into the design for sustainability discussion, and its potential industrial implications. Her book is particularly useful to the research because it provided the first authoritative voice in the fashion discussion; situates the discourse and acknowledges its origins providing a substratum which functions as both a sounding board and a foil to the research.

Sandy Black, an established academic and fashion writer who lately came to sustainability, provides the other voice. Her book affords a sound explanation and overview of the issues, and provides case studies of a broad selection of people and their methods of approaching sustainability. The images and the stand-alone profiles of practitioners clearly establish the diversity of work currently being included under the umbrella of sustainability or as named here, eco-chic. Of particular interest to the research are the thirteen listings of the titled Approaches of the Fashion Paradox. These provide an accessible starting point and account of methodologies for a designer or a company wishing to approach sustainability:

- Re-thinking Design for the Entire Fashion Life Cycle
- Reclaim and Re-Use Waste Materials
- Recycle
- Upcycle
- Repair and Remodel
- Recreate
- Reduce
- Use Ecological Materials
- Use Mono Materials
- Harness New Technology
- Longer Lasting
- Multifunctional Clothes
- Design for Delight

(Black 2008 p. 46-7)
These methods are significant because they offer an attempt to list suggestions for guiding design for sustainability directions in fashion. Black acknowledges here, almost for the first time in fashion, that design choices can impact on the life cycle of a garment. The logic would seem undeniable, however, in the past; many of the suggested fashion options have been almost entirely about selecting fabric to address environmental impact. In formulating a list of strategies, she provides beginnings for professional sustainable design practice, or company production protocols. Furthermore, the companies or fashion labels profiled in the book are identified as utilising one, or several of the following identified ten strategies:

- Re-use and Re-Design (Black 2008 p. 197)
- Organic Textiles (p. 207)
- New Thinking (ibid)
- Recycled Materials (ibid)
- Eliminate Waste (Black p. 223)
- Design for Longer Life and Re-Use (ibid)
- New Design and Manufacture Processes (ibid)
- Make Less But Smarter Clothing (ibid)
- Reducing the Impact of Washing and Aftercare (Black p. 235)
- Repair and Remodelling Services (ibid)

Most of these are mirrored versions of the Approaches Black listed earlier in the work although notable by its absence is Design for Delight. However, it is the particular methodology which aligns with one of Chapman's suggestions for industrial design, that is, emotional durability or empathetic design (Chapman 2005). In her opening chapter, Black (p. 14) raises some provocative questions, which indicate the questioning which is current in the fashion discipline. These are both exciting and heartening to read as there has been little English written debate, or critique within the fashion design discipline. Previously, the critique has been led by external consumer/user groups and popular media. The eight questions listed by Black, although not original are rare in the designer/practitioner context and are listed as follows:

- How can fashion become more environmentally friendly and ethically sound?
- How can we slow fashion down?
- How can consumers make a difference?
- How can designers make a difference?
- Can conflicting interests be reconciled in the fast moving industry like fashion?
- What ecologically sound choices are available in fabrics?
- What would be the impact on the fashion industry if everyone kept their clothes or longer?
- Can we resolve the fashion paradox of transience and sustainability? (Black 2008 p. 14)

These questions carry considerable bearing due to the previously identified lack of informed serious interrogation and reflection. Their novelty lies in the fact that they do not take the industry to task, but rather, question the role of the designer. In the past, it has been the production processes, the fabrication, and the management, even the marketing that have borne the assessment, analysis and critique. Of particular relevance to the research are the first and last of the research questions. The first question addresses whether ‘…fashion [can] become more… ethically sound’ (Black 2008 p. 14) and in so doing implies that it is currently unsound, thus supporting one of the research directions of the hypothesis. The final question has
particular significance to the research in its wording, ‘...the fashion paradox of transience and sustainability’ (ibid). The use of the words fashion and transience and sustainability in the same sentence besides engaging in wordplay, aligns with the research direction as regards sustainability, but of more importance to the research is that impermanence or transience is central to Buddhist tenets. It can be said that fashion epitomises transience, and as such, is an acknowledgement of the impermanence of life, feelings, and products. Therefore, the concept of using fashion as a restorative tool is paradoxical in both perpetuating the fashion and Buddhist discourse and challenging the industry established paradigm.

Two recent publications from the United States, FutureFashion White Papers (2007) and Sustainable Fashion: Why Now? (2008) are noteworthy because in the US there has been little writing in the area. FutureFashion White Papers is a collection of short articles mostly relating to the environmental impact aspects of sustainability in regard to fashion. It is often disappointing, in that the writers (mostly industry representatives) focus very much on their own area of expertise and interest, and thus, it is reliant on the reader to make the connections or connect the argument threads. The reader is left with the feeling that fashion is an industry with concerned members, but with few talking to each other, or aware of concerns other than those in their respective sectors, which may form part of the overall problem. There are some exceptions, for example, Kate Fletcher’s piece entitled ‘Not One But Many: New Visions for Fashion’ (FutureFashion White Papers 2007) which expresses both breadth and insight. Perhaps the perceived disconnect indicates the requirement for parties with an interest and a broader view to process the perspectives and contextualise them. The essays sourced mainly from US academics and select industry members in Sustainable Fashion: Why Now? (2008) address specific aspects of sustainability in topics that range beyond the impact of fabric selection on environment, to consumer choices, garment disposal and design strategies. The book is of interest as an example of the part of the American academic discourse that is also its weakness, in having the editorial tone and content of an undergraduate text book.

In regard to the research, all these publications provide some useful information and perspectives, however, it is Fletcher’s work, and to some degree Black’s that contribute most substantially. This is primarily due to the fact that in Fletcher’s work there is considered, developed discussion and argument that resists shying away to a series of case studies, or mining another author’s perspective. In her book, she has built and maintained more developed arguments; a seasoned clear perspective emanates from an industry reality, and a creative background; her work is tempered with both realism and idealism. Fletcher’s practice, thinking and philosophy have developed over a number of years of research, practice and publication. Both Fletcher and Black imply or state the different methodologies that can be utilised, and in so doing leave room for other strategies, practices and philosophies. Fletcher’s options (offered early in the book) that a designer can work within the supply chain in resolving one particular aspect, or completely external to the industry as it is, provide room for discovery and innovation. It is the implicit recognition of the importance of the design for sustainability, in addition to the acknowledgement that there can be alternative approaches, which support the intention of the research. Furthermore, the approach aligns with the concept ‘guidelines,’ rather than the ‘rules’ strategy that is being proposed within the thesis.

Designers from other disciplines including industrial design have discussed, (or included) fashion in their work, for example, Chapman in Emotionally Durable Design: Objects, Experiences and Empathy (2005), and writing with Nick Gant, Designers, Visionaries and Other Stories: A Collection of Sustainable Design Essays (2007). Chapman is notable for his inclusion of fashion within the sustainability discourse as a voice rather than a pejorative example. Manzini et al in the SusHouse Project (January 1998 to June 2000) explored the idea of designing products of service; which are products which the consumer desires for the service they afford; food, entertainment or transportation. This idea could be extrapolated to fashion, in that the designer would change from simply creating garments, to exploring ways to prolong their life span both in use and appearance. Customisation, repair, laundering, dyeing and alterations would therefore become the instigators for creative innovation. Tischner, and Tischner and Charter (originally from Germany and the UK respectively) began writing and working in the late Twentieth Century about ecodesign and design for sustainability (D4S) in a wide variety of contexts, including contributing to UNEP reports. Tischners’ work is particular, in that early on she identified the narrowness of ecodesign and worked on exploring and defining the difference. In
addition including clothing within their remit; in 2001 in their publication Sustainable Solutions: Developing Products and Services for the Future Katharina Paulitsch had wrote about her employers (Hess Natur Textilien - German clothing company) new work in environmentalism, clothing and service design.

The inclusion of an oddity concludes the review of literature addressing the fashion industry and sustainability, and related issues. It is relevant not due to the content, but because of the subject matter and the author’s perspective on it. Barbara Paleczny’s Clothed in Integrity: Weaving Just Cultural Relations and the Garment Industry (2000) is unusual because her critique is faith-based, writing as a nun of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (US) and with some family experience of the industry. It offers an interesting parallel to the research as another philosophy or faith-based questioning of the fashion industry. Of further interest is the advocatory nature of her writing and intent. The synergies raise questions that correspond with those within the research aim and its direction: will there be guidelines or rules? Following on, the questions also relate to the notion of ethical choices, or moral rules - topic questions that will be explored in more depth in subsequent chapters. In the section broaching Research/Writing with a Faith Reference are two writers with both design training and Australian connections; Michael Benedikt and Tony Fry. Benedikt is an Australian born architect teaching in Texas and the author of God Is the Good We Do: Theology of Theopraxy (2007), an unorthodox piece of writing that includes poetic declarations and philosophical musings on the role and potential of the designer. Benedikt’s premise is that god is manifested by the good that humans do, specifically designers, therefore, design becomes theopraxy, the practical enactment of god. Although Jewish by birth, the god Benedikt references appears to be non-denominational. There are strong parallels with his notion of theopraxy and design as philosophical social enactment to be explored later in Chapter Eight. Based in Australia, Tony Fry is an industrial designer, lecturer and writer who contributes regularly to the sustainability discourse and recently published his book Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics and New Practice (2009). He has linked ethics and sustainability and discusses them in relation to design. Both books are radical departures from the normative platform and provide a space for the hypothesis to grow. Finally, there was an early pioneer of ecodesign and design for sustainability; Victor Papanek, who also identified the connection with spirituality;

I want to show that there must be a spiritual underpinning to our eco-logical consciousness… I believe that it is rather a great spiritual rebirth or re-awakening, a desire to re-establish closer links between nature and humankind (Papanek 1995, p. 9).

In the final chapter of The Green Imperative Papanek listing solutions and concepts for making the New Aesthetic: Making the Future Work notes on point 6: …the lack of and spiritual basis for design will make ethical and environmental considerations a mere afterthought. He follows on point 7:

Design, when nourished by a deep spiritual concern for the planet and environment, and people, results in a moral and ethical viewpoint. Starting from this point of departure will provide the new forms and expressions of - the new aesthetic - we are all desperately trying to find. (Papanek 1995, p. 235)

In general, because of the newness of the research area to the fashion industry, the speed of operation and the nature of the way the industry is observed and monitored, there are few book resources. However, there is extremely valuable information to be found in other sources.

Other Sources

Alternative resources of information include a small amount of data from several practitioners who are established in the sustainability discourse and working via practical projects: their work and methodologies are published and disseminated through websites and curated exhibitions. Principally, these designers are based in the UK and for the most part, are not working within the mass produced fashion industry. For example within Australia, Alison Gwilt, Anthea van Koppen, India Flint, Timo Rissanen and MaterialByProduct have each addressed aspects of sustainability and have participated in individual and curated group
exhibitions of local and international practitioners. In the case Gwilt and Rissanen recently (2011) published a book to which contributed they edited. In the UK, Kate Goldsworthy studied for her doctorate at Chelsea College of Art and Design at University of the Arts London, and her research was entitled Material Recreation. Fletcher has collaborated with other designers to extend her research; with Matilda Tham in 2004 she conducted a practical research project and published it online: Lifetimes. She also worked with the textile designer Rebecca (Becky) Earley on their 5 Ways Project (2002/3) which is also documented online. Additionally, she curated the Well Fashioned: Eco Style in the UK (2006) exhibition for the Crafts Council London, an early indicator of gathering interest that brought together other designers addressing aspects of sustainability in their practice.

A significant proportion of the reviewed literature has been sourced from popular media, consequently, the available discussion has been introduced in newspapers: tabloid, broadsheet and magazines. Understandably, these channels do not contribute to laying exact foundations of the debate, or to establishing the academic rigour; nonetheless, they do indicate where beginnings may be forming in the conversation. In addition, they show where the concerns of the general public may lie, and the levels of their available information and possible knowledge. Watching the patterns of the popular media interest in the area has been both an entertaining and frustrating exercise as the various newspapers ‘discover’ ecofashion, eco-chic or fair trade, and are then distracted and return to the couture shows, or designers and celebrities. Noticeable is the fact they rarely ‘discover’ sustainability. Moreover, there has been a regular growth in the frequency of coverage and reader interest as illustrated in The Guardian (UK) beginning an Ethical Fashion Directory in July of 2008. An additional and established model of communication of issues, guidelines and facts useful to the research has been reports.

**REPORTS**

Due to the nature of the research topic, relevant literature is published on the internet primarily from two sectors. These are the commercial sector, and the not-for-profit or NGO’s. Both have agendas and viewpoints to promote, however, they are useful to analyse, evaluate and compare perspectives, arguments and data. Firstly, there are commercial corporate social responsibility reports by global companies including Nike, Reebok, The Gap and Wal-Mart. It is essentially corporate literature; a method to communicate publicly what these concerns select to be revealed and made known to their stakeholders, and to the general financial community. Secondly, there are reports from charities, NGOs, lobby groups, campaigns, and industry bodies and government ministries. By definition of their purpose, these reports are tools for clear communication, enabling effective reading and understanding of the exposed issues. Aspects of Nike reports have been illuminating in their selection of, and change of topics covered and published. Likewise Cotton Incorporated's LifeStyle Monitor (2007) report on green issues affecting cotton was informative in the manner they presented their argument, (referring to the environmentalists' response to standard cotton growing) and their presentation of the issues. The critique will be expanded upon in Chapter Two. Internationally, Oxfam has contributed some highly significant and meritorious documents; its agenda focussing on labour and human (women and children's) rights, social justice and global equity, and the ramifications of globalisation. Of particular use to the research was Trading Away Our Rights: Women Working in Global Supply Chains written by Kate Raworth for Oxfam International (2004); with its clear analysis of the fast fashion system and the outcome for the workers. In 2002, an early contribution to the discourse was made by the Scandinavian group; the Sustainable Solution Design Association in Denmark (SSDA) assembled a set of illustrated guidelines for fashion designers and published them online representing an early acknowledgment of the logic of combining of fashion, textiles and ethics in making design choices. Due to its brevity, the topics are not covered in depth, but it provided an early marker for what might eventuate as fashion design practice for sustainability.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) also has recently published their work (in collaboration with Delft University of Technology) and research (Paving The Way For Sustainable Consumption And Production – The Marrakech Progress Report 2011) online (Design for Sustainability: A Step by Step Approach 2009). Not only does their international research relate to D4S (principally product
or industrial design), but also they see its relevance in developing economies (*Design for Sustainability: A Practical Approach for Developing Economies* 2006). As has been identified earlier, the direction of the research is geared towards the designers’ choices and human and labour rights; their motivation source, and their philosophical base, rather than environmental impact in isolation. Yet, there are some influential campaigns and extremely well investigated reports which have contributed support to the research. In regard to the sustainable growing of textiles, human rights, global equity and holistic thinking, Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK was an early pioneer in Europe. They championed organic cotton and farmers’ rights in the developing world (in particular Benin, Africa) with their research, and the *Moral Fibre* campaign, supporting publications, books (Simon Ferriggo 2004) and a newsletter.

As mentioned, another group of researchers whose academic publication had an international impact are based at the University of Cambridge’s Institute for Manufacturing. Their report entitled *Well Dressed? The Present and Future Sustainability of Clothing and Textiles in the United Kingdom* (Allwood et al, op cit) dealt in part with environmental impact but in a broader context. The report has informed both Fletcher’s and Black’s writing (Green 2008, Diviney and Lillywhite 2007, 2009) and is fundamental to the research proving to be a significant inclusion to the slowly growing body of information about the fashion industry in a global context. It is an authoritative and accessible piece of research derived from a breadth of contemporary UK industry based and international information. The researchers have worked through and made sense of their information in both textual and graphic format. Of specific interest and importance to the research was the report that highlighted the role of manmade fibres, explaining their potential environmental impact.

In Australia, Professor Christina Cregan’s research (2001) into the outworkers in Melbourne has added both information, and a pertinent Australian contextualisation and grounding to the issues surrounding human and labour rights and the thread of social justice. Furthermore, it made clear that the fashion supply chain and its associated behaviours are not only located overseas but involve local companies both small and large. Sweatshops can be a local developed world concern as has been found in London and Los Angeles. Two reports of pertinence both in terms of geographic location and content are *Ethical Threads: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Australian Garment Industry* (2007) and *Travelling Textiles: A Sustainability Roadmap of Natural Fibre Garments* (2009), both co-authored by Emer Diviney and Serena Lillywhite. At the time, the researchers were based in the Ethical Business section of The Brotherhood of St Laurence, an NGO working for an Australia free of poverty. Although short in length, these reports relate specifically to Australia and provide highly relevant and contemporary useful information and proved a significant contribution to industry research in the manner of *Well Dressed?*, but with an Australian context. The final report of relevance to the research was commissioned by the Federal Minister of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Australia and compiled by Professor Roy Green entitled *Building Innovative Capability* (2008). The research was drafted through industry and public consultation, in addition to contributions from stakeholder sources and the report was compiled and published with a series of twelve recommendations’ which directly relate to the concepts being researched and reflected upon within the thesis and will be referenced as they occur.

**Sustainability Texts**

As iterated, most of the established writing relating to design for sustainability concerns architecture and industrial design. There may be several reasons for the phenomenon: fashion theory of any sort is a relatively recent area of research; previously the history of clothing or costume occupied the lion’s share of publication. Essentially, fashion was viewed as a design discipline that was practiced rather than being reflected upon in text by its practitioners. In the last ten to fifteen years however, fashion (as opposed to clothing) has begun to be included in sustainability writing, initially as an example of a system bereft of a sustainable intent. However, as was mentioned earlier, book and journal editors began to ask fashion scholars to contribute to the discourse reflecting the growing area of fashion theory, or perhaps recognising the maturity of fashion design as a discipline. This mirrors the experience of sustainable product design (SPD), in 2001 Tischner and Charter observed;
At present there are few SPD models that go beyond eco-efficiency and dematerialisation. The approaches that have been developed tend to be ecologically orientated and do not address the wider social or ethical issues, complex systems or supply chains. (Tischner and Charter 2001, p. 130)

Writing in *Emotionally Durable Design* (2005), Chapman critiques the reading of sustainability in manners that leaves the way clear for a new reading. Of pertinence to the hypothesis is his identification of a ‘... lack of philosophical depth...’ (p. 170) in the current methodologies. Furthermore, he states that:

…the majority of methods deployed by sustainable designers today do not actually attend to the root causes of the problems we face, instead focusing almost primarily on solutions that attend to the after-effects – or symptoms... (Chapman 2005 p. 170)

Chapman acknowledges the importance of sustainability in fashion design and includes an essay by Fletcher in the collection he co-edited with Gant, *Designers, Visionaries + Other Stories* (2007). Datschefski writing on sustainability similarly in *The Total Beauty of Sustainable Products* (2001) provided examples of clothing design; he selected the ubiquitous cotton T shirt (p. 20) and the Patagonia Fleece (p.90), but also included Foxfibre (organic coloured cotton) socks (p. 86) which supported his principles of sustainable design: cyclical, solar, safe, efficient and social. This selection of clothing indicates the discourse is not lead by fashion practitioners, consequently there are not fashion examples.

In New York, architect William McDonough delivered The Centennial Sermon at the Cathedral of St. John The Divine on February 7, 1993 and entitled it ‘Design, Ecology Ethics and the Making of Things’ (McDonough 1993). He spoke of his principles as ethics, design and ecology, which served as a precursor to the interests later detailed in his manifesto *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things* co-authored by Michael Braungart (2002). *Cradle to cradle* offers many significant perspectives including in the ‘closed loop,’ and the ‘waste is food’ (2002). However the Cathedral location contextualises his hypothesis in relation to faith, and whether personally religious or not, he imagined that the congregation may share his perspective. Therefore, it is not extraordinary that he discuses ethics, however, associating them with design and ecology within public discourse was unusual:

> If we understand that design leads to the manifestation of human intention and if what we make with our hands is to be sacred and honor the earth that gives us life, then the things we make must not only rise from the ground but return it, soil, to soil, water to water, so everything is received from the earth can be freely given back without causing harm to any living system. This is ecology. This is good design. It is of this we must now speak.
> (McDonough1993)

McDonough considers design as a *manifestation of human intention*, which is logical, but because of the faith association it becomes both salient to the research and a challenge to the perspective of what design is, should, or could be. The provocative contention is that design is an extension of the designer’s intention, not so much for the article or object, but as a philosophical response to the world. The acknowledgment of human intention reads as recognition of philosophy as a motivator for a designer’s practice and perhaps as a form of theopraxy. The writing is important in that gives permission and incitement to move the fashion design discourse to an area not previously addressed, that of ethics and philosophy.

**Ethics in Application**

Australia is very well provided for in terms of philosophers, particularly in Melbourne. Professor Peter Singer, Princeton University and University of Melbourne, and Professor Raimond Gaita, Australian Catholic University (Melbourne) and King’s College, University of London, both lecture, and publish around ethical premises. They enter the discourse from different perspectives. Singer has an international reputation for his writing on bioethics and ethical behaviour. His oeuvre has proven useful to the research, in particular *One World: The Ethics of Globalisation* (2002); *How Ethical is Australia?* (2004) (with Tom Gregg) and *How
Are We to Live?: Ethics in an Age of Self-Interest (1995), and most recently, The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty (2009). Of particular pertinence to the research is his work concerning relating to others, and the factors governing consequent behaviour. Similarly, it is the same aspect which is of significance in Gaita's work on the notion of community, humanity and indeed, how we relate to each other. His writing ‘Breach of Trust: Truth Morality and Politics’ in Quarterly Essay (2004) was of specific relevance to the notions of equality and fairness pursued within the research. The observations and the situating of fairness and its specific importance as an Australian national value are germane in confirming it as a discussion to commence in Australia. In his most recent book, Tony Fry steps lightly into the philosophy and ethics debate from a practitioner's perspective, although understandably, his work does not possess the philosophical depth of Singer and Gaita. Another new voice in the academic discourse of ethics in Australia is Professor Clive Hamilton. His publication The Freedom Paradox: Towards a Post- Secular Ethics (2008) is provocative and of significance to the thesis because of his use of Buddhist concepts. He positions ethics, the pursuit of happiness and living in Australia in a discourse where Schopenhauer and Eastern philosophies (including Buddhism) are also discussed. A further point of interest is his past role as Executive Director and Founder of The Australia Institute, a public think tank specialising in left leaning social reform, prior to his appointment as a Professor of Public Ethics, Centre for Applied Philosophy at Charles Sturt University. Whilst at the Institute, his writings Growth Fetish (2003), and Affluenza (2005) focus on consumption: he was concerned with social behaviours and thus provides an analysis of consumption. His work does not directly inform the research, but sets a rare (and Australian) precedent - Buddhism and ethics discussed by new voices and in new contexts which was previously non-existent. Finally, within the section of ethics in application is The Cooperative Bank of the UK; an unexpected source of information on ethics, yet it publishes online a yearly Ethical Consumerism Report documenting the ethical purchasing habits of UK consumers. In providing quantitative fiscal evidence of ethics in action, these reports, published since 1999, have charted the rise of ethical consumerism, and provided much needed statistics and related expenditure figures. For example:

… 2006 did see the emergence of a significant number of ‘low-cost’ clothing boycotts. For a number of consumers it would appear that low cost is now a potential indication of poor labour conditions. Subsequently, overall clothing boycotts grow by 20 per cent in 2006 to reach £338 million… (Ethical Consumer Report 2007)

Empathy Writings

To situate the connection of empathy to design, it is useful to look at the work of two designers in Jane Fulton Suri and Katja Battarbee both of IDEO, who have written and spoken on the topic. Their perspectives come from a motivation to find a better method of design, so the products will be more suited to the consumer/user and thus are desirable. In addition, their interpretation and utilisation of empathy offers the designer a further capacity to engage with a distant or different consumer/user. They employ ‘empathy probes’ which are packs of materials for the consumer/user (depending on the project) to engage with: making maps, taking photographs, creating videos, keeping journals, sending postcards, compiling scrap books of where they are, who they are, and what they are doing, and how they feel. Designers receiving the completed probes are then given privileged entry into the experiences of another, in an attempt to go beyond the usual observational or imaginative knowledge; to form empathy for the consumer/user. They employ ‘empathy probes’ which are packs of materials for the consumer/user (depending on the project) to engage with: making maps, taking photographs, creating videos, keeping journals, sending postcards, compiling scrap books of where they are, who they are, and what they are doing, and how they feel. Designers receiving the completed probes are then given privileged entry into the experiences of another, in an attempt to go beyond the usual observational or imaginative knowledge; to form empathy for the consumer/user. Writing in Emotionally Durable Design Chapman brought empathy into a slightly different perspective, in that he writes of consumer/users empathising with products almost returning to the original usage of empathy in art. Theodore Lipps, a German psychologist, utilised the word ‘einfühlung’… ‘feeling into’ (Barnes and Thargard 1997). ‘Empathy’ is the English translation, first used in 1910 and co-opted from aesthetics to interpersonal communication. It thus became a method for a designer to achieve a sustainable outcome, by enabling (via design) the consumer/user to bond longer with a product, consequently extending its lifetime of use. Simon Baron-Cohen’s writings and discourse regarding empathy in Zero Degrees of Empathy – A New Theory of Human Cruelty (2011) provided another perspective; his theory being that ‘empathy erosion’ leads to zero degrees of empathy. The next area of
research and the subsequent readings to be considered deal in part with the notion of compassion, which has a strong parallel with empathy, and how they relate to ethics and the ethical model: Buddhism.

**Buddhist Ethics and Socially Engaged Buddhism Writings**

The available number of publications both ancient and contemporary in English (or translated) relating to Buddhism is expansive. It should be noted that it was not the intent to read everything written, but rather to identify authoritative contemporary and useful texts for the fundamentals of Buddhism, and to support prior reading and knowledge. The philosophical underpinnings of the research teachings originate in Mahayanan Buddhism, and it is acknowledged that the writings and philosophy relating to Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB) emanate from several of the Buddhist lineages, teachings and teachers. Damien Keown’s book *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics* (2000) was of assistance, as were his other edited books and journal papers in establishing the framework of contemporary Buddhist thought relating to ethics. The most relevant and inspirational readings were those addressing SEB from established writers around the thread of Buddhist theory and practice in the USA, the principals of which are Kenneth Kraft, Charles Prebish, and Christopher Queen. Although varied in their viewpoints, they have achieved a balance of grounding in traditional Buddhist teachings, and a pragmatic yet thoughtful need to engage with all the debate and polarities of thought. Sallie B. King’s book *Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism* (2005) has been constructive in its bringing together core themes of SEB and providing an Eastern and Western history and contextualisation. Based in France, the Vietnamese monk/teacher Thich Nhat Hanh has provided a cornerstone to the reading of SEB with his crucial definition of *interbeing*, that is, ‘we inter-are,’ developing the concept further into the Order of Interbeing. The definition or statement encapsulates SEB and a major aspect of interest for the research, specifically addressing dealing with others. Finally, an early work by E. F. Schumacher furnished inspiration in his *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (1973) in that when discussing economics, he considered Buddhism. Although not entirely germane to the topic, the inclusion of Buddhism out of the faith, belief or religious based environs, provided a slender spur to the research. Schumacher accuses economists of suffering from ‘… metaphysical blindness, assuming that theirs is a science of absolute and invariable truths, without any presuppositions,’ (1973 p. 44) a perspective which is echoed in Fry’s work (2009). Schumacher’s intent to question the manner in which economists traditionally approached, viewed and worked within the world has resonance with the research.

In the last fifteen years, there has been a growth of interest amongst academics studying ethics in Buddhism. One of the emerging areas of specific interest and influence is SEB. The last ten years have witnessed a spike in writing and publishing around the topic; Queen and Prebish respectively, write individually and edit collections of papers. Reading around the topic reveals that the current thinking and practicalities of SEB could have a rich contribution to make to the ethics of the fashion industry in a variety of areas.

**Overview of the Chapters**

The thesis is laid out to explain the rationale for the research; to make it possible to understand and appreciate the situation, and the related questions. In addition, contributing factors are explained and contextualised, in Chapter One the rationale for starting the research has been explained and the problem described, the research questions detailed and the research aim outlined to provide location. Furthermore, the key texts and writers germane to the research themes have been identified in a literature review.

The recognised lack of breadth in the existing literature, and language confusion specific to the area of fashion design practice for sustainability is addressed in Chapter Two, where the available literature is discussed, and it is posed that a fundamental problem is that fashion language is not realistic. The language analysis discloses the history of sustainability and ecofashion, and the uneven nature of the development of the area. To address the perceived confusion; a lexicon is constructed from the language of the disciplines
of the fashion industry, marketing and the environmentalism sectors, to avoid confusion in the research and potentially, the broader discourse.

The current situation within the fashion industry regarding equality and empathy is examined and detailed in Chapter Three. The chapter opens with a definition of the roles and realms within the fashion industry, followed by an exploration of the nature of empathy and equality, their connection to fairness, and an investigation of what, or who could benefit from their use. Considering the further ramifications expands the argument, and it is posited that there are qualities missing leading to the last part of the chapter where there is speculation regarding what the industry could be if these omissions were restored and expanded.

Accordingly, Buddhism is discussed in Chapter Four and proposed as a possible source of ethics for a model to be used the fashion industry. Particular tenets are explored and their specific synergies and relevance to sustainability, and the problems of the fashion industry are acknowledged. Lastly, in the section ‘Socially Engaged Buddhism,’ SEB is proposed as a prolific source of practical ethical reference.

Sustainability and how it is currently interpreted is considered in Chapter Five as means to appreciate the argument. The academic writing on sustainability from a variety of disciplines is examined for issues germane to the fashion industry, and topics which have pertinence to Buddhist tenets: reverence for life (animal and human), and the environment are investigated. The cycle of the FD/PL is explained and expanded with the constituent phases and their relevance to sustainability and trying to work ethically within the industry as a designer. The narrowness of the current theoretical, philosophical and practical interpretation of sustainability and the lack of understanding of ethics are revealed and reflected upon.

Responding to the ethical mismatch, the ethical issues in the FD/PL relating to a new reading of sustainability are itemised and expanded upon in Chapter Six. Specifically, the concepts of the social impact, consequent repercussions, and the possible meaning of sentence and its applicability are pursued. The areas where these and other issues occur are laid out as: property, exclusivity, labour, social justice and global equity, and the impact hierarchy is also discussed.

Chapter Seven develops the research discourse threads; working definitions of empathy and equality are plumbed to gauge their potential use in the fashion industry specifically. In addition, the proposition that ‘empathy’ and the consequent ‘fairness’ as a particularly Australian characteristic is explored. Empathy as an extraordinary tool within the fashion industry is proposed; its various potential roles are considered and their consequent beneficial outcomes on the current industry.

Chapter Eight brings the hypothesis to its realisation by considering how a fashion designer responding empathetically and utilising social engagement as a design philosophy may, in fact, engage. The expectations of design methodologies are considered addressing rationality and problem solving, and the argument is advanced through consideration of philosophical motivation. The concepts of engagement, service and surrender of ego are explored, concluding in speculation and reflection upon the principles of an Engaged Buddhist fashion designer. Chapter Nine concludes the hypothesis in organising the outcomes of the chapters, and delineating the response to the original research proposition whilst outlining the suggested guiding principles.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the beginnings and rationale of the hypothesis have been framed, located and explored, the research question developed and the specific questions to be addressed defined and ordered. The research area and questions have been situated to comprehend the breadth of the topic and its potential implications.

Due to the lack of depth in the available literature, other sources have been referenced both from different academic disciplines and popular media. Currently, the disciplines more established in the discourse offer the more radical options. Whereas Manzini (industrial designer) suggests products which are ‘part of service,’ so they are not possessions but on hire for the time of their use. An industrial designer,
Chapman’s main perspective critiques fast consumption and addresses how design can slow down and lessen the environmental impact. Fletcher, Black and Alastair Fuad-Luke critique fast fashion and provide or list alternative methodologies, and in recognising the escalation, vastness and diversity of the industry acknowledge the potential difficulty of change. However, it is Fletcher who provides more substance for the argument, comprehending as she does that it is not possible to change a paradigm when working in the same manner that caused the problem. Her articulated knowledge of the industry and its potential to change underpins her thinking, and thus presents a layered line of reasoning recognising that complete change may not be possible for all stakeholders. At present, this argument makes sense because it allows companies to consider sustainability options.

The hypothesis is situated on the fringes of various areas of research: sustainable design discourse, ethics, faith in application, social justice, Buddhist studies, corporate social responsibility, and philosophy, to differing degrees and as such, the extent of the experimental nature of the hypothesis is apparent. In perceiving a connection between what appear to be diverse if atypical and dissonant disciplines, it has been necessary to borrow, patch and collage from each to build the arguments. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the hypothesis is drawn from slender indicators to map the beginnings of the argument, but it is here that a new thread of the discourse begins. Over the length of time of the candidature, the hypothesis has matured in that the synergy of topic has developed further and become more apparent. Conscious living and conscious design have been discussed in printed, digital media and public and industry debate to a more substantial extent.

Reviewing the literature has supported the hypothesis of the research in that there is a need for a holistic philosophical discourse, one which ‘stands back’ and questions the individual motivation, the underlying intent, and suggests that a focused inclusive approach may be revealed. Thus, in understanding the motivation, the stakeholders are able to consider future alternatives. To initiate the arguments it is necessary to grasp aspects of both the history and current terminology of the fashion industry, and fashion theory in relation to design for sustainability. The status of fashion and the language relating to environmental design, and design for sustainability will need to be explored and explained, the inherent confusion as it stands addressed and some alternative definitions considered.


3. Philip H Knight had stepped down from being CEO of Nike the previous November (2004).

4. The concept in part echoes the intent of *Tzadikim Nistarim* or *Lamed Vav Tzadikim* the Jewish belief derived from the Talmud that humanity is dependent on their being 36 righteous individuals in each generation; that is humanity is reliant on the goodness/righteousness of individuals for Gods’ interest/manifestation; “*For the sake of these 36 hidden saints, God preserves the world even if the rest of humanity has degenerated to the level of total barbarism.*” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzadikim_Nistarim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzadikim_Nistarim) (Accessed 3 June 2010)


7. Of specific interest to the research is the following: Recommendation 9: A New Australian Ethical Quality Mark should be devised with a budget allocation of $8 million to reflect the incorporation of defined ethical standards relating to labour conditions, animal welfare and environmental sustainability in TCF production and supply chains. This will enhance consumer choice and confer competitive advantage on firms that achieve certification.in *Building Innovation Capability – Review of the Australian Textile, Clothing and Footwear Industries*. Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, 2008, p. 110-111.
The Role of Language in Constructing Fashion Design for Sustainability
INTRODUCTION

As fashion boundaries move to address sustainability so language of expression follows providing markers for the new territory. These markers may be familiar, reassuring and perhaps useful, but ultimately, they have proven misleading as they were used in an inaccurate context. For example, what does ‘green’ mean in relation to fashion and what is ‘eco-fashion?’ Are they the same: do the terms refer to something specific? The newness of the discipline of fashion design for sustainability and the absence of a clear understanding of the meaning of many of the shared (with other disciplines) terms has led to an idiomatic confusion, exacerbated by changes in word usage altered by time and geography. Accordingly, an unexamined lexicon has accumulated terms relating to fashion design for sustainability, the environment, ecology, fabrication and manufacture. The popular media have made attempts to name the phenomenon, but have added to the misinformation by the imprecise usage, meanings and application, for example: ‘green fashion,’ ‘eco-fashion,’ and ‘green design.’ Language is crucial to the research because it constructs fashion; in a discipline, which is quintessentially ephemeral, it affords permanence paradoxically, providing longevity to the temporal. Roland Barthes supported the significance of language proposing that fashion is not finished until ‘… it reaches the fashion magazine stage because it is the language of the magazine which gives the clothing created by haute couture the structure of a signifier and the power to signify …’ (2006 p 78-9). Barthes referenced fashion magazines, however, his argument is even more pertinent to research, scholarship and industry stakeholders. If the language constructs fashion, then it is applicable so in fashion design for sustainability; however, when used in the latter context, the language becomes inaccurate and confusing. Design practitioners and stakeholders warrant a language with substance that they can comprehend, use and own. Furthermore, for the discipline to acquire credibility, it must address the needs of practice and theory. The lack of clarity in the terminology is a problem for designers, theorists, journalists and industry stakeholders attempting to initiate and participate in a discourse; serving to impede rigorous discourse, and the advance of authoritative publications. The situation has been exacerbated by careless usage of a variety of terms in the media. Correspondingly, the fashion industry has not been vocal in the discourse; treating sustainability like a season's trend, or sidestepping the issues awaiting stakeholder pressure, and/or government legislation to action change. Undertaking a hypothesis within the area of fashion and sustainability, it rapidly becomes apparent there is little in the way of explained and considered language. Consequently, the topic of the language confusion was proposed in 2006 as an article for the ‘Ecofashion’ special issue of Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture. The proposal was accepted and the article published in 2008 as From ‘Green Blur’ to Ecofashion: Fashioning an Eco-lexicon. A large part of the article formed the basis for the following chapter.

Fashion as both a design discipline and an industry has acquired and endeavoured to construct meaning from both the existing fashion terms and the new domain: ‘ecology/environmentalism.’ When ‘ecology’ first began to be used in relation to fashion, both terms carried forward the words, and practices from their respective histories. It became clear that there had been a construction of terminology collaged together to enable a quick sense of the topic, but not as a considered, focused, definition and contextualisation. Currently, the fashion and sustainability discussion rests on the periphery of other design discourses and theories with borrowed inexact terminology. Organising a lexicon is, therefore, crucial in establishing fashion design for sustainability theory. It will also function as a prompt and a descriptive tool. Furthermore, the lexicon will provide understood terminology for communication in the following contexts:

• Scholarly discourse
• Fashion theory
• Fashion design practice
• Science behind the environmental impact of the industry
• Marketing
• Consumer/users
• Stakeholders
• Media

Within this chapter, it is proposed to outline a lexicon of terminology in regular usage, relevant to fashion and sustainability as a beginning for scholarly reflection on the under-examined area. In addition to situating the argument, a short history of ecology and fashion will be provided. The rationale for the lexicon will be further outlined: the lack of a considered vocabulary, the ensuing problems due to the confusion and erroneous meanings will be discussed, and potential definitions and additions to the lexicon will be suggested. The lexicon will be divided into two sections; firstly, in relation to the environment and secondly; more specifically, to the fashion industry, its issues and post ‘first life’ or first use of the garment. As has been explored in Chapter One, fashion must be represented and participate with other design disciplines within the related fields of sustainability, sustainable design discourse, and theory. Therefore, the purpose of the chapter is to assemble a reflected lexicon of words used in the nascent discourse, in both scholarly and contemporary popular writing. The intention is not to standardise terminology, nor is it envisioned as the definitive interpretation, but as an initial mapping of the frontier - a lexicon, which can act as a starting place for the further discourse. As authoritative books are rare, it is necessary to search for the conference papers, the rare journal article, or through the miscellany of fashion journalism to source writing.

FASHION JOURNALISM IS NOT ‘REALISTIC’

Newspapers, magazines and websites represent the immediate source of textual information for the general public, and have been one of the few areas where issues relating to the negative impact of the fashion industry are discussed. As such, it holds a place of significance: as mentioned previously, Barthes considered printed text, including newspapers, crucial to understanding the language of fashion (2006). Newspapers are an accessible beginning, but imprecise word usage is an impediment to closer scholarly understanding of the terms ‘eco-fashion,’ and subsequently, the further reflection on ‘sustainability.’ For example, the fashion writer Suzy Menkes of the International Herald Tribune, observed in regard to New York’s high end fashion department store Barneys: ‘The company which has always searched for upcoming designers, has now put a focus on organic knits, eco-friendly cottons, grown to sewn denim and even recycled gold jewellery.’ (2008).

The terms are not wrong but are vague, leaving room to question whether ‘organic’ refers to the shape of design, the fibre growth, or the method of manufacture. The phrase ‘eco-friendly cottons’ is extremely vulnerable to scrutiny as cotton-growing can be particularly harmful to the environment and the farmers. It is possible to refer to ‘eco cotton’ when any process (but not all) has changed to make it less damaging. Understandably, journalists may require rapid information for an article to give their readers an overview, yet when confronted by the terminology, they appear to be confused by the layers of definition and interpretation that need to be considered. For example, when James Hall (The Telegraph, UK) writes about the ethical clothing phenomenon, the text is entertaining and lively, but unexplained:

Green is fast becoming the new black … But can mainstream chains make money on ethically sourced and manufactured clothing, or are they just jumping on a conscience-cleansing bandwagon that is populated by celebrities and eco-warriors? (2006)

The problem lies in the words that relate to fashion, ecology, the environment, sustainability and ethics are not fully understood and are sometimes used rashly. It is possible to question whether it matters if terminology needs to be exact, when there has not been a practice of objective writing (Grice 1996). One considers that within fashion, language has been used as prose, as part of the evocation of a collection at the concept inception, then later in descriptive terms to suggest the garments, and in the concept marketing materials. When reviewing a runway show, fashion journalists use language to suggest and conjure the collection, and
remark on constituent garments: the custom and practice has been to comment and interpret, rather than analyse and critique. There are notable exceptions, for example Hilary Alexander writing for The Telegraph (UK), an example of which will be discussed later, yet within fashion journalism in general, there is not an expectation to be realistic. As Samantha Grice observed, in the Ryerson Review of Journalism:

… Many journalists believe the words fashion and journalism don’t belong in the same sentence. Consequently, the field often doesn’t attract good writers, nor does it receive adequate support from many publishers, who try to produce it on the cheap. The result is coverage that is heavy on service, press-release journalism and thinly disguised advertorial while light on in-depth well-written stories. (1996)

Journalists are, however, a worthwhile and necessary source because as Barthes identified, newspapers are an area where fashion is made real, particularly for the general reader and consumer/users. Readers may be complicit participants in the expressive, interpretive nature of the language used; it enables them to join in the fantasy and theatre. So, in the new area of research and practice, journalists equipped with a dictionary of terms such as ‘…conical bra frocks and body-con pantsless scuba leotards…’ (Cohn 2009) may resist specificity in defining where, and how, to use an exacting terminology. Alternatively, they take the terminology of fashion, ecology and similar areas and collage them together for effect. Fashion is an industry, and a popular media relishes humour, wordplay, alliteration and punning in describing it, as is demonstrated by international newspaper headlines related to the topic:

• Green is the new black for cotton
• Sorry Planet Earth, the buzz word is plastic
• Absolutely ethical, darling
• So cool so ethical
• Fashion goes green
• That touch of green
• Green is good – by customer demand
• Chic without suffering – fashion displays its ethical face
• An outfit that wants to change the world
• Growing a green aesthetic

The playful approach is both entertaining and frustrating, as accuracy can be sidestepped in the pursuit of amusement and attention-grabbing. It could be argued that their readers, or fashion consumer/users may not need, want, nor understand accurate definitions, contextualisation, or critique. However, the confusion is clear to stakeholders and the resultant imprecise boundaries have been discussed by Cotton Incorporated in 2007 on their website (Lifestyle Monitor) which referred to the phenomenon as Green Blur. Therefore, there is an established need to explore the confusion further, to contextualise the research.

Scholarly literature relating specifically to fashion design and sustainability reflects the newness of the area of written research, in that there are very few publications, as noted in Chapter One. The fashion industry requires the information for communication to the industrial stakeholders to the supply chain, or Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005); for the consumer/users and stakeholders to understand corporate social responsibility reports, swing tags, or journalists to use in press releases. Furthermore, consumer/users need clear information when shopping for specific details: fabric content, sourcing, method of cultivation, location of manufacture of fabric and garment. The point of difference for a label may be that the company is sourcing its production from a worker’s cooperative in Brazil. Equally, if the company have selected all organic fibres, they want their consumer to understand and appreciate their choice. Without clear communication, effective and influential choices made to benefit
the current, and/or, future environment, human or animal rights, can be overlooked, or misunderstood. Correspondingly, language can be utilised to imply or infer beneficial choices, or altruistic ethics without empirical findings to support the claims. Observing and reflecting on the language, it is apparent that the inference of the words changes over time; it falls in and out of favour, and that geographical distinctions (UK, USA and Australasia), may in part, determine which words are used. It is opportune to consider what the contents of the lexicon may be as: a ‘vocabulary of a branch of knowledge’ (Thompson et al. 1995) for the participants, observers and commentators. Currently, it reflects the genesis; the two areas; that of environmental discourse and the fashion industry communication.

Language Confusion

Within the language, there is friction and confusion due in part to the bundling of terminology; words are put together because they sound informative, as opposed to their accuracy in usage. Moreover, when they are substituted one for another, the opportunity for accurate detail and nuance is lost. For example, the term ‘natural’ used in this manner is vague, but implies a lack of contamination and employment of benevolent cultivation and harvesting processes. The misuse of ‘natural’ occurs most commonly in marketing rather than in media. In a broader sense, the use of the hyphen is problematic, as it is used regularly to preface a word with ‘eco’ and ‘green,’ for example: ‘light-green environmentalist,’ ‘eco-power pinup,’ ‘eco-narcissism,’ ‘ecorazzi’ and ‘eco-ethical.’ ‘Light-green environmentalist’ and the unhyphenated ‘eco conscience’ are both indicative of the misdirection because they are tautologies, in that both terms make the same statement twice - ‘green’ and ‘environmental’ reference the same area. The lack of standardisation of terminology can work in the manufacturers’ favour; they can give their version of the issues and facts and employ ‘greenwash.’

The endemic confusion affects fashion theorists, academics, scholars and ultimately consumer/users, and is frustrating when searching for meaning. Conversely, it offers a fertile space for challenging current usage and forging a new practice relevant to fashion design for sustainability whilst enabling theorists, designers, and academics to critique the terms in text and practice. Yet, for the discourse to develop and mature there needs to be preliminary terms in the lexicon.

Exact information relating to the terms is difficult to establish and this situation has come to the notice of the industry. As mentioned earlier, Cotton Incorporated has commented on the lack of clarity under the heading ‘Green Blur’ on the company website:

*John and Jane Q. Public have little or no idea what the new, green marketing vocabulary is saying … Because they were unable to differentiate one green category from another, consumers simply stopped looking. (2006)*

Whether the proliferation of consumer targeted websites and publications supports the statement is debatable. Cotton Incorporated builds their argument with revealing results:

*A fiber [sic] made from organic cotton and one from cotton grown using modern agricultural developments is essentially the same in strength, staple length and quality. What differs is the way in which they were cultivated, and both methods have environmental plus sides. (2006)*

They acknowledge the consumer confusion, yet their argument implies (and contributes to the misinformation) rather than informs the discourse. The sentence: ‘What differs is the way in which they were cultivated, and both methods have environmental plus sides,’ is inexact especially when considering the ‘seed war’ in India (Shiva 2005) after the ‘seed monopolies created through TRIPS,’ (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) (Shiva 2005 p. 84), sales of expensive cotton seeds and pesticides to farmers in India and resultant debt related suicides. The way organic cotton is cultivated is radically different in methodology, but also in philosophical intent. To state that they both have ‘environmental plus sides’ is accurate in its approximations, but belittles the argument whereas the environmental and social impact of the organic cotton farmers, and the mainstream cotton farmers represented by Cotton
Incorporated are extremely different. Their rhetoric posits their own philosophical perspective and terminology:

*At this stage in green marketing history, mainstream consumers are still in the learning process, educating themselves on a multitude of terms and trying to understand the benefits of one fiber or marketing philosophy over another. In time, marketing messages and terms will become clearer in consumer minds and they will make informed apparel choices that are sustainable not only for the environment, but to their own, personal economies. For now, their natural instincts are guiding them through the green blur.* (2006)

It is justifiable to question how consumer/users are being guided through the *green blur*. If they are indeed educating themselves, it is constructive but the language and meaning of the terminology in the information available to them varies. According to the website Ecolabel Index there are currently 102 international ecolabels relating to textiles. So the consumer/user can understandably be confused. The industry labels are diverse from the ECC Eco-Flower, the Social Accountability International (SAI) SA8000® standard, Oeko-Tex® certification and Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certification. Thus, if the language used at the concept of a collection, and later describing the garments in press releases has been prose, how are consumer/users to make informed purchases, and the scholarly arguments prosper? The discourse must extend further for the study: the development of theory and critique surrounding the area must be considered and questioned. Should this occur, the following question may be raised: has the terminology been used in a cavalier manner because newspaper journalism is essentially as disposable as the clothing it seeks to describe? Perhaps by inference there is an implication that both fashion journalism and the fashion it covers are short-lived commodities, or of little long term importance, as Grice (1996) observed: 'One reason fashion journalism is viewed as frivolous is that some practitioners treat it that way.' To continue the perspective further, by implication, the writing is then not to be taken seriously. If an industry employing 26.5 million people globally is consuming the resources and energy of the planet (Allwood et al 2006), impacting the health and well-being of the current and future inhabitants, there is a manifest need for specific and responsible use of language, to enable clear understanding of communication regarding the future.

**Owning the Language**

Definition and clarity are sought to perceive emerging delineations, which may be explored, challenged, or celebrated. A tension exists in the fashion industry between the commercial, the practical, and the theoretical, which is borne out in the adoption of specific language and spheres of use. The terminology originated in the environmental movement, environmentalism and in the fashion industry, and was then co-opted and reinvented for fashion marketing and journalism. To go forward, both the industry and fashion scholars are required to be proactive and visionary in their ideas and the creation of a resulting language, whilst it needs to be transparent for other stakeholders at the same time. The environmentalists have owned language in the sustainability discourse in the past; the fashion industry and discipline are recent arrivals and have not been a popular addition to the table. The apprehension is understandable: environmentalists had championed the cause and owned the rhetoric, as George Black stated in 2007 on the *National Resource Defense Council* (NRDC) website:

*Elle, Vogue, and a slew of teen-orientated magazines and TV shows have thrust the world of high fashion, even hip-hop, into the mix, peppering their coverage with phrases like ‘eco-sexy’ and ‘ecolo-chic.’ But maybe a better term is ‘eco-narcissism.’*

In the online article, Black later concluded:

*Admittedly, environmentalism has always carried a whiff of the hair shirt, and would probably do well to lose it.*
Writing in *The New York Times*, Alex Williams noted that the environmentalist Paul Hawken had referred to green fashion shows as ‘anomalies,’ and Williams stated that ‘*Fashion is deliberate inculcation of obsolescence*’ (Williams 2007), echoing Packard’s earlier vision (1960). Paradoxically, environmentalists have utilised fashion shows for public consciousness-raising. Initially, the clothing presented was often entertaining with an emphasis on the avant-garde; unfortunately, garments were often constructed from refuse and recycled objects. These were one-off pieces, which further confirmed and contributed to the perception of the lack of realistic fashion solutions, rather than proposing workable options for the global industry. Nonetheless, changes have begun to occur: the fashion industry, educational institutions and consumer/users have become more aware of, and engaged with the environmental movement. The most utilised terms have been ‘green,’ ‘environmental,’ ‘ecological,’ ‘sustainable,’ ‘ethical,’ ‘recycled,’ ‘organic’ and ‘inclusive (universal) fashion,’ and ‘fashion design.’ As a vocabulary, they coexist, cross-pollinate, and are therefore readily reinterpreted to appreciate the genus of the language. A brief historical perspective provides further context.

**Historical Overview**

In endeavouring to establish the beginning of the commercial eco-fashion movement, a first signpost may be then San Francisco based Esprit and the launch of their Ecollection in November of 1991. The Green Movement, from which it took inspiration, had its beginnings in the 1960s. It was a political movement, a counterculture (thus consumerism was not the driver), as articulated in Nigel Whiteley’s (1993) reference to ‘*citizens*’ not consumer/users. Ironically, one of the icons of the early environmental movement was shoes, Birkenstocks. For contextualisation; The Friends of the Earth started in the US in 1969, Greenpeace began in 1971 in Canada, and The Body Shop was founded in the UK in 1976, and in Germany the pioneering clothing company Hess Natur was founded in 1976. It was also in the 1970s that Papanek started writing around design and the impact on the environment. Environmentalism came in waves: the first in the 1960s and the second in the 1980s (McLeod 2006 p. 84-92). For the design discipline in general, there was the Green Designer Exhibition held in 1986 at the Design Centre in London (Design Council 1986). Over the years since the early nineties, various fashion companies have experimented by responding to environmental issues, either driven by a fashion trend or zeitgeist. Generally, the subject was approached by addressing the environmental impact through selection of fibres and textiles, for example hemp, or organic cotton and wool. Kate Fletcher refers to the response in the early nineties as ‘*eco chic,*’ defining it as ‘… a more stylized reaction against simplistic perceptions of chemicals and industrial pollution than a conversion to sustainable values …’ (2007 p. 120).

With the new millennium, more fabrics became available for environmentally conscious designers who wanted to design clothing with a fashion aesthetic, and low environmental impact, whilst incorporating fairness and responsibility in the manufacture. The notion of an environmental agenda for a label or company had been characterised in ‘performance clothing’ (that is, clothing for sporting use), which requires clothing to be tested by repeated movement sometimes in hazardous climates and physical environments. The environmental agenda is epitomised by Patagonia as articulated in their online mission statement:

*What We Do*

We acknowledge that the wild world we love best is disappearing. That is why those of us who work here share a strong commitment to protecting undomesticated lands and waters. We believe in using business to inspire solutions to the environmental crisis.

(2011)

Patagonia’s clothes are designed to function in often extreme environments: rock-climbing, orienteering, and cross-country skiing. In addition they joined the Organic Exchange (now the Textile Exchange) when it started in 2002. The consumer/users identify with their recreational surroundings, thus Patagonia supported their environmental values. The environmental agenda migrated to fashion clothing; no longer perceived
as a passing seasons’ fad, but into the mission values of small labels. In the United Kingdom, Gossypium (organic and fair trade cottons) and People Tree (organic, fair trade design and manufacture) who have been trading from 1998 and 2001 respectively began to have their work acknowledged. In Denmark in 2002 the Sustainable Solution Design Association published Guidelines: a Handbook on the Environment for the Fashion and Textile Industry.

Within the growth of the discourse, the role of the consumer/user has substantial influence. The indication that ‘eco-fashion’ could be only realised through a designer’s selection of fabric alone, gives an unbalanced perspective; there was a corresponding consumer/user interest and expectation, which is also part of the history. Tim Lang and Yannis Gabriel identified a fourth wave of consumer movements, which they call ‘alternative consumerism:

… We sensed that while this fourth wave had many elements – green, ethical, Third World solidarity and fair trade orientations – it as yet lacked overall coherence. In the last decade of the twentieth century, that coherence, we believe began to emerge. (2005 p. 48)

Their insight also provides an important realisation by acknowledging that these elements were not previously located in the same group. Meanwhile, there were changes occurring with different tangible outcomes; in the curatorial essay for Well Fashioned: Eco Style Exhibition (Figure 1. Exhibition poster/flyer), Rebecca Earley reviewed the recent past. She identified the following as markers of the growth of eco fabrics and reported increase in fairly traded goods: the Ethical Fashion Show in Paris in November of 2004, the Anti-Apathy RE: Fashion event as part of London Fashion Week in February of 2005 and FutureFashion at Verdopolis: The Future Green City 2005. In addition in 2004 Tasmin Lajeune started the Ethical Fashion Forum, as did Made-By NL.

Before concluding this short history it is useful to note the nature of the companies involved with the subject has changed. Due to consumer/user interest and information, but also to available fabrication, (traceable supply chain - growth and process) there was a difference between these early eco designers, and manufacturers and their clientele. As the movement grew the consumers/users became more aware, and the mainstream companies often led by outdoor performance clothing became involved (some prompted by activists), driving the demand for organic fabrications and ethically sourced garments. As a result a company of the size and influence of Wal-Mart has embraced organic fabrics in its clothing and is ‘greening’ its supply chain and transportation systems (Humes 2011).

The demand for information, and thus the need for considered use of language, is supported in the convergence of subject related magazines: The New Consumer (UK), The Ethical Consumer (UK), Ecology (UK), EcoTextiles (UK), Organic Style (US), Green (Australia), GreenPages (Australia) amongst them, some short-lived, others with longevity. Books that directly acknowledged the consumer/users need for clear information to strengthen interest in purchasing clothing with an environmental and/or ethical provenance appeared: The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping (UK) in 2004. Concurrently academic publications began to appear such as The Ethical Consumer (2005), and the international academic group Educators for a Socially Responsible Apparel Business (ESRAB) was formed in 2001. These delineate a burgeoning interest in ‘eco-fashion’ and the developing field of scholarly discourse and critique on the subject.
A FASHIONED LEXICON

In establishing the words in the lexicon in an approximate chronological order of use, ‘eco,’ short for ‘ecology’ was employed in the 1980s. ‘Environmental,’ a more general term was used in relation to design in the 1990s, whereas the word ‘green’ is an early term which had fallen into disuse for a time. Recently, it has come into usage again relating to fashion, probably co-opted from the international Green political movement. Finally, ‘ethical’ originates from established philosophical and religious discourses and the ethical investments movement.

The following brief lexicon of words indicates their meaning, geography, and history and illustrates the flux within the terminology, in addition to providing contextualisation to the ‘eco-fashion’ discourse. What follows is not perceived as the final pronouncement; rather, it is a beginning, a premier coup for the challenge. There is a good deal of imprecision and generalisation; the same word may be used to describe different, yet similar, processes and outcomes. Additionally, there is the ‘piggyback’ factor; that is, in the absence of
available terms, or factual information, there is a tendency to attach behaviours, or practices, to a familiar, predefined term. The lexicon is divided into two sections; the first section addresses the fashion industry, post consumption and the sustainability movement; the second section applies to the environmental aspects of the industry. They provide prompts to the related areas and circumstances and therefore merit scrutiny.

Ecology and Eco-Fashion

‘Ecology’ is a logical beginning, defined in the dictionary as: ‘the study of the interaction of people with their environment,’ (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English 1995). Therefore, ‘eco-fashion’ is the first of the words, which concerns the fashion industry, and their related areas including marketing, merchandising and journalism. Eco-fashion was probably one of the earlier terms, referring to fashion with a specific benign intent towards the environment; it implies some definition, but like many terms referring to fashion and clothing, lacks reference, or precision. The practical realisation (by the designer or production manager) of the ‘eco’ aspect of fashion is usually through the sourcing of environmentally benevolent fabrics. However, the degree of benevolence has varied radically both in the past and contemporarily. Within the media, both popular and ‘serious,’ there has been a tendency to preface words with ‘eco’ to reference the connection to the environment: ‘eco-fibre,’ ‘eco-t-shirt,’ ‘eco-jeans;’ as a flexible term, it is likely utilised because of its non-factual approximation. Thus, it provides the reader with an impression of kindliness or doing little harm to the environment, but is rarely substantiated by factual information, or a specification of which aspect of the garment (conception, fabrication, manufacture or disposal) is in fact, ‘eco.’ Within academic study, when the term ‘eco-fashion’ is sometimes used (more likely in US), it can again reference fibre and fabric selection. Furthermore, it can refer to pattern-cutting to enable thrifty fabric utilisation (an economic fabric lay); less construction, and ease of disassemble when the garment has finished its first life. One ‘life’ is the usual expectation of a garment, however, designing for several ‘lives’ enables a garment to be altered, or remade for a different consumer/user for a different purpose several times over. Paradoxically, topics relating to ‘… the interaction of people...’ (Thompson et al. 1995), such as social justice and corporate responsibility are rarely collectively considered in the fashion industry, if the environmental factors are deliberated. In education, these topics are taught in business, merchandising and buying, whilst sustainable design and inclusive (universal) design are perceived as different. Yet all of the topics are interrelated in the stages in a garment life-cycle analysis, or the FD/PL (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005) and supply chain; these are not theories in isolation but work successfully if practiced concurrently. However, when considering the well being of the human and environmental aspects of the fashion industry other terms come into use, for example, ‘fair trade.’

Fair Trade

The fair trade movement addresses global equity, social justice and responsibility, and over the last five to ten years has grown in influence internationally; both as a philosophy and a method of trading with developing countries to enable the growers and makers of goods to receive fair payment; a living wage. The organisation Fair Trade defines their agenda as:

Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives. (Fair Trade Glossary 2011).
In addition sustainable development is included:

_The term Fair Trade defines a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in developing countries._ (Fair Trade Glossary 2011)

Working from a premise that in the global economy, it is often the growers and makers who are poorly paid; as can be seen the movement aims to source directly from the makers to enable them to receive a fair price and a higher percentage of the sales price. There is an ideological connection to ethical trading and potentially ethical fashion; referring to an altruistic intent, and politics. In the past, the ‘Fair Trade’ label and organisation related mostly to food products and craftwork, however, cotton is now included as shown in a promotional photograph featuring the actress Minnie Driver (Figure 2. Minnie Driver in Oxfam fair trade organic cotton advertisement UK 2007). As a movement, fair trade manifested as both small and large organisations internationally, as evidenced in Traidcraft in the UK (1979). The movement developed into a Fairtrade™ mark, an independent consumer label in 1994 (UK), and the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (1997), TransFair in the USA (1998), and in Australasia (2005). Due to its benign intent, a progression of the logic would then indicate that if garments were fairly traded, and or manufactured, the environmental impact would need to be considered. It is important to realise that unless specifically labelled ‘organic’ as such, there is no benevolent outcome simply by association, however, worthy the cause. Therefore, expectations of entirely ethical NGO clothing need to be investigated rather than assumed; for example, sweatshop-free sneakers are not made by unfairly paid workers, but we need to discern who designed the sneaker which bears a striking resemblance to a sneaker designed, made and owned by global brand Converse. They may be fairly traded but are not necessarily ethically conceived and designed.

FIGURE 2. MINNIE DRIVER IN OXFAM FAIR TRADE ORGANIC COTTON ADVERTISEMENT UK 2007.
Ethical

The term ‘ethical’ is perhaps an unexpected selection for this part of the lexicon. Couched in its most familiar form, it is a recent arrival to fashion terminology and is being used more and more; it is used in relation to consumption, fashion design and trading. In 2002 the Ethical Fashion Forum the small but influential industry based organisation, was established in London and they have their own definition of ‘ethical’.\(^\text{13}\) Having migrated from the ethical investment movement, it had previously brought quasi-religious inference and connotation. Within the discourse, the term ‘ethical’ refers to philosophically guided actions and behaviours determined by the impact they have on others. Thus, ‘ethical fashion’ may refer to the potential positive impact that the designer, the buying choices, or the production has on workers, consumers, animals, society and the environment. The word ‘ethical’ is challenging by inference, as it may be perceived as a judgemental definition. Due to the perceived closeness in meaning with ‘morals,’ there is a supposition of imposed correctness. This then works to construct a polarising disjuncture between ‘ethical’ and ‘unethical’ clothing; correspondingly, it is a precarious pedestal for a range of clothing, or a label to be described as ‘ethical’. The inference is of a holistic response (not always possible in other terms in the lexicon) to the entire production process - a ‘cradle to cradle’ (McDonough and Braungart 2002) approach, which could be perceived as a provocation for lobbyists to monitor production. Consequently, it is appropriate to mention the lobbyists and activists that scrutinise the fashion industry closely within the discourse regarding language. The term ‘ethical fashion’ may be construed oxymoronic, and an incitement by some stakeholders engaged with anti-fur, anti-sweatshop and other industry reform campaigns. As Clare Coulson (The Telegraph, UK) writes:

…”It can be argued that eco-fashion is an oxymoron. How can eco-friendliness fit with so ephemeral an industry? The most significant progress should perhaps come from consumers: buying less, and more ethically, could be the most ecologically sound way to shop. (2006)"

There are consumer activist campaigns, concerning social justice, corporate social responsibility and animal rights relating to fashion, and certain of these have been graphically confronting in their imagery, text and actions as shown in Figure 3. a confronting image depicting Shirley Mason for PETA. Some outcomes have been beneficial to stakeholders, the environment and workers when a particular process or processes have been changed or stopped. Due to its more mainstream application and ephemeral nature, it is important to note that the fashion industry is a broader target for critique than, for example, architecture and industrial/product design, and the result has been campaigns waged against specific companies and practices both locally and globally. Notable has been the close scrutiny of Nike and their subcontractors, and the active campaigning by People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) against the Australian wool grower’s practice of mulesing, which involves cutting flesh (often without local anaesthetic) from the rear end of sheep to avoid flystrike (infestation, then being consumed by maggots). One consequence of this targeted scrutiny has been an anxiety within fashion companies; they are frequently loathe to be ethical, or improve their environmental impact quotient, for fear of attracting closer examination or adverse action. The dichotomy between action and inaction is played out both in large campaigns with global manufacturers, and locally with small non-government organisations.
Green

The popular term refers to a product, or service that intends to or wishes to be identified positively with the environment, with or without verification. It is one of the oldest terms within the lexicon - it references the political movement of the 1960s, but has fallen from use in a broader context. However, green as a term, has become popular in the general media (Figure 4. Vanity Fair, ‘Green Issue’, May 2006) over the last four years in the US, the UK, and more recently, in Australia. The association is with the environment at its most lush, so the term ‘green’ is an apposite value and in a world facing droughts, floods and blizzards due to global warming is highly desirable. However, it is hyperbolic within general writing; referring to the environment and environmental issues, and can and is utilised in a trivial and simplistic manner. Similar to ‘eco,’ it is deliberately used as an indiscriminate ‘catch-all’ term, and is a connotative preface for issues, products, organisations, behaviours and actions to indicate a general or specific environmental intent and or content. Furthermore, it matches the fondness for punning in the popular and fashion press, as evidenced in these headlines:
Green is the new black for cotton (Blanchard 2007)
Fashion goes green (Hall 2006)
Growing a green aesthetic (Menkes 2006)
Green is good – by customer demand (Menkes 2007)

Greenwash

Extending the wordplay applications of ‘green’ is the expression ‘greenwash’, paraphrased from whitewash; and meaning to cover up unpleasant or unacceptable environmental facts, or behaviours. As a methodology, it is perceived as a marketing ploy; the term has been used in a scathing manner by organisations and individuals inside (or allied to) the environmental movement, to describe an action/policy, or outcome, implemented to divert, or assuage environmentalists’ critique. For example, a large company with a long term environmental pollution problem may announce a small short term project to deflect scrutiny and they may employ greenwash, or promote their perspective by omission of information. Perceptually, there is indifference
by some companies towards human and animal rights, and the environment concerning their production, marketing and disposal methods and a reliance on consumer/user and/or stakeholder ignorance. Greenwash is the last of the terms in the lexicon directly associated with fashion industry.

Environmental

This term is the first in the second group; the ‘green awareness’ group of words and is readily utilised by theorists and academics as an adjective that refers to surroundings and the habitat, in this case, the earth. Like ‘ecology,’ it references the scientific, but it is less easy to abbreviate; ‘enviro-fashion’ is not as catchy as ‘eco-fashion,’ consequently, the term is not used. ‘Environment’ and ‘environmental’ are the terms used in circumstances where facts and measurements are recorded rather than the aesthetics and benefits of ‘natural’ cotton. But within both the science and the public discourse what is deemed suitable for the environment changes according to research and opinion. For example, the research report Well Dressed? (Allwood et al, op cit), proposed that man-made fibre had merit in regard to the environment due to its ease of laundering, longevity and its potential for recycling. Thus, in a discussion regarding the choice of a sound ‘environmental’ fibre for the future, it should be noted that the object may in fact be man-made (e.g. polyester). In the past, hemp, organic cotton or wool would have been the primary recommendations, which reflects past concerns relating to the growth and disposal of an environmental fibre, whereas the laundering and drying inherent in the care is understood to have a considerable environmental impact:

… Elimination of tumble drying (which uses around 60% of the use phase energy) and ironing in combination with the lower wash temperature, leads to around 50% reduction in the global climate change impact of the product. (Allwood et al p. 40)

In light of the laundering information consumer/users in the Northern Hemisphere may reframe their environmental perspectives and look more broadly when making their fabric selections.

Organic

‘Natural’ or ‘organic’ are readily interchanged mainly in relation to fibres, which can be a problem because it is a misuse of the terms. ‘Natural’ has no real veracity in the context usage as the term refers to how the staples of the thread, or fibre came into existence and does not infer nor state that no chemicals, (herbicides, pesticides or fungicides) were used in their propagation and growth. When used correctly, ‘organic’ as a term relates to the growth of fibres on a plant, and the resulting fibre and fabrics specifically referring to the standard of Soil Association Certification Limited (SA) established in 1973 in the United Kingdom. A recent arrival to the fashion and textiles discipline, the term ‘organic’ comes from the farming and the food industries. Consequently, to be able to call a product ‘organic’ it has to conform to the extensive measurable requirements set out by the Organic Soil Association, which requires the grower to undertake organic certification; a committed and long term endeavour. However, achieving organic certification enables the seller to ask a premium price. The expectation of accuracy of certifications is crucially important; particularly in the growth and production of food, because organic food is often bought for children and adults with serious health issues. The ‘organic’ standard means that the subject, for example, cotton, or fibre process has received S.A. accreditation. As mentioned earlier, the organic accreditation is highly desirable therefore it is understandable that during 2008, the Australian Wool Innovation Limited and International Wool Trade Organisation (IWTO) were defining ‘organic wool’ and ‘eco-wool’ to enable them to achieve the premium price for their wool growers. There has been rise in organic definitions and standards to address the premium the organic standard and environmental kudos it provided the product. The definitions of ‘organic’ vary according to geography, Europe was practice within environmental awareness; Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) was established in 2002 in Germany, their most recent definition of their textile standard is Version 3.0:
The aim of the standard is to define world-wide recognised requirements that ensure organic status of textiles, from harvesting of the raw materials, through environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing up to labelling in order to provide a credible assurance to the end consumer. (GOTS 2011)

Provenance

The term ‘provenance’ has not had a large amount of usage in the fashion industry, but holds potential therein and is a similar terminology for the concept of ‘truthful labelling’ (Middleton 2007). The term has links with ‘organic’, in that it is about communicating information of worth to the manufacturer and the consumer/user. It is borrowed from the practice of fine art accreditation: requiring objects to have a documented history, from its creator to the current owner, thereby enabling the seller to establish that the object is genuine, chronologically substantiated and thus worthy of the asking price. Understandably, an authenticated Picasso is worth considerably more than an ingeniously executed likeness. If the term were to be adopted by the fashion industry, there could be a corresponding benefit to both the seller and consumer/user. If verified, a fairly made and traded garment, with little environmental impact, and no harm rendered to other beings accrues philosophical/political/social merit (as a record of the consumer/users conscience), and fiscal worth to the ethical consumer/user. ‘Provenance’ has another aspect to recommend it for the design scholar. In the methodology of accrediting the fine art pieces, there is robust debate as various sources are tracked, scrutinised and their authenticity argued, knowledge acquired and shared. Patagonia have instigated The Footprint Chronicles® a system of tracking examples of garments on its website, that engages the consumer/user viewer to give a sense of transparency. Leonardo Bonanni, created Sourcemap whilst at MIT; an online social network where members of the public (or the industry) can construct supply chains of anything food or product. Similarly, it is envisaged that there would be ongoing hyper-transparent critique of design, by industry professionals and non-government organisations of sourcing and manufacture in their intention to establish said ‘provenance.’

Recycled

When the fibre has been made into cloth, then cut and manufactured, sold and worn for an amount of time and is of no further use to the first owner, it is ‘recycled’ after which it may have a ‘second life’ as stock in a shop selling second-hand/pre-loved/vintage clothing. These shops are often run by charities, and have generic geographically defined names: Oxfam shops (UK), Good Will, Thrift (USA) and Opportunity (Opp) shops (Australasia). The garments may also be sold on to merchants in developing countries. Alternatively, they can be ‘upcycled,’ ‘redeployed’ or ‘downcycled’. ‘Upcycling’ occurs when discarded garments have their value increased by altering or customising. The term is similar in meaning to ‘re-use’ which can mean to reuse the garment or slightly change it. The processes can be undertaken by an individual consumer/user, or utilised by designers and small companies who specialise in the practice. Similarly, a garment may be ‘redeployed’: altered, ‘disassembled’ (Fletcher 2008) deconstructed or dyed, or customised and sold back into the clothing system; for example, Project Alabama (Brown 2010) (2000-2006). Some labels are pursuing this process for their unsold or returned (after wear) garments. The opposite process is ‘downcycling’: ‘… most recycling is actually downcycling; it reduces the quality of the material over time …’ (McDonough and Braungart 2002 p. 56). ‘Downcycling’ is clothing repurposed into fibre stuffing, rags or blankets, which is usually the exit from the supply-chain, or FD/PL.
It is timely to consider the current and proposed meaning of the term ‘sustainability,’ specifically in relation to design for sustainability. In regard to the future of the discourse Fletcher wrote:

‘… The challenge of sustainability – that is, of integrating human well-being and natural integrity – is such that we can’t go on as before. Business as usual or, more to the point fashion as usual, is not an option.’ (2008 p. xii)

As she indicates, a new perspective and interpretation is required. Like many terms in the lexicon, ‘sustainability’ is often employed in an arbitrary manner. However, its usage requires more rigorous consideration, especially when one considers its developmental value in future. In terms of expression, its value lies in being a larger ‘umbrella’ word for proactive practices. In writing that sustainable design is unresolved, Chapman appears to support a review of the etymology of sustainability when he states that it is:

‘… a relatively new arrival on the creative scene with a great deal still to learn …’ (2005 p. 170). ‘Sustainability’ is not environmentalism by another name; it is broader and more inclusive with a profound far-reaching intent. It has been used in referring to the planet, environment and design for two or more decades, however, within the nascent fashion design for sustainability discourse, the term is used more by theorists and academics, and less by the fashion and popular press. As a descriptor, it came into mainstream use in relation to the Our Common Future (Brundtland Report – World Commission on Environment and Development) in 1987, which defined sustainable development as: ‘… development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ In June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Earth Summit declaration (Principle 3) stated that: ‘… the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.’ (UNCED 1992). In the simplest interpretation, ‘sustainable’ means to maintain and continue the situation, specifically, for the purposes of the hypothesis, maintaining the fashion industry. In a critical reading, the phrase ‘sustainable fashion industry’ could refer to perpetuating the current industry with its negative and positive outcomes and principal foci on profit. However, in an environmental discussion, and in relation to corporate social responsibility (referring to business), ‘sustainability’ refers to sustaining the environment without depletion. A more contemporaneous interpretation of ‘sustainability’ denotes sustaining the environment, but also replacing more than has been used; enriching. Nevertheless, the reading is too narrow for fashion design, the future of the planet, the inhabitant beings and an industry which can be local, and global. The reading and application does not reflect the expansive intent of its meaning. If ‘sustain’ means to preserve, protect and provide for the future, perhaps there could be different reading:

… Sustainability as capacious, as including. This appears to be a broader conceptualization (embracing human rights and intellectual/cultural copyright) than others may have taken regarding the term. (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005)

The definition merits a closer more contemporary reading ‘sustainability’ as holistic looking more broadly at what sustainability could be. For example in the sense of dissolving the traditional hierarchy with humanity at the top; perceiving animal life and likewise the planet (perhaps referencing Deep Ecology theory, or pragmatically ClientEarth) as equals of possibly more important. In regard to social inclusion that inclusion as the rights and ideals of the makers, and the makers’ communities and countries, and those of the consumer/users, but also their spiritual well being. Are their ethics being challenged in making product in this case clothing using a certain method, at a certain time, and place?

Moreover, inclusive (universal) design is a logical, holistic addition beyond the initial provision of design for the physically and intellectually less able and the aged is proposed within the reading of ‘sustainability.’ The new perspective and reading would be achieved by a less sanguine review; addressing the ageism, sexism, racism and sizeism that are perpetuated within the fashion industry to varying degrees. If there is a challenge to be waged on the norms of the industry, it is wise to consider that there are many areas of inequity open to scrutiny, not only in regards to the current or future state of the environment, hence the necessity for a holistic perspective – looking beyond the triple bottom line, maybe as Monique Barbut wrote “… ‘leapfrogging’ over
the resource intensive and pollution generating development patterns that have been followed on developed countries”, in Design for Sustainability – A Practical Approach for Developing Countries (UNEP 2006, foreword). Describing sustainable design Tischner and Charter wrote: ‘Part of the process will be to develop a more holistic view and to manage the product development process more effectively to ensure sustainability is embedded at each stage’ (2001, p.137). Put simply ‘Sustainability is about the well-being of the future’ (UNEP 2006, p. 22). Within this debate is nomenclature; the naming of things: for example design for sustainability (D4S) which originated in Delft University. In some of the definition is broader and holistic:

.. D4S – which encompasses issues such as the social component of sustainability and the need to develop new ways to meet the consumer needs on a less resource intensive way. D4S goes beyond how to make a green product – now it strives to meet consumer needs through sustainability in a systematic and systemic way. (Design for Sustainability – A Practical Approach for Developing Economies, UNEP 2006, foreword)

It should be noted that references to this specific definition of design for sustainability will be referred to as D4S, and the term design for sustainability as used in the thesis does not reference their specific definition. The last definition leads to the next aspect of the lexicon; labelling.

Labelling

The final term concluding this lexicon (no longer in alphabetical order to consider the application of both sections) if it is agreed that there is a need for a considered appraisal of the language used, it is then necessary to question where this may be possible. One of the most immediate solutions to the confusion is through the accurate labelling of garments. It should be noted that there are two perceptions of labelling in fashion. The first and most used is driven by the need for specific information: garment care and content labels. The second applies to the labelling of a fashion trend; clothing style, a look, a theme, a detail. Consider then, the amount of garments or collections deemed ‘eco’ by fashion journalists, or in press releases. Precise labelling can be perceived as straitening in an industry that celebrates hyperbole and, as has been indicated, may be perceived as reductive, or judgmental. Thus, it is proposed that in the future, labelling should be done in a proactive sense: informing all stakeholders of the exact content and production data. Furthermore, as a valuable method of building a contemporary map of the growth of the discipline discourse; not as a method of confining ideas and practices, but rather as a means to encourage navigation of ideas. In terms of practicality there are a growing number of certification/accreditation labels and certification bodies. From early on there were environmental standards Oeko-Tex® in 1995 and later in 2002 GOTS started, the European Union ‘Ecoflower’, the Soil Association (SA) label, and production standards like bluesign®, or finally social standards: Fair Trade and SAI (SA8000®) which were either certified by not for profit, industry groups, or independent auditors. Similar to the food industry, the fashion industry would have to consider how to alert the consumer/user to the less favourable aspects of the content and manufacture. As Fleur Britten (International Herald Tribune France) ironically speculated regarding labelling: ‘If clothes had to list their real ingredients on the label, bad standards and toxic chemicals would need their own symbols’ (2005). How, or with what information to label the garments is a difficult question, as Rebecca Earley observed in an interview:

Should our clothes be ‘truth labelled’ so we can choose material/organic alternatives, or the country of origin? The problem is that with clothing the production process is so long and complex, often taking place in many different countries, using many different materials. A ‘truth label’ would be lengthy reading on a swing tag! But that information could be more readily available through a company’s website and other literature. (Middleton 2007 p. 54-55)

The concept of a truth label has potential, and the idea of further information being available on a website could be a very useful support. Britten’s suggestion of a series of symbols for the less favourable aspects of the manufacturing process also has merit making it possible for the consumer/user to make an ethical
decision at point of sale. An addition could be technology assistance via a swing ticket similar to a barcode, which when scanned, would hold ‘sustainability’ information that could be read on one of the hand-held devices most consumers/user carry, such as a smart phone. Figure 5. shows the Laundry Pal – Apple iPhone washing labels application. Appropriate language used responsibly is not only of value both to understand and inform the fashion and ‘environmental’ discourse, but also serves to provide ‘provenance’ and subsequent, added value to the garments. The concept is borne out when reading informed observation in a newspaper (The Telegraph, UK), for example:

[Consumers] … more and more are looking for garments that are eco conscious, either by being Fairtrade, organic or recycled or manufactured in a manner that protects the workers and the environment. (Alexander 2005)

Most of the various aspects of the ‘eco-fashion’ discourse are addressed singularly and appropriately mentioned by Alexander, rather than bundled together as a genus, thus averting confusion. The rare example illustrates that clear information provides the reader with a breadth of the terminology. With their proposed definitions the words are useful in the short term, however, in the long term they become part of the discourse, and it is anticipated that they will and should continue to be questioned.
CONCLUSION

By providing a history of the terms, the corresponding development of the area has been sketched. The growth of environmental organisations, and corresponding media, exhibitions and eventual runway shows have all constructed, and made use of the language. In addition, the terms have recorded the burgeoning response to social inequities and identified the growth of both consumer/user’s interest and power, but also the information which is available to them. The industry’s role and response has begun to emerge; where language has been used commercially to inform, and sometimes misinform via labelling has been documented.

This chapter is one of the first instances in which the terminology, histories and arguments of design for ‘sustainability’ in fashion have been assembled together. Furthermore, a background to both the central and peripheral discussions has been established, and by coordinating the terminology in a lexicon, the contributing factors can be clearly identified and understood. For example, the term ‘eco-fashion’ is where the contemporary fashion media perceive that the environmental movement, the fashion industry and marketing overlap. As a term, it is used mostly by the media for organising (and understanding) some of the behaviours and outcomes relating to the environment and the fashion industry. It is highly debateable whether it is helpful, or constructive to the discourse, as it could be posed that ‘eco-fashion’ functions as a shield; obscuring from scrutiny areas that are difficult to contemplate. The term describes fashion addressing the environment, but it does not capture all the related issues; only partially addressing them thus enables the industry and the consumer/user to neither reflect upon, nor challenge their thinking and behaviour. Whereas ‘sustainability’ is not as easily explained or compartmentalised; it is flexible and its very capaciousness, meaning to sustain, to perpetuate, makes it more appropriate and useful in the hypothesis, and also germane to design practice, theory and the industry. Because it could be perceived as inexact, it is not as easily made into ‘snappy’ headlines, however, that very characteristic recommends it for further examination and interpretation. It is proposed that in later chapters as the arguments develop and deepen, the terms ‘ethical’ and ‘sustainability’ will be revisited to map, extend and to review their applications.

An initial lexicon has been proposed and the contemporary language sourced, the history, and use explored. As has been identified, it is not easy to achieve a universal language because fashion patois has been neither realistic nor exact in the past. Furthermore, the problem of language confusion is exacerbated by the speed of the fashion industry in servicing the twin demands for creativity and profit. When one adds to the discussion the rise of ‘ethical’ consumption and fair trade movement, the resulting need for accurate, considered and responsible language is apparent. It has been proposed that ‘provenance’ be added to the lexicon; the term referring to a documented trail of connected sources which would enable the consumer/user, the designer, merchandiser, and buyer to know the origins of the fibres, fabrics and garments. Moreover, the term ‘provenance’ (like ‘sustainability’), proffers a point for fashion and other discipline theorists and academics to challenge and dispute. Overall, through further interplay of arguments for and against terms in the language, fashion design for ‘sustainability’ discourse and practice will gain rigour and become more robust. Firstly, an accurate, vibrant language provides definition to design practice paradoxically providing both a specificity and universality for communication with other fashion practitioners and design disciplines and theorists. Secondly, it offers a tried and tested lexicon that will facilitate clear and accurate communication with other FD/PL stakeholders and the media.

The nature of fashion writing and the expectations (or lack thereof), in part paves the way for the next chapter. Chapter Two identifies how the language and writing have emerged. To comprehend the context and origins of the language and its future usage, it is necessary to examine the topic of industry, which will be pursued in Chapter Three. Establishing a comprehension of the levels and roles of the industry enables the addressing of the research question; regarding the ethics embedded in the FD/PL, and the general ramifications within the fashion industry. To achieve the outcome, it is crucial to comprehend how the fashion industry is structured, and functions, at the beginning of the Twenty-first Century within a global context.
1. *Green is the New Black for Cotton* (Blanchard 2007)
2. *Sorry Planet Earth, the Buzz Word is Plastic* (Alexander 2007)
3. *Absolutely Ethical, Darling!* (Edwards 2006)
4. *So Cool So Ethical* (Coulson 2006)
5. *Fashion Goes Green* (Hall 2006)
6. *That Touch of Mink is Back in Demand* (Galbraith 2007). The article caption manages to reference both a film and the consumer/user choice of fur.
7. *Green is Good – By Customer Demand* (Menkes 2007)
8. *Chic without Suffering – Fashion Displays its Ethical Face* (Carter and Smithers 2007)
11. TRIPs: Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights
13. For the EFF, the meaning of ethical goes beyond doing no harm, representing an approach which strives to take an active role in poverty reduction, sustainable livelihood creation, minimising and counteracting environmental concerns.
14. The Ethical Fashion Forum has drawn up a set of 10 criteria for ethical fashion, to inform the fashion industry's official ethical fashion awards, the RE:Fashion awards:
15. Countering fast, cheap fashion and damaging patterns of fashion consumption
16. Defending fair wages, working conditions and workers' rights
17. Supporting sustainable livelihoods
18. Addressing toxic pesticide and chemical use
19. Using and / or developing eco-friendly fabrics and components
20. Minimising water use
21. Recycling and addressing energy efficiency and waste
22. Developing or promoting sustainability standards for fashion
23. Resources, training and / or awareness raising initiatives
24. Animal rights
CHAPTER THREE

Searching for Ethics, Equality and Responsibility
INTRODUCTION

Fashion belongs to everyone via popular media; it is entertainment and social currency, whether on the internet, runway, High Street or school playground providing arenas of public and private display for a culturally and fiscally diverse audience and stakeholders. However, there is an absence of concrete information on fashion as an industry in the public arena, and to understand the reality (the links to the public domain, history, society and culture) requires knowledge of fashion practice, theory, and reflection thereon. Earlier, in Chapter Two, there was speculation on the new territory of developing ideas, and mapping through the language, addressing both the labelling confusion that currently exists, and indicating the emerging thinking and future potentiality. The provision of an initial lexicon enabled the start of an analysis and reflective commentary on fashion, sustainability and ethics. Chapter Three will lay the foundations for the hypothesis by establishing an overview of the fashion industry; its structure, influence, the responses made by whom, why, and what is missing. An informed perspective will be provided to address one of the thesis research questions: ‘How do the ethics embedded in fashion design production … their current applications serve the fashion industry, humanity, animals and the planet?’

To perceive the scope and influence of the global embodiment of the fashion industry, an analysis will be undertaken to establish an overview of the industry, and contextualisation will be provided. The argument will build upon the area defined in the first chapter; that is, the industry will be viewed from the perspective of how it functions, addressing preliminary issues underpinning sustainability. To fully comprehend the particulars of fashion as a phenomenon, a reflective analysis of the current paradigm will be undertaken. The roles and realms of the industry will be reviewed; gaps in responsibility and ethical behaviour will be identified. Following on from the review, questions will be posed, for example; can we presume profit is the sole driver, and if not, what are the other forces, and how does the industry respond to negative circumstances? Consequently, it will be possible to speculate beyond the current industry situation and surmise what the industry could potentially be. The gaps in response and practice can be utilised as opportunities to reflect upon, and respond to with alternative methodologies and practice. To start the chapter, the function and meaning of the word ‘fashion’ requires examination in order to appreciate where equity and inequity occur.

FUNCTIONS OF FASHION

The word itself is a starting point: ‘fashion’ suffers from the same problem as much language; it has a common general meaning, and also one very specific to practitioners, and theorists and these differ. For the chapter and the thesis as a whole, it is expedient to secure and understand useful meaning(s) of the word, particularly, in light of the misuse of the word ‘fashion’ as an umbrella term. In addition, ‘fashion’ has different meanings according to the context in which it is used; for example, a large percentage of people living in developed and developing countries have a particular experience and opinion of ‘fashion.’ It is common currency in contemporary urban life, from the high street consumer, to the fashion magazine editor, to the philosopher. For example, Roland Barthes wrote in the early in the Sixties:

> According to public opinion, fashion is located within the mythology of unfettered creativity that enables it to evade both the systematic and habitual, resting upon a romantic notion of an inexhaustible abundance of spontaneous creativity. (Barthes 2005 p. 92)

What ‘fashion’ is can be described in several ways, both theoretically and practically; for the wearer it is a social experience, a form of communication and entertainment for the wearer, and the observer. Kate Fletcher and Matilda Tham observed:

> We believe that in order to achieve more ecological practices in the fashion and clothing industry, we must understand and use the rhythm of fashion, the dialogue between our clothing, ourselves and the Zeitgeist. (Fletcher and Tham 2004 p. 254-5)
The location of how we see, perceive and understand ‘fashion’ should be questioned. To proceed and appreciate the question clearly (whilst contributing to the overview), there needs to be discussion of ‘fashion’ as a theoretical discipline before it is possible to consider its other meanings.

‘Fashion’ is both abstract and concrete; a temporal concept and an industry employing over 26 million people globally (Allwood et al. 2006). Firstly, the domain of theory will be considered, as an area of theoretical discourse ‘fashion’ is a fairly recent phenomena; legitimate ‘fashion’ research for many years was the locus of costume historians. However, in the late Twentieth Century social historians, anthropologists, ethnologists, psychologists and philosophers, essentially observers, migrated into fashion analysis and theory. It is rare for an active fashion practitioner to write in a scholarly manner regarding ‘fashion’: there is a sense of ‘they,’ rather than ‘we’; ‘fashion’ as the object, rather than as the outcome of a personal reflective design practice. Instrumental in the growth and recognition of ‘fashion’ as a theoretical topic are the Europe based publishers Berg and their journal, Fashion Theory, which was started in 1997, followed by a sister journal Fashion Practice in 2009. Fashion Theory’s publication has marked a change in fashion publishing, previously dominated by the Fairchild group and similar US specific fashion industry and education texts. With their incremental publishing of small volumes covering theoretical, cultural, ethno/anthropological topics, Berg have provided a theoretical underpinning to several areas of fashion study. Otherwise in publishing, there may be autobiographies, biographies (often highly pictorial) of designers, company chairmen and corporate histories, but there are few reflective scholarly books from the designer, or design practitioner/academic. Furthermore, academic writing related to design is not often located in fashion design, in comparison to the other design disciplines. Ironically, architects, artists and product designers refer to fashion in their writing, but fashion designers infrequently write about their own (or other) disciplines. The circumstances may trace their source to the immaturity of ‘fashion’ as a recognised design discipline, whereas industrial, (or product) design is a recent arrival to design discourse in comparison to art and architecture. A reflective commentary or scholarly critiqued insights are not common. There are further definitions beyond theory; therefore these should be considered to afford further context and perspective.

Fashion was historically the habitat and privilege of aristocrats and people of wealth. Practically, fashionable clothes represented a stratum of society which could afford the time and money to acquire clothes for expression (of their wealth, position and aesthetic), rather than as a practical necessity. In the past, fashion has embodied the licence of the aristocracy and the rich; clothes were woven, dyed, embroidered, cut, starched and constructed by hand. The garments could be extremely luxurious; for example, during the Renaissance Italian noblewomen bequeathed bejewelled sleeves to their daughters. With the advent of mass production, particularly after the First and Second World War, fashionable clothes became available to the working woman. In the 1960s in London and Paris, the young and creative led the fashion aesthetic from the ‘street.’ Contemporarily, fashion is the entitlement of the middle and lower middle classes of the developed and developing world. Fashion is not only the garment; it is the ensemble, the assemblage: the sum of the parts and the locale physically and socially, in which the garment is worn and presented. This permits the wearer to stand out, or meld with the social environment, to identify with a peer group, or reject the societal confines. Fashion can be an abstract phenomenon, an individual (public) response of an internal experience; a constructed concrete temporal identity. At the same moment, it is a global industry, and a vehicle of the three-dimensional: the aesthetic, social and political response of a designer. Fashion should not be mistaken for ‘clothing,’ which is a necessity for climate, practicality of function and society, as Fletcher wrote:

*Fashion and clothing are different entities. Clothing is material production: fashion is symbolic production. Although their use and looks sometimes coincide, fashion and clothes connect with us in different ways. Fashion links us to time and space and deals with our emotional needs, manifesting us as social beings, as individuals. Clothing, in contrast is concerned chiefly with physical needs, with sheltering, shielding and adorning. (Designers, Visionaries and Other Stories 2007 p. 121)*
Fletcher and Tham observed; ‘People’s psychological and material needs have to be met, meaning both fashion AND clothes are important…’ (2004). Continuing the strand of their argument, it is possible for garments to pass from being fashion to clothing due to a series of variables, with time and social environment the main determinants. ‘Clothing’ is essentially practical and functional; it keeps the wearer warm, or cool, and comfortable; is practical to launder and reveals, emphasises, or disguises the body shape according to the societal and cultural norms, and personal preference. ‘Fashion’ can become ‘clothing’ through the passing of time, or due to its lack of meaning in the societal habitat. When discarded garments are exported overseas to developed or developing countries, they may become ‘clothing,’ or ‘fashion.’ In the overview it is useful to note the preference within ‘clothing’ manufacture for companies to choose to generally categorise themselves as manufacturers of ‘fashion,’ as garments that are ‘in fashion’ are at a premium in regard to price and demand.

‘Fashion’ garments are important to the thesis discussion due to their built-in obsolescence and the eventual environmental impact. The role of time in relation to the construct of ‘fashion’ is crucial because the calculated changing of trends escalates purchasing. This is not a new phenomena Vance Packard wrote quoting B Earl Puckett, Chairman of Allied Stores Corporation: “Basic utility, he said, ‘cannot be the foundation of a prosperous apparel industry … We must accelerate obsolesce … It is our job to make women unhappy with what they have.’” (Packard 1960 p. 74) The phenomenon encourages the shortening of lead times from design sketch to delivery into a store. Of further importance, is the effect time has on ‘fashion’ and the ‘fashion’ influenced sections of the ‘clothing’ industry, which will be explored later in the chapter. ‘Fashion’ changes, sometimes slowly, but mostly very quickly; if a style goes ‘out of fashion’ it provides a manufacturer the opportunity to design, generate, and sell another garment. In turn, the consumer/user can buy a garment, and discard another providing a revenue stream for the opportunity (‘Opp’) or charity shops, recycled clothing merchants, or ultimately contributing to landfill. According to the report ‘Well Dressed?’ (2006), the amount of clothing textile and waste in the UK is considerable; breaking down to approximately 30 kg per person per year. There are other viewpoints, roles, realms of interest, and influence within the ‘fashion’ and ‘clothing’ industry to be considered. To enable a fuller understanding, a brief overview and reflection on the ‘fashion’ industry structure will be undertaken from an approximate Australian perspective.

ROLES AND REALMS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

One of the intentions of the chapter is to provide some industry context and the levels that are addressed by the hypothesis. Contingent to the argument proposed are the roles of stakeholders and their realms and spheres of influence and operation. The thesis is written in part from the perspective of a designer; thus design and the role of the designer will be the initial area addressed, whilst other participants and bodies will be located and explained as the discussion is in regard to the industry, and subsequently references the supply-chain. There are many stages to the Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005), which could be described by participants or observers as ‘the beginning’ of the process. However, for the purpose of the discussion, it is proposed that design initiates the fashion supply chain because without an aesthetic concept, product is not ordered, cut, or machined. How far the role, or choices of the individual designer, (or the design team), resonate within the FD/PL, society and the environment, depends on the size of the company, or the perception of the importance of the contribution. The designer being discussed is a ‘general’ designer not employed in haute couture or prêt-à-porter; more likely working for a high-street brand, or designer label that identifies with prêt-à-porter, but services the top end of the high-street market. Geographically, psychologically and philosophically, the designer in a traditional company structure is usually located within the management structure of the hierarchy. However, the design studio can be situated separately from the company headquarters, in one of the international fashion capitals, to facilitate immediate engagement with contemporary trends; recruiting and retaining educated, experienced design staff. The label is the trading name and organisation within which the designer (amongst others) works; a company and a label can be eponymous, or it can be one of a stable of labels owned by a company. The designer, or design team can design for a specific label, or for several levels within the company. The term ‘management’ can include the chief executive officer (CEO), the finance officer, the head of production, and
the sales director, but in a small company all these roles could be carried out by two or three people. Within a larger company, there could be a board of directors, and vice-presidents of divisions with representative offices all over the world. For the purposes of the chapter, it is essential to appreciate the variety of scale, influence and location, rather than examine a specific company’s details. Principally, the management and administration of the larger companies are usually located in the developed world (often based in the Northern Hemisphere) and where managerial staff are recruited.

Key to the hypothesis is the acknowledgement that it is the developed countries, their ethics, cultures and attitudes that guide the industry. Knowing the location of the managerial staff is significant because the geographical location of the decision-makers affects their perception, and thus their evaluation of industry behaviours. Next within the supply chain are the workers: a general term which describes the people that practically cut, construct and finish the garments. They often work for larger, lesser-known subcontractors in a factory, or from home as outworkers, and are not directly employed by the main company. In addition, there is a workforce engaged in growing and manufacturing fibre and cloth, but for brevity and focus it is proposed to concentrate on garment manufacture. The garment manufacture workforces are most likely based in a developed country consequently; they may not share the ethics and attitudes, cultural background, religious beliefs, fiscal resources, or societal status of either the management, and/or the consumer/users.

The consumer/user is can be located anywhere from a physical presence in retail outlets, to virtual space through access to the internet. ‘Consume’ summons visions of devouring, not pausing to savour or enjoy, and their perspective of the fashion industry is likely to be governed by the time and finance available for them to participate, and the role fashion plays within their culture. In the past, most consumer/users would have been geographically located in the same places as manufacture, the design studio and management. Manufacture, design and consumption are not polarised geographically; for example, due to the rising economies of China and India, parts of their populations are makers, but some participate in the international fashion arena as consumer/users. As mentioned earlier, design starts the fashion process, but consumer/users are drivers for the industry; their role is pivotal and their realm of influence and involvement has developed and changed over recent years. The public profile of a company, brand or label (incorporating their design and ethics) is fundamental to its prosperity. Informed consumer/users in developed countries scrutinise more than the garment design; increasingly consider the conduct and values of the label (Popcorn and Marigold 2002). Ethical Fashion Forum carried out a survey of retailer in 2011 finding that design and style were the primary considerations however; ‘Ethical credentials and well communicates stories behind the product do help to secure the sale …’. (Ethical Fashion Forum – The Market for Ethical and Sustainable Fashion Products - Briefing report 2011 p. 3) The integrity of the brand is based on its transactions with its workforce, the community and environment, as well as the financial return provided for the shareholders. In the purchasing of garments, they are ‘buying’ the values, behaviours and the ethics of the company and their product; consequently, the consumer/users’ judgment and consciousness, knowledge and ethics are on display in the purchase of a garment. Through the speed and accessibility of communication (largely the internet, twitter, Facebook), non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) and others can keep media, consumer/users, stakeholders, shareholders, and the industry informed of behaviours and their outcomes.

There are bodies internal and external to the industry which contribute to its promotion and profile. They have specific agendas; for example, governmental groups which may legislate and monitor or promote the industry such as Austrade. Organisations of industry members, support, promote, train and lobby for their needs, both nationally and internationally (The Council of Textiles and Fashion Industries of Australia - TFIA, the Australian Fashion Council, Technical Textiles and Nonwoven Association - TTNA). Unions can likewise be national or international; Textile Clothing and Footwear Union Australia, International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation, but they have a different role; that is, to serve and protect the well-being of various types of participants (both blue and white collar); and to develop the future of the industry. There are some professional organisations for designers; for example, the Design Institute of Australia (DIA); whose focus is on a variety of design disciplines (not fashion, in particular), but they have little bargaining power in regard to salaries and conditions. In an industry where salaries are often highly competitive and confidential, the notion of cooperative negotiations for designers, or management is considered an anathema.
Shareholders provide a decisive influence in the industry because of their expectation of fiscal return on their investment, fuelling the drive for profit. Individuals and investment organisations are susceptible to different influences other than a desire for profit and can be targeted by NGOs. The organisations mentioned in Chapter Two have agendas that vary in their roles and there are national groups and charitable concerns, such as Ethical Clothing Australia, Oxfam Australia, and Brotherhood of St Laurence. In addition, there are international human rights organisations: Oxfam International, Fair Labor Association (FLA), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), War on Want, Behind the Label, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Furthermore, there are education and industry based groups including; Educators for a Socially Responsible Apparel Business (ESRAB) and Fashioning an Ethical Fashion Industry (an offshoot of Behind the Label), Ethical Trading Initiative (E.T.I) and the Ethical Fashion Forum (UK). The human rights organisations are usually considered to be the most influential groups as their work impacts upon the public (often consumer/users), shareholders, media and ultimately, the workforce. However, the international animal rights groups have a growing influence, fuelling the debates over the farming and or trapping of fur, leather and most recently, wool. The reach of NGO’s and lobbyist’s influence and the sophistication of communications have been underestimated on several occasions: for example, by Phil Knight former CEO of Nike in USA, and Australian Wool Innovation, as previously mentioned. Certain groups resort to very public and antagonistic campaigns, whilst others work in a collaborative manner for bilateral improvements. This area and its constituent issues will be addressed further in Chapter Five.

To gain a fuller appreciation of the breadth of fashion system, it is essential to consider it from another aspect that of an economic entity, a method of accruing money in exchange for goods and/or service (haute couture). There is a divide between the study and writing of fashion theory, and the practical aspects of mass manufacture of fashion garments. Information, writing and research relating to manufacture in the fashion industry is often highly quantitative and managerial in direction and content. The writing on the business of fashion and its consequences rarely aligns, or contributes to the reflective aspects of fashion design discourse. As a phenomenon, the disparity would appear to be more pronounced than in other design disciplines. The research in this and the following chapters is intended to address the lack of combined reflective, philosophical and practical, ethical analysis of the industry. The fashion industry has many levels of manufacture; an overview will provide a clearer understanding of the specifics of the arguments being made.

Industry Levels

Clothing manufacture and the subsequent retailing of the garments is a global industry: a designer’s sketch can activate supply-chains which cross continents; for example, a men’s suit can be designed in New Zealand, made in Mongolia and sold in Australia. As tracked in Travelling Textiles: A Sustainability Roadmap of Natural Fibre Garments (Diviney and Lillywhite 2009), a small garment; for example, a merino wool T-shirt can involve six countries in its sourcing and construction (as shown in Figure 6. Global Dimensions of the Forest Dress and the Merino Tee), although this was not always the case. In the 1960’s clothing factories began to be established where the inexpensive skilled labour was situated:
East Asia thus became a regular location. Contemporarily, there are garment factories all over the world; therefore, subcontractors from Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea (Knight 2007) - previously sources of inexpensive manufacturing - have taken their management skills and transferred them to the operation of factories in Central America and Africa (Raworth 2004). To comprehend the size of operations: a test order for a garment style sent by a European chain-store could be as many as 20-40,000 pieces, to which cutters and machinists respond on another continent. Fabric can be purchased from stock, or spun, knitted, or woven, dyed to order, and transported to a local factory, across borders, or overseas. The garments will be cut, machined, packed and distributed in one country, but more likely with a large order, the process can happen over several countries. As was stated in Well Dressed, the report by University of Cambridge, Institute of Manufacturing: ‘In 2000, the world’s consumers spent around US$1 trillion worldwide on clothing – split roughly, one third in Western Europe, one third in North America and a quarter in Asia.’ (Allwood et al 2006 p. 2). There is a growing body of literature both printed and online concerned with human rights and the negative effects of clothing manufacture on the employees. It is an essential issue due to the size of industry, ‘Globally, there is a work force in the clothing and textiles production of 26.5 million in 2000.’ (Allwood et al 2006 p. 2). The reported number is now likely to be larger. In addition, the real number could in fact be larger again because the figures may not reflect the amount of outworkers. As identified by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the amount reported can contrast from those actually working:

*It is difficult to ascertain the number of outworkers in Australia, as data is both varied and out of date. Figures range between 23,650 (Industry Commission 1997) and 329,000 (TCTUA 1995). However, labour rights organisations interviewed indicated that these discrepancies are most likely due to the informal and hidden nature of the work, the reticence of the workers to be identified, the outworkers’ limited English and the practice of extended family helping to meet deadlines. (Diviney and Lillywhite 2007 p. 2)*
The global industry is not insignificant; for several countries, it is their largest industry and thus a considerable source of national revenue, and consequential influence. According to the report from Oxfam International: *Trading Away Our Rights* (Raworth 2004), one young woman in five is employed in a garment factory. This statistic is corroborated by Allwood et al in examining specific locales such as ‘… Bangladesh, where the clothing sector accounts for more than 70% of their total exports.’ (2006 p. 9). Clearly, many parties committed to gaining and retaining work are involved, and as a result, Export Processing Zones (EPZ) or Maquilas were developed. These are formed when subcontractors (usually from another country) are located in a free-trade-zone in a second country, utilising local labour to make garments for consumer/users in a third country. For example, Korean subcontractors may be based in an EPZ in Mexico with Mexican workers making garments for the US market, or a Thai subcontractor may manufacture in Vietnam for the world market. The profits can be immense but not for the subcontractors or the workers: most of the profit within the fashion industry is made at the retail and branding stage, as Raworth stated: ‘… in 2003, the value of Nike’s brand alone was estimated at US$8.2bn, Gap’s brand at US$7.7bn, and Levi’s brand US$3.3bn.’ (2004 p. 49). To comprehend the perspectives, it is necessary to understand the levels of manufacture within the fashion industry.

To provide context for future aspects of the arguments in the chapter, it is useful to identify the primary industry levels. Fashion and clothing manufacture is generally acknowledged as positioned on approximately four or five levels: ‘haute couture,’ ‘prêt-à-porter,’ ‘High Street stores,’ ‘chain stores,’ and ‘multiple retailers.’ There are overlaps, particularly at the lower end of the market. The definitions are not rigid; in fact, they are frequently blurred by the industry to enable companies and labels to move into different markets.

**Haute Couture**

The level of the market and manufacture is defined by a French industry organisation known as the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*; they decide which company can use the term ‘haute couture’ and as a result, only ten or twelve fashion houses located in Paris are recognised. External to the precise Chambre rules, ‘couture’ is usually understood to refer to the method of assembling the garments, sewn by hand, and the fitting of the garment to the individual client. Other companies, (labels or individuals) make garments to fit clients, use methods of hand-sewing but they are not ‘couture’ houses. In terms of processes and status of the practice, there are parallels between made-to-measure menswear or bespoke tailoring, and aspects of ‘couture.’ Other companies do not have the design concepts, access to the foremost quality fabrics, finishes, beading, and embroidery, nor are they able to produce a full collection for a salon showing in Paris twice a year, or correspond with any of the other Chambre definitions. An interesting aspect of ‘haute couture’ is the length of the useful life of the garments. They may remain with the client and be remade, or given to family or friends, or they may be on-sold and have many ‘lives’ of further use, thus taking much longer than other garments to be considered not wearable. Many of the couture houses also have a ‘prêt-à-porter’ line, which is often the larger source of revenue, and sometimes brand recognition.

**Prêt-à-Porter**

The second level within the industry is *prêt-à-porter*, meaning ‘ready-to-wear.’ It is a different method of garment assembly, as opposed to made-to-measure, or fitting to the client. Garments are made in production runs (a number of garments in identical style and fabrication, in a selection of standard sizes and colourways). It is possible to see the difference in Figure 7. Haute Couture and Prêt-à-Porter from Dior Spring/Summer 2011. The method differs from the high street chain-store labels in that *prêt-à-porter* refers to a higher section of the market encompassing quality design and manufacture, fabrication and price, and may include some hand-finishing or detailing. Garments at the ‘prêt-à-porter’ market level cost less than ‘haute couture’ but are much more costly than clothes from the High Street stores. It is the prêt-à-porter lines of clothing that represent the highest production numbers and profit from garments for many of the couture houses. The designs are original; they often reflect the signature style of the house for that season, and are made in
high quality fabrications. The well established ‘prêt’ labels show twice yearly in the Paris, Milan, New York, or London Fashion Weeks, which are not in fact, ‘haute couture’ fashion weeks, a common misunderstanding amongst the public. The price tags can add to the confusion for the casual consumer/user as ‘prêt-à-porter’ garments can retail in the high thousands of dollars, particularly when imported; for example, from Europe to Australia. It is not necessary for to be part of a ‘couture’ house to run a prêt-à-porter label. Yet it can be confusing when an established and successful prêt-à-porter label starts a ‘couture’ line, as did Jean-Paul Gaultier. Extremely pertinent to the research topic is the location of manufacture for prêt-à-porter. It may be assumed that the manufacture occurs in the country of the labels’ headquarters perhaps New York, Paris, Milan or London. In the main, however, prêt-à-porter has been manufactured offshore for many years. In fact, several labels use the same subcontractors because the selected factories are technically advanced with skilled workforces, high standards of manufacture and swift deliveries. Local small to medium designer labels (positioned in the market and price range between prêt-à-porter and the High Street) would like the cachet of a prêt-à-porter and the license to demand the associated high prices. But the aspiration is not substantiated by the quality of the manufacture, or the fabrication, whether made locally or overseas, or the profile of the brand, and the marketing budget.

FIGURE 7. DIOR SPRING/SUMMER 2011 PRÊT-À-PORTER AND HAUTE COUTURE IMAGES.
HTTP://WWW.FASHIONWINDOWS.NET/2010/10/CHRISTIAN-DIOR-SPRING-2011/
The High Street, Chain Stores and Multiple Store Retailers

The ‘High Street,’ ‘chain stores,’ and ‘multiple store retailers’ are the source of the highest percentage of clothing worn in the developed world. But there are common misconceptions concerning clothing in this level of the industry: some is inexpensive and poorly made offshore, however some clothing is well made. Certain companies have a high standard of quality control, and thus the garments are well made to withstand regular use and multiple launderings. Paradoxically, these qualities are not particular to a specific price level, which is in contrast with small scale manufacturing by some designer labels with a higher price, which can sometimes be badly constructed and not robust. The disparity between manufacture and price in these areas requires the consumer/user to be observant. The High Street level has the highest turnover, revenue and subsequent disposal, and thus is pertinent to the research.

The stores that are classed as ‘budget’ stores (some may be designated as ‘multiple store retailers’) both national and multinational are mostly excluded in the analysis, as many budget stores principally sell generic ‘clothing’ rather than ‘fashion.’ They do, however, represent a considerable amount of sales, profit and disposal. There are exceptions to the ‘clothes not fashion’ rule; for example, Target in Australia (and internationally), which addressed ‘fashion’ by ‘courting’ design through commissioning occasional small ranges by established design identities, including: Gwendolynne Birkin (Australia), Josh Goot (his 2007 collection as shown in Figure 8.) (Australia), Stella McCartney (UK) and Zac Posen (US).
In an approximate sense the market levels within the industry, and pricing, reflect the originality of design, fabrication, and methods of manufacture. Occasionally, these overlap; for example, in the fabric sourcing between prêt-à-porter and haute couture, or the respective colour palettes between High Street and prêt-à-porter. There is a strong commercial advantage for one level to appear like another. Conversely, the practice is not to confuse the consumer/user between the finished garments; most consumer/users could recognise a prêt-à-porter piece in comparison to a chain store garment. Rather, it enables the consumer/user to feel part of/close to the contemporary fashion trends from the runways of Milan, or Paris. It is part of the movement of styles and trends to ‘bubble up,’ thus aspects of street culture inspire the higher levels where the expression ‘trickle down’ used to be more common in the manner that ‘couture’ styles would inform High Street clothing. Proportionally, the largest part of the entire industry is mass manufacture, whether for global sportswear labels like Adidas or Nike, chain stores, or budget stores like Wal-Mart (net sales in 2009 $401.2 billion), placing huge orders. As was observed in Well Dressed?:

In supplying finished goods to end consumers, multiple store retailers dominate this sector – selling 70% of clothing in Western Europe and 85% in the USA. The top five department stores in the USA delivered about half of its total sales. (Allwood et al. 2006 p. 11)

If haute couture is considered the zenith of design and quality manufacture, it is surprising that the global industry is driven by mass manufacture. Due to its sheer size, the methods, values, and thus ethics of mass manufacture permeate industry. To comprehend where the impact takes place, it is relevant to consider where the industry is based geographically. According to Cambridge University researchers, the manufacturing sector is ‘dominated by Asian countries’:

China continues to dominate the sector because of the build-up of competitive advantages including short lead times, efficient logistics, a more experienced and skilled labour force, a better power infrastructure (with fewer power outages) and more investment in capital equipment. (Allwood et al. 2006 p. 10)

On a smaller scale, the research completed by the Melbourne-based Brotherhood of St Laurence identified that two thirds of the companies responding to their questionnaire, mainly manufactured in China, and another third in India (Diviney and Lillywhite 2007). As the University of Cambridge’s report observed: ‘Developing countries account for almost three quarters of the world clothing exports...’ (Allwood et al 2006 p. 10). The explanation lies in the widespread industry practice of chasing low prices and better quality of manufacture around the world. Production managers search the globe for countries with subcontractors who can provide price, quality, and volume; a skilled and comparatively docile textile trades workforce, political security (democracy is not a prerequisite) and a good transport infrastructure, which currently includes Burma, but not North Korea. In addition, in the cases of India and China, the state-of-the-art technology, due to foreign investment was an incentive for placing orders (Diviney and Lillywhite 2007).

It is the intention of the thesis to identify the ethics and values permeating in the fashion industry; the ethics of mass manufacture. Their significance is due to their impact on the planet, its population and ecosystems. Yet when considering the impact on humanity; manufacture can bring economic opportunity to a country (Barber et al 2004), and eventually educational opportunities, health and welfare to the workers and/or their children. However, the statement begs two further questions: firstly, what or where, is the source of the ethics and values, and secondly, by whom are they ‘owned.’ The treatment of the workforce and the environment is governed by the ethics and values of the company placing the order; the ramifications of the circumstances will be addressed later in the chapter and the thesis.

A further key factor in the industry that is often is paid lip-service but rarely discussed in depth is the role of time in relation to fashion, which has deep consequences, and grave costs to the stakeholders and the environment. Therefore, to appreciate the influence of time and its roles in relation to sustainability it is important to explore it more closely.
Time and Fast Fashion

Time is paramount in regard to design for sustainability. Writing concerning the future of fashion in an essay *Fashion and the Social Sciences*, Barthes’ speculation was prescient:

*There may be a problem one day if the perfectly regular half-century rhythm of fashion were to change. A dress would then normally reach its shortest length in ten or twenty years, then pass through the apparent return of the long dress, and then the cycle would start again … A new history of fashion would begin.* (2006 p. 94-5)

Time is the final realm of influence within fashion in the thesis. It is a temporal experience and creation, functioning as *zeitgeist*: a summation, a snapshot of the context for the individual and society. As garments record societal norms of modesty, gender politics, in short, fashion will act as wearable archaeology. The perception of beauty, the advancements of technology in terms of fabric construction, dye, finish, garment construction techniques and treatments are captured by fashion. Being ‘out of fashion’ is often governed by time, cultural, societal and climate changes. The garments of a particular period are then discarded as waste, demanding further consumption. Time has a crucial function in both fashion and sustainability because the impact on the industry has direct significance in relation to human rights and the environment. Garments are made so quickly that human rights are impacted; deadlines and delivery dates are moved forward, and overtime laws are waived or ignored. Air freight (costly to the profit margins and environment) is a default option for a subcontractor when a delivery is late. A garment, or a look can come in and out of ‘high fashion’ (usually equated with *haute couture* and *prêt à-porter*) quickly for a season (six months), or it may be faster still; a matter of weeks in regard to High Street fashion. The frequent deliveries of fashion ‘looks,’ or speed of changing styles is referred to generally as ‘*fast fashion*,’ defined by Allwood, et al as follows:

*…“Fast fashion” where stores change the designs on show every few weeks, rather than twice per year. This emphasis on speeding up production has led to concentration in the industry with fewer larger suppliers …* (2006 p. 11)

Fletcher has written regularly regarding time and the fashion system. In *The Ecologist* she acknowledged the existence of ‘… a sample or design sketch into a finished product in as little as 12 days…’ (2007). As an area of concern, time unites many critics of the industry due to the escalation of the processes, the impact on the workers, and its long term harm to the planet. There are several underlying causes behind ‘*fast fashion*’ as Fletcher identifies in *The Ecologist*:

*Fast fashion isn’t really about speed: it is about selling more goods making more money…*  
*Short lead times and cheap garments are only made possible by the exploitation of labour and natural resources.* (Fletcher 2007)

The industry has changed in many ways in the last twenty years and of particular relevance to the research is the speed of fashion. Clothing prices have decreased driven apparently by customer/user demand; paradoxically, there is a well-documented backlash against cheap clothes in the UK. Yet there is an expectation of very inexpensive clothing particularly amongst the young consumer/users; a garment is worn a few times and discarded, either to the back of a wardrobe, landfill, or to be recycled possibly via a charity. The escalation is ‘*progressive obsolescence*’ as Vance Packard wrote concerning obsolescence in the 1960’s; quoting a term coined by J George Frederick (written in the 1920s) explaining: ‘*This simply meant indoctrinating the people who do have spending money with the habit of ‘buying more goods on the basis of obsolescence in efficiency, economy, style or taste.’*’ (Packard 1960, p 60) Zara, the Spanish High Street label and retailer is often cited as the example of shortest lead times, which is likely enabled in part by suppliers. For example contractors based in Tangier supplying the Spanish company El Corte Inglés in 2004 were dealing with shorter lead times, as researched by Oxfam International: ‘*In the last three years, lead times have fallen from 14 days to 5 or 7 days - some of the shortest in the industry.*’ (Raworth 2005 p. 52). It should be noted that not only can the garments take 12 days but there can be deliveries of clothes for as many as 50 weeks of the year. Fletcher cited other causes for ‘*fast fashion*’ and further rationales: ‘… Tracking sales
with electronic tills and just–in-time manufacturing,’ and stated; ‘Fast fashion, as it exists today strikes no such balance. Indeed, it is largely disconnected from reality – with little recognition of poverty wages, forced overtime and climate change.’ (Fletcher 2007)

Furthermore, she identified different methodologies and proposed a change in tempo:

_**Slow fashion supports our psychological needs (to form identity, communicate with others, be creative through our clothes) as well as our material needs (to cover and protect us from extremes of climate).** (Fletcher 2007: The Ecologist)

If fashion is a constructed temporal identity, the nature of temporality is of crucial significance. There are ramifications; for example, the conditions of workers involved with manufacture do not improve; Australian outworkers report scarcity of work and faster turnaround times in the last few years (Diviney and Lillywhite 2007). The size of the consuming populations and the breadth of international fashion distribution means faster and more consumption of fibres, fabrication and resources in growth and manufacture. The human and societal impact of fast manufacture is the increase of working hours, without corresponding pay increases, appropriate breaks, overtime choice, or holidays. Often, it is the family that are also negatively impacted, in terms of loss of child-care and care for the aged. Subsequently, there will be an increase in utilisation of energy resources via the transportation, distribution and delivery of the garments; however, in post consumer/user purchases, as mentioned in Chapter Two, there is the added impact of laundering, drying and ironing (Allwood et al. 2006). Due to the frequency of change of products in the stores, the consumer/user is encouraged to purchase more, and regularly (Packard 1960). Unsurprisingly, it leads to a backlog of underused, discarded clothing in wardrobes, charity drop-off boxes or rubbish bins. Some second-hand clothing is exported to developing countries (Baden and Barber 2005); however, as previously stated, a large amount goes to local landfill (Allwood et al. 2006). Outlining the levels of the market and manufacture, and the role and effect of time on fashion, enables reflection on opportunities to change the ways the industry and fashion practice are considered.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY**

The numerous processes, the often-distant locations, multiple languages, and frequency of subcontracting, provide opportunities for inequalities to develop, and standards of behaviour and treatment to be overlooked, ignored or flouted and misunderstood. As mentioned previously, the negative impact of the fashion and textiles industry is debated outside the industry by stakeholders, NGOs, community and media. Following a life-cycle analysis of designing or producing a garment, the fabrics and their consumption of a country’s resources (water, energy, people) in the growth and process of fibre, production thread and fabric are a primary factor. Mapping the production of components of a collection on a world map would show many journeys criss-crossing oceans and continents consuming energy and resources as seen earlier in Figure 6. (Diviney and Lillywhite 2009). The issues of design, garment manufacture, sales and distribution are professionally, distant; physically, philosophically and importantly, ethically.

It is possible to grasp why Fletcher declared the fashion industry as one of the ‘… most complicated industrial chains in manufacturing industry…’ (2008 p. 41). If the garments are made in China, another country (the location of management and/or major shareholders) will receive the largest percentage of profit. Movement of capital has an impact on local and national community impact this is understood but there are other outcomes, which are hazardous to ecosystems both current and future. In establishing influences currently at work in the industry, a fuller understanding of what is missing is possible. The expectation of kind, respectful, fair, supportive, inclusive (even nurturing) behaviour within the supply chain, and an industry with zero waste, seems highly unlikely, yet one is impelled to question whether it is possible. To grasp the situation, the question ‘what is missing’ should be asked and the contributing factors explored.
A Need for Responsibility and Ethics?

To make an initial summation of the missing elements within the fashion industry supply chain, specifically the FD/PL, the list would start with consistent positive values, which support the current and future well being of the planet. There is an absence of an overview of responsibility and ethics within the design practice, and in addition, it is unclear what or where is the source of these ethics and values, and whether they are ‘owned.’ Not unlike other industries that require the use of a variety of resources and employ large numbers of people in different countries, fashion has a history of abuses and successes. For example, at the beginning of the supply chain, there is the practice of industrial theft: ‘rip off, knock off, pinch’ (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2002 p. 387), or breach of design copyright and cultural appropriation. Technology has facilitated fashion theft for many years (Coleridge 1988). Courtesy of the speed of image transfer, a style or a look can copied and in a matter of minutes be in another time zone on another continent. It would seem that individual designers, buyers or companies were, are not or are unable to take responsibility for their actions: the only deterrent being an occasional litigation by another designer and/or company. Design can be owned by individuals, labels, corporations or tribes, iwis or hapus* (Shand 2002), yet breaches of ethical behaviour is frequently committed in design studios and buying offices in the fashion capitals of the developed world. There are many areas the industry ignores; does not recognise, nor comprehend the responsibilities of intentional manufacture and trading (as will be identified in Chapter Five). In addition there are stages, or issues within the industry that require responsible, conscious, ethical behaviour and a change of paradigm.

The industry is the object of vociferous activism and lobbying, which raises questions as to the cause, and specifically, ‘why fashion,’ not other design disciplines and industries? A source of the antagonism could be the pronounced disparity between the product, the lifestyle of the consumer/users, and the working conditions and pay of the makers. Furthermore, the developed country societies are distanced from the origin of the products they consume and prime examples are the food and clothing industries. In the food chain, the unpleasant practices associated with the farming; penned enclosures, live animal transportation and slaughtering are unseen: both psychologically and physically. Within fashion, the inability or likelihood of industry management (including designers), or consumer/users, directly experiencing the conditions of the workers perpetuates both physical and psychological distance. However, should they witness the conditions of the workers, the animals, or the environment involved; their responses are very different. Furthermore, how the responses are formed and the nature of the ‘personal’, ‘professional’, and ‘corporate’ responses is extremely significant and fundamental to the hypothesis.

Personal, Professional or Corporate Response

Endeavouring to comprehend how fashion management can be unaffected by the circumstances of the industry, or more pertinently, the consequences of their actions is difficult to understand. The responses may be layered: divided between ‘personal’ and ‘professional’ and ‘corporate’. For closer examination of the response it is useful to provide an example: consider a bystander on a street, discovering a caged wild animal for sale in a street market. Perhaps the ‘personal’ (individual) would differ from ‘professional’ (designer) in response, and from the ‘corporate’ response, but what could be the reasons? Questioning the drivers is critical throughout the hypothesis and it is necessary to query what may drive, or inspire the responses.

Peter Singer (2002) observed that some people believe favouritism should be shown to ‘our own kind,’ which could be referred to as ‘degrees of association.’ That is; an individual will feel more protective toward those their associates or blood relatives, of their culture or religion. Thus, if the person knows another (family member or a friend) in distress, they are more likely to respond in a caring and supportive manner, but as the degrees of association ebb so it is unlikely there will be a protective response. Returning to the example of the caged wild animal: if the observer owns a pet, she or he is more likely to try to intervene. Would the response differ if the ‘professional’ designer who discovered the caged animal (without a pet), and thought the fur markings would make ideal hood trimmings for the winter collection? As the levels of response are being examined in the analysis, it could be posed that these tiers of response are due to
degrees of association. Thus the likelihood of an immediate proactive response would more likely be from a pet owner, or someone familiar with animals. However, as the other (the animal), or circumstance of concern becomes more and more distant (either by relationship or location), the response becomes less intense or disappears altogether. A large part of fashion production is located in South East Asia and China, far from most management headquarters and design studios. By the act of subcontracting the production, there can be a loss of association: enabling a less intense, immediate ‘personal’, ‘professional’ or ‘corporate’ response. To pursue the argument further, what would be happening if there was a positive ‘personal’ response to the previous example, what could be the driver(s)? Could it be general fellowship, or protecting property, avoiding prosecution, a desire to do (or be) good, or pursuing a personal philosophy or belief system? It is possible to speculate that the face-to-face experience may be driven by an emotional response, a feeling for the other of empathy.

Returning to the instances of ‘professional’ response and ‘corporate’ response, it is possible to speculate on how, and/or if these may differ and why. The response could be determined by relationship; as a ‘professional’ there is an expectation, or necessity for rationality and objectivity, which references a cognitive response. Furthermore, a ‘professional’ detachment almost gives ‘permission’ for the person not to be involved; the ‘professional’ relationship can be employed, or perceived as a barrier to a ‘personal’ form of behaviour. The barrier of legal obligation is real for the ‘corporate’ response, because in litigation, the expression of concern for the other party can be interpreted as culpability, obligation and/or liability. By characterising a response as ‘professional’ or ‘corporate’, it is possible to identify levels of response, governed by the both distance and legal implication. Social implications of subcontracted labour were identified by Allwood et al. (2006): they include child labour; a young female work force, sexual harassment, denial of association (forming a trade union), pay (minimum legal wage versus minimum living wage), lack of contracts and benefits. Approximately commensurate with the growth of distance between management, garment manufacture and eventually, the consumer, there has been a pronounced growth of internal and external agencies advocating and addressing ethics: environmental and societal impact, and or human and animal rights. It has resulted in the ‘birth’ of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) publications phenomena in the latter part of the Twentieth Century, in reply to the growing unease of a wide variety of industry stakeholders, with the perceived absence of embedded ethics, and resulting need for alternative responses.

For a company, or an individual (CEO, or designer), or board of directors, to accept responsibility for all the processes within the supply chain and the garment life cycle, may seem a colossal liability and accountability. Nevertheless, the profits, down to the last cent, (from these same processes) are entirely accountable: correspondingly, so must the responsibilities be accountable. Perhaps not in a legal or financial sense, but ‘responsible’ as defined in the dictionary: ‘1 liable to be called to account (to a person or for a thing); ‘2 morally accountable for ones actions’ (1995). To recap: the word ‘ethically’ is preferable usage to ‘morally’, due to the associated religious and judgmental connotations. To ask companies and individuals to be ‘morally’ or more specifically ethically ‘accountable’ (publicly or privately) for their actions in the fashion industry may seem confronting and confounding, but for the industry to respond to market needs and sustain itself, the planet and inhabitants it is an imperative. The change is occurring with pioneers in environmentalism, sustainability Patagonia helping Wal-Mart in their green change the potential in unlimited (Humes 2011), will the high street labels be too far behind.

Drivers for Responsibility

To consider the notion of ‘ethical’ accountability distanced from the legal and financial responsibilities, it could be asked how responsibility in industry differs from that in private life, and what are the drivers? In 2007 UNEP in the report Design for Sustainability – A Practical Approach for Developing Economies listed external and internal drivers for a company to consider D4S (Figure 9.) and they in part acknowledge the breath of drivers for a company but not the deeper drivers within an individual. If we are responsible for ourselves and the welfare of others as individuals but not as an industry or professional industry member, does a desire for commercial success then obscure other expectations and objectives? Poorly treated workers are not a
developing world phenomenon (Cregan 2001); neither is wasted energy, nor polluted water; they all can occur locally in Australia. Responsibility is being accountable for a kind intent, action, or outcome, which could be perceived as philanthropy and altruism. In the fashion industry, there is scope for a ‘personal’, ‘professional’ or ‘corporate’ philanthropic or altruistic response.

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FIGURE 9. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DRIVERS FOR D4S (HEADINGS ONLY) DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY – A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING ECONOMIES UNEP 2006 P.27 HTTP://WWW.D4S-DE.ORG/MANUAL/D4SCHAPTER02.PDF

Although separate in active definition they are related; it could be argued that ‘altruism’ is a progressive growth from ‘philanthropy’ and within corporate settings scrutinised by NGOs, activists and lobbyists, there is capacity for ‘philanthropy’ and ‘altruism’. Many examples of corporate ‘altruism’ exist, but what is relevant is their impetus; that is, an acknowledged inequality responded to by an individual, a group, or a body. These responses in an individual may emanate from a variety of drivers: a caring approach, or an acknowledgement of humanity, or a respect for life in its various forms. It is understood that ‘philanthropy’ is not a response to legal liability, governmental legislation, or an attempt to accrue good standing with a consumer/user base ‘ethics wash’. In its most unadulterated form it could be anonymous; with no expectation of gain in return, only to assist.

Inequality, Responding with Philanthropy and Altruism

As referenced earlier, one of the drivers pertaining to recognition of social, or human rights could be the admission of inequality within the supply chain. If there is a philanthropic intention to respond, there could also be a drawback, because in its unmodified, paternalistic model, it can imply a lack of self-determination, or independence, or equality (of the recipient), accentuated by the negative association with receiving charity. The sources of the funding for ‘philanthropy’ attracts scrutiny: the Nobel Peace Prizes being funded with a fortune made in manufacturing explosives. In questioning the most useful term or intent, ‘altruism’ would
be preferable because of a less delineated imbalance of power. The aspect of ‘altruism’ defined as a ‘… regard for others as a principle for action’ (1995) recommends it because it references ‘principled action.’ This short phrase flags further discussion relating to ‘principles’ and ‘action,’ which will be explored later in Chapter Eight. Examining the desire to help, to respond unselfishly, kindly and practically, it is possible to reflect further on the origin of the intention. Following on, it is feasible to pose that to be a philanthropist or an altruist, an individual would have ‘empathy,’ whose dictionary definition is; ‘… the power of identifying oneself mentally with (and so fully comprehending) a person or object of contemplation…’ (1995). The complex meaning, history and deeper ramifications of the psychological response will be explored in Chapter Seven. To return to the argument: if a person were unable to identify with the experience of another – ‘zero degrees of empathy’ (Baron-Cohn 2011) - thus the nature of inequality would be difficult to experience. By identifying; empathising with another, the continuing inequality between a designer, worker and consumer/user is difficult to comprehend; a response is required.

Within the fashion industry, ‘equality’ could refer to equal consideration, respect and human rights, and possibly equal pay; there could also be an expectation of equal representation, consensus, or determination. Consequently, it may infer a role, or at least, a contribution by the workers to the company management, or planning and implementation strategy. If equality were fully embraced in this sense, the traditional fashion industry management infrastructure could find it difficult to function; the paradigm would need to be altered. However, it can be questioned whether there be could be such a radical change. It is thought provoking to consider the changes that addressing inequality might require: a basic result may be that workers would have their pay and conditions improved. Following an empathetic imperative what would all the participants think, require, or expect and appreciate: the situation can be viewed from many viewpoints. Perhaps, there would not be an expectation of total equality on either side; furthermore, if ‘equality’ and ‘empathy’ are to be contemplated, then the notion of sides is not useful. Searching for holistic solutions enables creative, proactive thinking into the power hierarchies, attribution of benefits and provision of profit, this be the beginning of the new paradigm.

Endeavouring to address inequality within the global fashion industry, a holistic and empathetic approach can be employed, which could further benefit from a shared and inclusive methodology forming the beginning of the new paradigm. It would be possible to imagine that communications within the industry, or company structure could be horizontal, circular and organic as opposed to linear and vertical. On reflection from a fashion practitioner’s perspective, were the FD/PL diagram to be superimposed over a map of the world, and it would indicate geographically where the negotiating power lies: management, consumption and disposal at the top (Northern Hemisphere) of the diagram and production and transport towards the bottom (Southern Hemisphere), as shown in Figure 10. The Fashion Design/Production Loop Version Two overlapping the globe. The concept of sharing, inclusion and consensus in an industry setting (even in the discussion process) is unusual; it alludes to collectivism and cooperatives, which may be at odds with the fashion industry. Yet there are instances of successful worker (machinists) cooperatives in the developing countries working in the fashion industry such as the Coopa-Roca in Brazil (Clark 2008). It is their intention to improve the income, quality of the work and the health of the workers and their families. (http://www.coopa-roca.org.br/en/index_en.html). Part of the empathetic response may lie in not foisting expectations or judgements of what is desirable and undesirable onto others. The expectation for all the stakeholders to have the same potential of pay, working conditions may be contested by a variety of participants. Taking into consideration inequality within the fashion industry, other issues arise; in close alignment to equality is the issue of ‘social justice’ in its intent and applicability to the manufacturing workforce. Yet within the term, there is not an expectation of equality, but of just behaviour and treatment in regard to the people involved with manufacture, and those (families, and their communities) affected by the manufacture and stakeholders, in general. As such, as a term and intention it may have more supporters than ‘equality’ (in its broadest interpretation). ‘Justice’ particularly resonates in Australia due to its closeness in meaning to ‘fairness’, and the importance of the national cultural value of ‘a fair go’ (Thomas 2007). ‘Social justice’ as a term is used by many reform organisations around the world and refers in part to the provision of human rights, and consequently, can be used specifically in relation to the fashion industry workers conditions.
Ethical Response

Under the heading of ‘social justice,’ it is possible to question whether participants within the FD/PL are treated ethically, or if the company behaves in an ethical manner towards its employees, shareholders, society, animals and the planet. To recap as defined in Chapter Two, to behave ‘ethically’ would be to make; ‘… philosophically guided actions and behaviours determined by the impact they have on others’ (1995). Can the ‘personal’, ‘professional’ or ‘corporate’ perceive and respond ethically with ‘social injustice’, in the same manner? It is possible to envisage a situation whereby children in South East Asia (for example, eleven year olds) undertake work for prolonged hours on garments. Perhaps the ‘personal’, ‘professional’ or ‘corporate’ ethical response would be identical, and if not, what would be the reasons? Personally, confronted with eleven year olds working (as with the previous example of the caged animal), an individual in the developed world could well be shocked and deeply concerned for their welfare. She or he could recollect their own childhood, or their children or family of a similar age and personally intervene; alert a local or international NGO, or boycott the company’s product. The same individual in a ‘professional’ role may respond differently; distance may enable them to be more dispassionate, or they could argue for a lesser response because of local employment, societal and cultural
expectations, or the conditions being the responsibility of the subcontractor. The unspoken industry truism is that the children work well (excellent hand-eye coordination), and only by using a sub-subcontractor may argue it be possible to achieve the required fine detail, at the necessary (within the current paradigm) price point. If the ‘professional’ were a designer, the argument could reflect a desire to achieve the most aesthetically realised version of her/his design for a particular price point. Noteworthy too, is a potential disparity between the ‘personal’ (human to human) and ‘professional’ ethical responses, both referring to an individuals’ ethics, but one is a private (‘personal’) and the other a public (‘professional’ or ‘corporate’) persona. The divergence between what may be two different responses reflects the physical, geographic or psychological distance compounded by the complexity of the FD/LP (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005) that in some cases distances a ‘professional’ from regularly observing mass production of the garments.

The ‘corporate’ ethical response has a variety of manifestations. As in the case of the ‘professional’ designer, public ethics may reflect the physical, geographic, and or psychological distance. There are two additional aspects to consider that contribute to the ‘corporate’ response; the legislative factor mentioned earlier, and the public relations perspective, again connecting to the consumer/user perception, and media and NGO interests. A corporation is run by people with ‘personal’, and/or ‘professional’ ethics, which can be subsumed in the ‘corporate’ yet this does not have to be the case. Ethics may be costly for a ‘corporation’, but their absence can be very expensive, in the short and long term for the society: the environment, human and animal welfare, and for a company’s long term public profile. The application and benefit of ethics will be explored more fully in following chapters, and the consideration of how, by whom, and where ethical choices could occur leads to imagining what a new paradigm for the fashion industry can be.

**Appreciating the Potential for Fashion Industry**

By identifying some of the inequalities, it possible to comprehend more fully the current state of the industry; and consequently, to imagine what it could be. The identified gaps can be closed, an alternative paradigm envisioned; the new drivers could be the desire for profit made responsibly, and with a positive global environmental, and social impact. For this to happen consequences, actions, and responsibilities would have to be understood from an ethical perspective, rather than from the standpoint of fiscal or legal impact. In the same way profit is pursued in the corporate milieu, what could be the outcomes if ethics were the truly desired targets rather than Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) regulations? In the business world there are examples of companies that pursue their personal philosophy, a social, or environmental agenda before there was either legislation, or societal ‘trends’ to support them; for example, the origins of the Australian company Fletcher Jones and Staff. In some ways, larger companies are in a more difficult situation; they have more structures and methodologies to deconstruct, and to slow down, however these did not stop Wal-Mart. Whereas it could be argued that a smaller, newer company beginning in the industry with an uncommon paradigm could be easier: working in different ways, with profit as only one of the audited outcomes or intentions. Moreover, a larger (and longer established company) could change difficult, however, they would have more economic power, and thus could bring their suppliers, workforce and subcontractors along with them to address their alternative ideals; for example, Ray Anderson founder and CEO of Interface (textiles and carpets) (Hawken 2007) and Lee Scott then CEO of Wal-Mart (Humes 2011).

If these positive changes were to occur, it may be queried how they would affect the consumer/user. The answer is simple: the price of the garments would be higher; other than that, there may be no difference, except in some fabrications. Furthermore, referring to the earlier discussion of time, should ‘slow fashion’ be part of the alternative, it could mean (as in the past) that the production may be situated geographically closer to the point of sale, and there would also be less frequent style changes. Alternative beneficial outcomes might be ethically, responsibly-made fashion clothing, which has provided social enterprise and fair employment, and the sustaining of the planet and its inhabitants. The changes would be mostly unseen by the consumer/user in the developed world, but as in organic farming, it could bring the garment closer philosophically and psychologically to the conscious consumer/user and benefit the workplace, the planet and its inhabitants, both now and in the future.
Rather than identify specific ways in which the industry could be different (which will be explored in Chapter Five), it is valuable to address the philosophical ways. If it is agreed that an expectation of the fashion industry is to make garments, and pay for the materials, labour and transport, the driver is a desire for profit for the owners and/or shareholders; it may not, however, be the sole impetus. Reflecting on what might be the other philosophical intentions could be a daring, proactive, and subversive exercise. An example of a philosophical stance is Bono (lead singer of U2) and his Red™ Label initiative (shown in Figure 11. the Red Levi Inspi(red) range); that involves labelling a garment or product with a red label. Thus signposting for the conscious consumer/users and an opportunity to support the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, in addition to funding a variety of initiatives. It is a popular model characterised by fundraising with a T-shirt; the political status. The intended ‘good’ can be undone if the T-shirts are made by poorly paid workers, who lack message communicated by a print; to acknowledge the cause, and reflecting the consumer/users charitable/human rights, from fabric grown using large amounts of herbicides, pesticides and water, that then quickly contribute to landfill.

There are all types of enactment and aims: preserving the environment, or employing of the less able, or the aged in developing countries. For example, an alternative for a designer could be a short term involvement in a developing country with an aim of social innovation and entrepreneurism; creating a localised business and/or production model to enable the workers to take over the enterprise after an agreed amount of time, or when mutually agreed outcomes have been achieved. A myriad of rationales and philosophical viewpoints are available that can be enacted through fashion design and the fashion industry. However, the important factor to understand is that there may be different hierarchies of importance for production, and to reflect upon the possible changes. The drivers could be one or all of those suggested, and understandably, key topics (society, environment among them) occurring throughout the thesis are considered here as motivators for changing the paradigm. A desire to utilise the fashion industry to address society could stem from a humane intention, originating in a political agenda or ‘altruism’ or specific spiritual, or religious or philosophical beliefs.

Should a philosophy with a social agenda of inclusion or cohesion be the driver, what might be the outcome? Historically, industry has been a method of social cohesion: enabling the support of beliefs or religions in communities (for example, Quakers, Shakers, Amish and Mennonites; developed world Christian
communities). Starting a fashion company could enable families to stay in one place, remain together, or bring employment to a particular geographic area, in that maintaining and/or developing employment represents social enterprise and innovation. Therefore it is important to recognise that the driver(s) are assembled by the individual or company according to their respective philosophies.

Finally, in querying possible alternative drivers it is necessary to consider that as mentioned the philosophy may originate in spiritual belief(s) or religion(s); for example, an intention of ‘right livelihood’: a Buddhist tenet means to do a job which does not harm life, or perpetuate untruths. How could ‘fashion’ be recreated or ‘redirected’ (Fry 2009) if addressing the specific philosophies of the designer, a company and the consumer/user? Imagine that both in manufacture and purchase stakeholders would have the opportunity to consciously purchase and knowingly support (or not) an equitable industry, or fair employment, or alternatives to endangering animal life. Whilst acknowledging virtuous intentions as drivers, a term that has not been used in the argument recently is ‘sustainability’; specifically, design and manufacture for ‘sustainability.’ Many of the issues (ethical and responsible behaviours) discussed in the chapter underpin ‘sustainability.’ It is advantageous to speculate where ‘sustainability’ sits when discussing drivers and what the industry could be? As stated in Chapter Two, the definition of ‘sustainability’ could be broader and more inclusive (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005), than the usual narrow expectation of sustaining the environment alone. It could be extrapolated as being an ethical response; a philosophical response, thus, a desire to be sustainable could be another driver for change. Later, in Chapters Five and Six ‘sustainability’ will be explored in relation to the fashion industry, and what catalytic dynamics it can provide searching for different paradigms.

**CONCLUSION**

To appreciate the circumstances and the sphere of influence that the research addresses, a reflective examination has been undertaken, and a brief overview provided of the fashion industry. The context via structural explanation within which the research is couched has been detailed to comprehend where the questions are situated. Building on terminology definitions in Chapter Two, the meanings of ‘fashion’ have been considered and discussed, which has highlighted the difference between ‘fashion’ and ‘clothing’, and enabled further insights into the contemporary industry market levels and historical roles. Looking beyond the necessities of ‘clothing’, the functions of ‘fashion’ have been reviewed and explored. Thus it has been possible to reflect on ‘fashion’ as social and political experience, communication and entertainment for the wearer, and the viewer, its measure of both status and wealth, and delineation of class. The levels of the fashion industry have been summarised to provide both the subject of the hypothesis, and also the setting or realms where they exist and interact. Working within the five levels: ‘haute couture’, ‘prêt-à-porter’, ‘High Street chain stores’ and ‘multiple retailers’, the relevance of originality, type and location of manufacture and price have been considered. To advance the hypothesis further, the roles and realms from a designer’s perspective within the fashion industry have been explored from designer to consumer, via management and workers. Following on, the overlapping roles of NGOs and stakeholders were described. The escalating role and impact of time in regard to the speed of fashion and therefore of manufacture was introduced.

The concepts of time are responsible for some of the problems faced by the industry and the planet. After examination of the grave problems regarding the effects, a crucial question: ‘what is missing in the fashion industry?’ was posed to enable an investigation of the absences, and consequentially, to explore alternatives. In light of the considerable negative impacts of the industry, a need for responsibility was identified. How the responses could be perceived as ‘personal’, ‘professional’, and ‘corporate’ were examined, and the drivers for responsibility were investigated. One of the speculated drivers was the recognition of inequality and the ensuing outcome being an empathetic response. In relation to ‘empathy,’ the meanings and associations of ‘philanthropy’ and ‘altruism’ as part of a benevolent response were discussed. It thus became conceivable to speculate on what fashion could in fact be in that context.

The chapter has outlined some different ways of regarding the industry, as has the essential questioning of motives of the industry and the involved individuals. Alternative drivers for the industry and other hierarchies have been sketched opening the possibility of changing the industry paradigm and the fundamental intent
of design practice. In regard to the research question: *How do the ethics embedded in the fashion design production ... their current applications serve the fashion industry, humanity, animals and the planet?* It has become clearer that the ethics of the industry, serve the developed world management and the stockholders, but also there is room for change of thinking and practice.

The crucial question of what is missing in the fashion industry enabled reflection on the absences and the alternatives. The drivers for responsibility were investigated; one being the recognition of inequality and the discovery of ‘empathy’ as being the central response. Underpinning ‘empathy’, ‘philanthropy’ and ‘altruism’ is an expectation of an ethical outcome, and their expressions as ethical enactments. Moreover, it becomes possible to speculate on what ‘fashion’ practice with alternative drivers, as design for sustainability in an industry with a new paradigm could be.

To further the argument, a philosophy and the constituent ethics needs to be sourced and piloted for the hypothesis to be explored and challenged. Buddhism will be investigated in the Chapter Four and analysed for its relevance and application for the fashion industry, and design for ‘sustainability.’ Continuing with the model of establishing meanings, the terms, values, morals and ethics will be defined for the context to enable a clear understanding of the argument and application. The specific areas which require ethical consideration will be identified and discussed. A particular movement within Buddhism will be selected for its practical application and its shared perspectives with alternative paradigms of the fashion industry and designer practice.


3. These exist in many countries. Currently, they are located in Southern urban coastal China making use of the migrant rural workers according to Suki Chung of Labour Action China at Ethics of Fashion or Fashion of Ethics? - The Fashioning of An Ethical Industry Conference Report (27th February 2008).

4. 'Maquiladoras' (Maquilas): Foreign-owned assembly plants in Mexico. Companies import machinery and materials duty free and export finished products around the world. They are also known as twin plants, maquilas and in-bond industries. CorpWatch: Maquiladoras at a Glance.


6. The term consumption seems apposite, as it references a hunger-like impetus and the notion of devouring the object; and having to pass through the body in (the process of consumption), with little expectation or desire for keeping, maintaining or owning the object.

7. Iwi and Hapu are tribe and sub tribes of Maori.

8. The social enterprise/innovation aspect of several fashion and clothing companies sometimes includes living and working with the makers for period(s) of time.

9. It is likely that the developing economies of China and India will also adopt or discover their concern regarding the environment, and human and animal rights.

10. philanthropic adj. loving one's fellow men; benevolent. philanthropy n. 1 a love of humankind. 2 practical benevolence, esp. charity on a large scale. (1995)

11. altruism n 1 regard for others as a principle for action 2 unselfishness; concern for other people. £ altruist n. altruistic (1995)


15. Consumer/users can boycott stores which according to the Cooperative Bank in the UK in 2006 the consequent losses reached £338 million.
CHAPTER FOUR

Sourcing Ethics and Attributing Value
INTRODUCTION

It is timely to undertake reflection and to speculate on alternative paradigms for the fashion industry and designer practice. As Tony Fry wrote: ‘… another kind of future begs to be articulated, as does the way to bring it into being by design.’ (2009 p. 2). As Fry states, ‘another kind of future’ is needed, which can be achieved by design, not only in terms of products, but services, and by ways of design thinking at both issue and system level, concepts germane to the research. As Kate Fletcher observed:

*If we influence things at the level of paradigm, then a system can be totally transformed…* Fostering this new way of seeing is the on-going biggest challenge of sustainability for fashion and textile sector – to build a convincing, reflective and ethical paradigm that is sustainable by design. (2008 p. 23)

The intention of the research is to investigate specifically what is available to designers and other stakeholders to guide them in perceiving the industry in an empathetic manner and in making ethical choices. In the previous chapter, the nature of fashion was explored, and an overview of the levels of the fashion industry was provided, making it then possible to situate the roles and realms of influence. Within these levels, there exist inequality and unethical behaviours and practices; indeed, throughout the industry there is a need for personal, professional and corporate questioning of individual and group response to inequality. Tracking the path of response: from recognition of inequality and of the ‘other,’ to acknowledging responsibility has brought the hypothesis to the sourcing of guiding principles, or ‘ethics.’

Placing ‘ethics’ at the forefront of the research at this point provides the broadest perspective of how to respond, and enables an alternative source to be contemplated. In the chapter, Buddhism will be considered as an alternative philosophy to the current options: a source of principles to address the gaps of response in the industry. Specific areas, which require ethical consideration relating to reverence for life, animal, human and the environment within the industry are identified and discussed. Furthermore, the parallels with sustainability will be highlighted because to better understand the nature of sustainability and its applications, ethics have to be interrogated. The shared principles discovered in sustainability and Buddhism provide a challenging synergy, and the prospect of using them in an industry so tightly focused on obsolescence is highly paradoxical. Meanings of the terms ‘values’, ‘morals’ and ‘ethics’ will be established to provide an understanding of the argument and its application. In addition, speculation will be undertaken regarding the origins of the ‘ethics’ used in the industry. Moreover, if empathy were to be the source of ethics, it is necessary to find guidelines informed by empathy and borne of an acknowledgment of inequity. It is here that Buddhism is pertinent, grounded as it is in compassion for the other, with the first of The Four Noble Truths being the acknowledgment that ‘there is suffering.’ Furthermore, for the ‘ethics’ to have viability they must be relevant to a global workforce, stockholders, consumers/users, media, and other stakeholders, whilst addressing where responsibility gaps exist: life rights (human, animal and environmental) and creative intellectual and cultural property, and fast fashion. The progression of the argument will be described; from ethics pertinent to sustainability, to those which are inherent in Buddhism. The constituent ethics will be examined and analysed for their relevance and application to the fashion industry, in particular design for sustainability, addressing, in part, one of the thesis research questions: *what is empathy, and its place with Buddhism?* and exploring another research question: *how can Buddhist ethics offer potential guiding principles?* A specific movement within Buddhism with a practical application will be selected for evaluation. The particular aspects of Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB), which recommend themselves to the argument, will be explored, and the synergies that are both unusual and pertinent to ‘ethics materialised’ (Fry 2009 p. 50) via design: design for sustainability will be analysed. It is proposed to examine the concomitance between the new reading of sustainability, Buddhism, Buddhist ethics and eventually, SEB.

There has been a shying away from ‘ethics’ and their role in design, specifically around sustainability, which requires exploration. Brave souls in the design disciplines may mention ‘ethics,’ but the writing reveals neither definition, nor speculation on what they might be, or how they are to be considered. Fry is unusual in his writing about ‘ethics’ and makes reference to: ‘Aristotle’s ethics and the philosophical tradition it instigated,’ (2009 p. 50) when writing about design-based redirective practice. He notes:
… What Aristotle did was to suggest that the discussion of how to advance ethics should focus on legislation and the study of constitution in order to discover what laws and customs best serve it. (2009 p. 255)

Fry elaborates on how it could perceivably occur:

*Within this tradition, ethics is seen as embodied in ‘practical philosophy’. This does not mean philosophy that completely centres on pragmatic and instrumental ends that ignore the objective of ‘the good’. Within this philosophical tradition, ethics is not seen as just being enacted by a particular kind of subject – the individual who acts ethically. Rather, the subject is viewed as both able to direct, but also be directed by ethics materialized (the ‘good’ as things in action).* (2009 p. 50)

The exciting, and ultimately supportive aspect to the arguments in the thesis thus far, is the brief discussion of ‘ethics materialized’ (Fry 2009); the notion of the materialisation or enactment of an ethical intent. There are strong parallels to elements of the research. Although neither religious nor spiritually based, Aristotelian ethics would have currency in a variety of cultures, as do Buddhist ethics. While the examination is from the perspective of other design disciplines - industrial design and architecture, Fry develops his argument further:

*This understanding allows us to grasp ethics in relation to performative qualities of objects created and mobilized by individuals striving to transfer ‘acting ethically’ to ‘ethics embodied in the way things of the world act in order to sustain’ (which is taken was the baseline of ethics).* (2009 p. 50-51)

Fry references designers working to design for sustainability when he writes of ‘… individuals striving to transfer ‘acting ethically’ to ‘ethics embodied in the way things of the world act in order to sustain’. Furthermore, his argument draws an important parallel with the writing of Michael Benedikt (2006) who poses an unusual theological theory in a design context. Although perhaps challenging in regard to theology, it is highly provocative for the hypothesis because it is a designer (an architect), not a theologian or a philosopher discussing God as being embodied in practice (thopraxy). Benedikt speculates that the good that we do as humans is the realisation of God. The thread of the argument – design as a theological or philosophical embodiment - will be explored later in the chapter, and in further depth in Chapter Eight. This makes it possible to plot an arc from empathy to ethics to design for sustainability: the outcome being materialised ethics. However, before the argument can begin it is necessary to establish the meaning of certain important terms.

**CLARIFYING THE TERMS**

Rather than enter into prolonged descriptions and arguments regarding the meanings and nuances, the intention here is to identify the words that are in contention such as ‘values’, ‘morals’ and ‘ethics’. Benedikt explains his perspective of ‘morals’ and ‘ethics’:

*A note about the words “moral” and “ethical.” The boundary between them is fuzzy. In the tendency, however, moral actions are (good) things done for whatever reason: and the subject matter of “morality” tends to be interpersonal (e.g. sexual behaviour, aid, decency). Ethical actions are good things done on the account of the principles behind them and in our knowledge of our freedom to do otherwise. The subject matter of “ethics” thus tends to be institution - and business related. (Hence “business ethics” or “medical ethics”.) Very roughly: religion cares more about morals, and law and moral philosophy about ethics.* (2006 p. 26)
'Values' and 'morals' as terms are problematic for use here as they both have distracting negative associations: they are often used in a pejorative, judging way referring mostly to their absence in a subject. They both refer to a deeper and more personal context and do not sit so readily in a personal, professional and corporate discussion. 'Ethics' is preferable as a term for the discourse because it works effectively in the context of the research questions and arguments, in that it is not as pejorative or judgmental and is less likely to polarise discussion. It has the appropriate expectation of rigour of thought without the confusion and allied dogma of some of the other terms. To establish the discussion, it is useful to touch upon the meanings and attached concerns regarding these terms and the thesis arguments.

Values

Fashion is a business concerned with making money. As mentioned earlier, in 2000 US$1 trillion was spent on clothes, hence the term 'value' could easily be misinterpreted as meaning financial worth. However, 'values' can mean a set of beliefs that an individual (personal), or a corporate entity holds as their guiding principles. Value can also equate to the amount of concern, 'empathy' and compassion merited by a subject, or an issue, as a mode of establishing preference. The following definition is germane to the argument: ‘… (in plu.) one's principles or standards; one's judgement of what is valuable or important in life’ (1995). Firstly, how the principles or standards will be described must be explained.

Morals

The word 'moral' has judgmental connotations in its associations and usage: the definition in a dictionary implies this critical nature by the use of 'goodness or badness' in the definition:

1 a concerned with goodness or badness of human character or behaviour, or with the distinction between right and wrong. b concerned with accepted rules and standards of human behaviour. 2 a conforming to general standards of conduct. (1995)

To recap, Benedikt recognised the religious associations:

… The subject matter of “morality” tends to be interpersonal (e.g. sexual behaviour, aid, decency) … Very roughly: religion cares more about morals, and law and moral philosophy about ethics. (2007 p. 26)

It has not been an imperative or an objective in the fashion industry to be 'moral' or to have 'morals': a 'moral fashion industry' was not a desired outcome. Usually, the word is employed in critique: to describe someone or something as ‘immoral’ or ‘amoral’ is antagonistic and can polarise a dialogue. Thus, within the industry (at whichever stage within the fashion supply chain), the term is neither useful nor relevant, due to its religious connotations and hypercritical associations. Yet the expectation of a responsible industry is different again. The absence or lack of 'morals' is usually an individual (personal) concern rather than a professional or corporate characteristic or behaviour whereas 'ethics' as a term has a similar, but different role and tenor.

Ethics

The use of the word ‘ethics,’ and the corresponding differences of interpretation of the meaning are challenging. It is infrequently used within design but when it is used, it is used vaguely: Fletcher (2008) writing on fashion and sustainability names her second chapter ‘Ethically Made’ but does not define ‘ethics,’ perhaps assuming that their structure and content are a given. Fry referred to ‘… ethics materialized (the ‘good’ as things in action),’ (2009) and Benedikt (as noted earlier) in part concurred:
Despite appearing similar in meaning, usage, and context to 'morals,' 'Ethics' have a lighter and more interpretative prospect, and perhaps a modular capacity (more easily linked with other sources). For 'ethics' to be usable in the required situations, it is necessary for them to resonate and habituate with the peoples, cultures and locations within the fashion system. 'Ethics' can come from various sources and be ordered by number and thus can interrelate with a variety of other sources, which is crucial for the research. To continue the discussion, an established definition is of use: 'Ethics 1 (usu. treated as sing.) the science of morals in human conduct; moral philosophy. 2 a (treated as pl.) moral principles; rules of conduct.' (1995). The second (2a) definition offers the thesis the most potential for interrogation: '…2 a (treated as pl.) moral principles; rules of conduct' (1995). 'Ethics' are proposed as a term because they have practical associations, professional objectivity and connections with externalised decisions. As Benedikt mentioned, they are ‘… institution - and business related.’ (2007 p. 26). Thus, they can be 'rules of conduct' or more preferable guidelines ‘of conduct’ within the fashion industry. It is proposed in the thesis to consider ‘ethics’ as the most useful term of the three, as they relate to sustainability. 'Ethics’ as they are employed within fashion design for sustainability will be explored later in the chapter. From there it is intended to utilise those 'ethical' issues (identified from the fashion supply chain) to research the 'ethics,' (or lack of them), within the corporate settings.

The consumer/user has an expectation, perhaps a wish, or desire for the producer/manufacturer of a garment to arrive at the product ethically; ‘Compared to the other age groups, 35-44’s and 55+ are the most concerned by ethical criteria … the under 25’s care more than other age groups about profits being given to charity’ (Ethical Clothing Report 2008 by TNS Worldpanel Fashion – Briefing Report 2011, Ethical Fashion Forum 2011 p. 3) When writing about the importance of the female market, consumer trend forecasters Faith Popcorn and Lys Marigold stated: ‘While men and women alike are tuning in more closely to a company’s ethics and practices, women care about the details.’ (Popcorn and Marigold 2001 p. 196). However, unethical behaviour in fashion manufacture makes headlines, and leaves the consumer/user little alternative but to confront the issue that their garment has had a negative impact, not only on the environment but on other peoples lives. The consumer/user may be an activist or directed as one, as shown in the flyers (to be left by customer/users with retailers) for the new Ethical Clothing Australia (formerly known as Homeworkers Code of Practice and the No Sweat Shop label):

Your Clothes Are Beautiful, but are your ethics? I want to buy clothes made in Australia under fair working conditions. If your clothes fit the bill, I’ll be back. Become accredited and display the Ethical Clothing Australia trademark on you Australian-made garments. (ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au)

There is a burgeoning awareness in mainstream popular media of the inequities within the fashion industry and clothing manufacture. To address the consumer/user concern there has been raft of publications in recent years reflecting the cumulative ill ease with the current mode of living, purchasing, and consuming. Mainstream publications include books: Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping, Living an Ethical Life, Change the World for a Fiver and magazines: Ethical Consumer, New Consumer, Organic Style, Slow Living, The Ecologist and Peppermint. If there is a need for ‘ethics,’ then the next step is to consider where they may be sourced.
Having established that ‘ethics’ best describes the guidelines of conduct needed to address sustainability, it is logical to seek possible sources. The reason for the discussion of ‘ethics’, is to serve as a preface for later speculation on the motivation and intended outcome of sustainability. After the initial consideration, the intention is to scrutinise current practice (post empathetic analysis) to address a perceived inequality. According to the ‘ethics’ that a designer champions (or those of her/his employer), the response to the inequality may differ, presenting a need to consider the sources of ‘ethics’ at play within the supply chain. The identified sources of the ethics are listed in Figure 12. Sources of ethics in the supply chain/garment life cycle. Furthermore, there are overlaps of source, and it could be argued that there are eight potential sources of ‘ethics’ within the supply chain (see above). However, within the fashion industry, there are four enactors of ‘ethics’ (Figure 13. Enactors of ethics in the fashion infrastructure) who may enact them.

**Figure 12. Sources of Ethics in the Supply-Chain/Garment Life-Cycle.**

**Figure 13. Enactors of Ethics (in the Fashion Infrastructure)**

**Placing Ethics in the Industry**

There is a tension between the ‘ethics’ of the fashion industry (corporate) and of the practicing fashion designer (personal, professional), and of the consumer/user (personal). A potential polarisation arises from their probable motivations to be ethical. An ethical response from industry is characterised in a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) report, statement, code of conduct or vision statement. Originating from the board of directors, the response could express the company’s intent to separate themselves from an industry, not accepting responsibility for its actions, or be the recognition of consumer/user’s expectation; the impetus
(driver) could flow from their perception of current and future industrial legislation regarding responsibility. However, the alternative ethical respondents - the designer and consumer/user, also have perspectives. The fashion designer’s (professional) role is defined within industry: working within a studio, designing garments, toileing/prototyping ideas, selecting fabrics and trimmings. In the act of designing (discussed in Chapter Six), choices are made that have a positive or negative impact throughout the industry, however, it as an individual (personal) that most designers initially make these (professional) choices. They are made in response to their own aesthetics (professional) and ‘ethics’ tempered by those of the company by whom they are employed (corporate). The differences between the individual (personal) and the corporate could blur with time and practice. A designer working on her/his own collection for their own company would be more likely to have an individual/industry (personal, professional) response. There are designers, both new to the industry and those contemplating entering it, who are very conscious of their own professional ethical requirements, and the difference between those espoused and practiced by large and small companies. The dissatisfaction and concerns led designers in London to seek out like-minded others forming the Ethical Fashion Forum in 2004. It is a manifestation of both humanist and environmental perspectives (with a strong fair trade intent), rather than a defined sustainable design initiative. The desire for an ethical outcome can be materialised as a horizontal structural response to ‘ethics’ (or lack of them): working directly with maker(s), or a vertical structural response to ethics; working systemically within a company and thus, industry. If it is established that ‘ethics’ are relevant: fundamental to the future of the planet, and the future of the fashion industry, it is valuable to question what are the core ‘ethics’. It is posed that one of the core areas is life; that is, the recognition and acknowledgement of the importance of life.

Recognition of Life via Empathy: Environment, Humanity, Animals

Whether as an individual designer, or a CEO of a global company, it is necessary to engage with the question: what is the value of life? Accordingly, what is the value of our life, if we put no value on the lives of others? In 2003, following the beginning of the war with Iraq, and Australia’s participation therein, Peter Singer wrote concerning the value of life and responsibility:

*Governments may have a greater responsibility to protect their nationals than they do to protect foreigners, but when it comes to calculating the costs of war, nationality does not change the value of a human life …* (2003 p. 16).

The issue of value of life in its broadest sense (human, animals and the planet) and what it means in regard to the fashion industry and stakeholders is important because it is a key to the ethical issues and questions hence and bears closer scrutiny.

To challenge students to reflect on their motivations for apportioning value to life, a traditional philosophy exercise is to pose hypothetical situations relating to a number of people that have to be rescued from a life-threatening situation, in which not all can be saved. Furthermore, the hypothetical group of people generally contains family/friends and strangers and the common response is that family/friends are rescued. The students are then questioned thus: other than the family relationship, why are they worth saving? What are their specifications of value? Is the likelihood of their being of value to the individual student (emotionally, physically or fiscally), reason enough for the preservation of their lives over others? Furthermore, could a stranger’s life be of equal value if she/he could match these characteristics, or if not, be of less, or even of no value? Is the attribution of value so self-serving? It is these questions that lead to querying why a designer, or any stakeholder, should give empathetic consideration to their (ethical) behaviour towards others. If it is agreed that certain life is of value, but there is a hierarchy of worth as indicated by the previous, philosophical question, could there be a potential for recognition of beneficial qualities of diversity and difference of life? William McDonough addressed the point in a sermon he gave in 1993:
… If Thomas Jefferson were with us today, he would be calling for a Declaration of Interdependence which recognizes that our ability to pursue wealth, health and happiness is dependent on other forms of life, that the rights of one species are linked to the rights of others and none should suffer remote tyranny. (1993)

The acknowledgement of interdependence is extremely meaningful for the hypothesis because it touches on sustainability, the environment and society. In addition to a significant thread of teachings associated with SEB interpreted by Thich Nhat Hanh as ‘interbeing’; as evidenced in his 1989 short poem gatha where he writes ‘we inter-are.’ As Santikaro Bhikkhu observed: ‘Nothing comes to us without the benevolence of others’ (2002 p. 305), this statement relates to how the world can be viewed, and likewise, how ‘ethics’ could be employed. Therefore, if ‘ethics’ relate to life, sustaining a diversity of life in the present tense, and in the future: life is the start of sustainability. Thereby, the question follows: how far will the desire for equity for another extend? For ‘ethics’ to exist, it is necessary for there to be a response to another’s life, and for the empathiser to be concerned with society.

To formulate empathy for another life requires social imagination: not insularity but to be imaginative about and for the other(s). The experience of ‘empathy’ is inclusive: it is allowing the state of another’s well being to enter into one’s consciousness: into the landscape of concern and caring. Initially, it is necessary for the person who is empathising to project their awareness or consciousness into an individual, which requires the empathiser to be imaginative about and for the other(s). Reflecting on another’s existence, and believing in interdependence; the consequential response would be to behave ethically towards them. Pursuing the concept further, it is reasonable to question whether there are barriers to ‘empathy’ and ‘ethics’ for other beings. Following on, the next question could concern the inclusion of other life forms. To apply the concept, an individual or company may be called upon to empathise with and behave compassionately, and thus ethically beyond the norm of their friends, family, and pets; to machinists in Burma, Arctic foxes, or even towards forests and rivers. It is here that it should be noted that this train of conjecture if extended might also embrace the more radical beliefs of Green politics and environmentalism. There are resonances with Deep Ecology and the theories of James Lovelock; Gaia, although they are not pursued in this context they pose a provocative potential thread of research.

The outcome of the conjecture of what/whom is worthy of empathy may depend upon the theoretical or practical nature of the philosophical questioning. The Buddhist perspective would be that all are worthy of compassion because according to the first of The Four Noble Truths, there is suffering (dukkha), which can translate as ‘unease.’ Without the awareness of the inequity in the way we experience, occupy, and live on the planet there would be no motivation to consider sustainability. All may be worthy of compassion, yet an empathetic response in the individual could be restricted by a perception of their position on the hierarchy of worth, of the individual, or company. In the spirit of the new reading of sustainability, we may consider all beings worthy of compassion.

It is valuable to question whether compassion could occur only if there is a parity of experience, or could it occur if the object of compassion is perceived as having a preferable experience? In short, is it suffering that makes the other worthy of compassion? The word ‘suffering’ has been used because of its significance in Buddhism: meaning ‘ill ease’ and associated discomfiture, rather than torment or desperation. The deliberation should occur when reflecting on how to respond to the needs of all other sentient beings. Human beings negotiate their way through existence mediated by their response to the life of the other sentient being next to them: whether partner, stranger, dog, or, as the Buddhist’s believe, the rock3 on which they may be sitting. Thus the argument thread returns to the underlying question: how is life acknowledged?
Reverence for Animal Life

In considering ‘life’ in this way, extending the discourse, and pursuing the inclusive intent (interdependence and interbeing), it is useful to remember environment ‘lives’ (animals, insects, trees, and microbes), and to question whether they constitute ‘others,’ and merit ethical behaviour. Arguments within the thesis are centred on the fashion industry, and the discussion located around humanity directly related to the industry. However, reverence for life has further application in the environment: ‘living’ can include humanity, the environment, plants and animals and other ‘sentient’ beings. When something is living and aware, it may be described as ‘sentient: having the power of perception by the senses’ (1995) and consciousness. Ethical behaviour enacted as design for sustainability is the unmediated empathetic response from one ‘sentient’ being to another or others. It is an acknowledgment of life: its value, its right to be, its potential, or capability of experiencing ‘dukkha’ and its right to acceptance and coexistence on the planet.

The degrees of recognition and accreditation of diverse ‘life,’ and sentience vary according to the knowledge, experience, feelings and beliefs of the individual. It is fundamental not to have an enforced acceptance of other ‘sentient’ beings, but potential guidelines of conduct: stakeholders within the debate must be free to make choices; free to experience their own responses. The depth of regard for life raises the question: is all life sacrosanct and inviolable, or perhaps some life is more valuable than others? The deliberation is pertinent for a designer when selecting materials for garments such as fur. The example demonstrates the conundrum of considering the welfare of another ‘sentient’ being: are they recognised as having the same rights to existence as afforded to humans? In making decisions, it is revealing which ‘sentient’ beings are privileged: are we ‘inter-are’?

Revisiting the fur debate will be useful in exploring the rights of ‘sentient’ beings. A designer or manufacturer has more to consider than just the aesthetics in choosing whether to use real fur as a coat trim. There are two aspects to the question: suffering and death. The recognition and acknowledgement of the ‘suffering’ of all ‘sentient’ beings can be interpreted as a need for rights (human and animal), and the stewardship of the environment on their own and their descendents behalf. Trying to imagine what the rights of other ‘sentient’ beings could be, human rights could be a model, and achievable examples could be selected. For example, the rights might be freedom, nourishment, shelter and an absence of ‘suffering.’ If the animals were recipients, they would be protected from being trapped, hunted and possibly farmed and killed (for example in Figure 14. Caged foxes farmed for fur). Yet, where lays the key concern: suffering prior to death (animals welfare), or taking of life (animals rights), or both? If it were proved they had not suffered in their existence prior to their death, would the taking of their life be deemed permissible? The two aspects remain: the first; was the animal’s existence (farmed, hunted or trapped) a form of ‘suffering’? The second question relates to death; that is the taking of life; is foreshortening an animals’ life untenable, or is it the end use its skin? The argument confronts human animal life difference, which Anna L. Peterson discusses:

Most Western belief systems define humans as unique among the rest of life: humans are the only animal with x, some essential trait lacking in all other animals and setting people not only apart but above them. Western religions generally point to an eternal soul as the candidate for x, while secular philosophies often focus on rational thought and the capacity for conceptual language. (2001 p. 2)

Our anthropocentric thinking may be difficult to relinquish. As Fry wrote in Design Futuring:

We humans cannot fail to be anthropocentric. However, we can recognize anthropocentrism as our inescapable condition and henceforth take responsibility for it … Our being anthropocentric has barely been recognized in the millennia of Western philosophy, let alone in popular consciousness. (2009 p. 31)
If it is demanding to empathise with another human being, will there be a similar difficulty empathising with a sheep being mulesed for wool production, or a kangaroo shot for leather? Further insight into the question is provided by considering humanity as a species that does not have domain over and stewardship of the earth and its resources. If elephants were making selections regarding worth, what use would humanity be to them, and what rights might they afford humans? Perhaps, they might perceive humanity as an expendable resource; useful for meat, teeth or hair, to be used, wasted, or discarded. The recognition, acknowledgement and respect for the life of all things is crucial to the discussion of ‘ethics’ and their enactment within the fashion industry. The first of The Five Precepts of Buddhism: ‘no killing,’ does not only relate to humans thus the acknowledgment of sentience and reverence for life. In analysing sustainability for its root drivers and constituent ‘ethics,’ synergies begin to occur between sustainability and core beliefs of Buddhism, in particular SEB.

SUSTAINABILITY AND BUDDHIST SYNERGIES

Discovering the similarities between the ‘ethics’ and intention of sustainability and Buddhism seemed almost a by-product: however, through analysis and reflection, further connectivity began to emerge. Concurrent to exploring the ‘ethics’ in the research will be the tracing, and evaluation of the synergies of Buddhist ‘ethics’ in underpinning sustainability. It is the reason the modular nature of certain ‘ethics’ (in this case Buddhist) is important, in that they can be found in a variety of beliefs, philosophies and religions. It is not the intention to propagate a cursory ‘pick and mix’ approach to the ‘ethics’ of belief systems. Yet, due to the dominance in the recent past of Judaeo-Christian ‘ethics’ in developed world management within the global industry, there is room for alternative perspectives and ethics.

It is an intention to explore the correlation of Buddhist ‘ethics’ with those of sustainability. The stages of the fashion supply chain are situated around the globe, thus Judaeo-Christian ethics may not be relevant to the totality of global stakeholders. Most global manufacture currently takes place in South East Asia and China, thus the workers’ belief systems could be Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam, Buddhism or Christianity, providing further viability for an analysis of Buddhist ethics; referencing sustainability and issues in the fashion supply chain. Buddhism just over 2,500 years old as a religion or philosophy started in India and the monks and nuns travelled. So not only does it share many root beliefs like reincarnation with other Eastern beliefs, it has been existence in the various cultures for many centuries. Furthermore it is not perceived as the religion of a recent colonising power and for the last few decades it has been the object of positive interest and growing popularity in the developed world. In comparison there has been a spike of interest in Islam, however there
is a commensurate anxiety. It is likely they have suitable ethics and principles\textsuperscript{7} applicable for an empathic
designer, but Hinduism and Confucianism although with millions of followers are not widely understood in
developed countries in the Northern Hemisphere.

An unexpected discovery via literature analysis is the readiness of Buddhist scholars to perceive Buddhist
ethics as applicable in a variety of circumstances, possibly even the fashion industry. Jonathan Watts wrote
regarding the potential of Buddhism:

\begin{quote}
... It also has meaning for other societies struggling with similar ethical and social issues. In short, if Buddhists can craft a progressive personal and social ethic that encourages peaceful societies, this may offer a valuable resource for similar endeavours in non-Buddhist societies. (2004)
\end{quote}

Buddhism may at first appear an unlikely addition to a sustainability discussion. Investigating 'ethics' and
alternative guidelines of conduct for the fashion industry stakeholders and fashion design practice, the
quest is speculative. However, there are precedents for comparison. Edwin Datschefski (2001) recognised a
similarity between one of the better-known Buddhist teachings, The Eight Fold Path, and his perceptions of
the intentions of sustainability (Figure 15.). The paraphrased list may seem to have been written in a light-hearted
manner; however, it serves to highlight some legitimate synergies, and it overlaps with Buddhism,
which has a powerful resonance and impact within the sustainability discourse. To make comparison and
resulting similarities clearer, The Eight Fold Path of Buddhism (Figure 16.) is usually expressed as shown in
the following table.

### Datschefski’s - The Eight Fold Path

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Right Understanding</th>
<th>Continually learn about nature and about new sustainable technologies and techniques.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. Right Aspiration</td>
<td>Make a commitment to work towards 100% sustainability in your job and home life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. Right Effort</td>
<td>Get on with it. Do what matters, do what works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4. Right Speech</td>
<td>Speak helpfully and compassionately about your work to everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5. Right Conduct</td>
<td>Be sustainable in all your tasks; walk the talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6. Right Livelihood</td>
<td>Make your living from working on sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7. Right Concentration</td>
<td>Keep focused on your goal, avoid distractions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8. Right Mindfulness</td>
<td>What are you waiting for?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 15. Datschefski’s - The Eight Fold Path.**

### The Eight Fold Path of Buddhism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. Right Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. Right Aspiration/Intention/Aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3. Right Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4. Right Action/Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5. Right Livelihood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6. Right Effort/Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7. Right Mindfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8. Right Samadhi/Contemplation of Life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 16. The Eight Fold Path of Buddhism.**
Addressing ‘ethics’ in terms of (ethical) sustainable design Datschefski found synergies between The Four Noble Truths of Buddhist teachings, and the core principles of sustainable design. Furthermore, he identified a parallel between environmental pollution and ‘suffering’ (a core tenet of Buddhism), and whether conceived as a motivational device, or a genuine belief, Datschefski’s Eight Fold Path of sustainability is a workable comparison. Buddhist ‘ethics’ have an apposite synergy with sustainable design; in the case of Datschefski that was product design; however, these ethics can be utilised by fashion and the fashion industry.

There may be some hesitation in exploring a subject with religious connotations in the context of design practice as there has been an emphasis on rationality (discussed in depth in Chapter 8) combined with expression. Thus, to read Lisa Newton’s statement ‘…that sustainability is a steady state of the soul…’ (2002 p. 7) is unanticipated, and thrilling in its straying from apparent rationality. A discourse is opened regarding the ‘soul’ and sustainability which has dangerous ramifications: it permits arguments referencing sustainability, religion and philosophy. The provocative aspect is that the phrase includes the word ‘soul’: the association with religion(s) enables deeper discussion regarding philosophical motivators/drivers and outcomes. The thesis discourse has broadened in the context of Buddhism and sustainability therefore, to enable the connection to be understood a brief background into Buddhism is required.

Origins of Buddhist Philosophy

To pursue the proposed synergy, it is necessary to situate the origin of the philosophy and it followers. It is stated in several accounts that the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) achieved enlightenment and an understanding of the realities of the world whilst in meditation under a tree at Bodh Gaya in India. He shared his insights with followers teaching and travelling through India, eventually ordaining monks and nuns who took his teaching further afield. The insights were interpreted as tenets and precepts given as oral teachings; hence, they are in numbered clusters (for easy recall): The Eight Fold Path (Figure 16.), The Four Noble Truths (Figure 17.), The Five Precepts, (Figure 18.), The Six Perfections (paramitas) (Figure 19.) as shown in the following tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 THERE IS SUFFERING (DUKKHA),</td>
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<td>2 THE ORIGIN OF SUFFERING IS ATTACHMENT (OFTEN INTERPRETED AS CRAVING)</td>
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<td>3 THERE IS CESSION OF SUFFERING,</td>
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<td>4 WHICH IS BY PRACTICING THE EIGHT FOLD PATH</td>
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FIGURE 17. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTH

<table>
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<th>THE FIVE PRECEPTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 NO KILLING</td>
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<td>2 NO STEALING</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 NO TELLING OF LIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 NO UNLAWFUL SEXUAL CONDUCT</td>
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<td>5 NO INTOXICATION (ALCOHOL OR DRUGS)</td>
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FIGURE 18. THE FIVE PRECEPTS.
### The Six Perfections (Pāramitās) + Late Additions

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<td>Generosity</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Patience</td>
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<td>Vigour</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mediation</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Self Realization</td>
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**FIGURE 19. THE SIX PERFECTIONS (PARAMITAS) + LATE ADDITIONS.**

Buddhism spread throughout Asia and beyond with a philosophy that can be summarised according to Damien Keown in *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics* as the Buddha ‘taught the existence of an external moral law’ (Keown 2000 p. 3) known as ‘Dharma,’ and believed that through reason, analysis, reflection, and meditation a person could come to know the requirements of the law in any given set of circumstances. His philosophical position can be described as ‘moral realism’ (Keown 2000 p. 3).

Within Buddhism, there are diverse groups and lineages of teachings. The uniting beliefs are those listed earlier: The Four Noble Truths, The Noble Eight Fold Path and The Five Precepts. However, importance is placed on applying and evaluating the tenets before acceptance into a practitioner's life, which implies that not all tenets may be embraced by all Buddhists. Furthermore, the interpretation and application may change according to the ‘vehicle,’ the lineage, group, and the practitioner. For example, one of the more accessible debates is the consumption of meat or vegetarianism as a Buddhist practice. The debate is a continuation of ‘no killing,’ one of The Five Precepts because all life is precious and inviolable, (supporting the belief in reincarnation) it is often interpreted as not killing (or have anyone else kill ‘for’ another) for food. Further explanation is necessary in order to comprehend the breadth and the limitations of Buddhism.

**Situating**

In terms of numbers of adherents, Buddhism falls behind Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The 360 million followers or practitioners are distributed over a diversity of countries, many of which are involved with garment manufacture, including: China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Taiwan, Cambodia and India. Some of the cultures of the people making the garments in the fashion industry are Buddhist whether spiritually or secularly, fully (Thai) or partly (Chinese). Keown offers useful guidance: ‘It cannot be assumed that Buddhists in India, Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan and elsewhere with their different histories and cultures will think alike or speak with one voice.’ (2000 p. 2). To continue his statement, they may share the same ‘ethics,’ but their interpretation and application could be significantly different. The hypothesis is not the arena in which to describe the many differences and interpretations of Buddhism, and their cultural inflections and readings. It should be appreciated they many contain remnants of prior beliefs, countries, traditions and cultural practice, and expediencies.

Following on, there is a link, and subsequent paradox, between the fashion industry based in the developed world and the people of the countries (India and China in particular), and cultures of the developing world involved in production. In the near future, they will also become heavy consumers of fashion as their economies are improving, and the growth of a moneyed middle class continues. As a result, Buddhist philosophy has a particular pertinence and potential because it is likely be familiar in their culture and
of relevance to how they perceive the world. However, Keown cautioned that there are many ‘strands’ of Buddhism, ‘... to select only those which are in harmony with fashionable trends in Western society is to treat Buddhism superficially, and fail to engage seriously with its views.’ (2000 p. 16). Both the statements are laudable and true, however, there is a global workforce, producing clothes utilising unsafe methods in poor conditions for unfair wages, therefore there needs to be respectful engagement with what is a generous, holistic, and useful philosophy.

Life, ‘The Other’ and Rights

The core tenet for both sustainability and Buddhism is empathy for life, and the life of ‘the other.’ How a designer values life and the qualities of another informs their raison d’être, world view and personal philosophy; for example, how a designer responds to Buddhism, and engages with sustainability. Therefore, specific issues from the fashion supply chain relating to life and the other need to be considered including: sizeism (sample & production), ageism, sexism, racism, child labour, sweatshops, outworkers, global equity and social justice, and animal rights. If a designer has empathy for the life of the other, it is probable that he or she will also acknowledge their rights.

The acknowledgement of the other is paramount, and from that recognition and comes a diminution of difference. Our separation from the other can appear (or develop) a physical and psychological difference, it can be taught and supported by perceptions that are often guided. In following a policy of sustainability, we are in fact, revisiting early teachings and perceptions. Within Buddhism is the expectation that adherents will usually have compassion for the self and beyond to the other, to a recognition of interdependence and the absence of self, to interbeing. In the perceptions of difference and the growth of separation comes the subtle and insidious apportioning of value, which has an impact on sustainability in all three areas: environment, life (human, animal and plant), and intellectual and cultural copyright. The underscoring question is what or whom is worth caring for and how can this be enacted?

If the hierarchy of worth was lateral within the fashion industry (that is, all sentient beings would be equals in decision-making) would it be sustainable and inclusive? A lateral hierarchy governing the fashion industry would be short-lived because there would be little support for humanity to take resources from the earth/environment and other sentient beings, in order to have more clothes. The concept of sustainability and ‘ethics’ being practiced by specific stakeholders (not humanity) could be alarming. Imagine if sheep were the drivers of fashion industry; there would be no mulesing, and no shearing as currently practiced. If we were to dwell on the perspective and review the fashion system with the concept in mind, certain anomalies and cruelties become quickly apparent. For the argument, it is not necessary to reconfigure the fashion industry for the sheep’s convenience, but by pursuing the speculation, it is possible to perceive how acutely anthropocentric the system is. With this frisson of realisation, it is possible to review the stakeholders and motivators, speculate whether aspects of the revised hierarchy could be transferred, and question who the beneficiaries within the fashion industry supply chain could be. In embracing different perspectives, it is possible to explore the current ethical structures and identify where alternative ethics may offer a richer opportunity.

SOURCING BUDDHIST ETHICS

As a philosophy, Buddhism offers a pliant philosophical structure with which to experiment and interact with sustainability. In addition, it tenders a non-Western perspective, which represents a proportion of the stakeholders, but does not exclude others. Furthermore, it proffers a set of workable transferable ‘ethics’, which could provide achievable guidelines for both individuals and companies, wherever their geographic locations may be. To truly comprehend its uses here, Buddhism has to be explored more deeply.
As the ‘ethics’ and morals in Christianity are derived from the Ten Commandments, the ‘ethics’ in Buddhism start from The Four Noble Truths, The Noble Eight Fold Path, The Five Precepts and the two hundred and twenty seven rules given by Buddha to ordained monks; two hundred and forty eight for ordained nuns, and five given to laity. James Whitehall explains in detail:

The virtuous practices that in Buddhism characterize a good person were often defined as at least the six paramitas of generosity, or gift-giving (dana), morality or the Five Precepts (sila), patience and forgiveness (kaanti), courage and vigour (vrya), concentration (dhyana), and wisdom (prajna) … Enrichment of virtue-like practices beyond the paramitas is seen in the development of the well-known Four Immeasurables (the Brahmaviaras or ‘divine abodes’) of Buddhist friendliness, compassion, joy, and peace, which further mapped out, stimulated, and idealized Buddhist moral praxis. (2000 p. 24-5)

These ‘virtuous practices’ would align with the empathetic intent in the new reading of SEB, but as Luis Gomez is quoted in Kraft: ‘Buddhist Studies continues to be a Northern enterprise about non-Western cultural product…’ (2000 p. 487). The observation echoes the dilemma facing design for sustainability: manufacturing based in the developing countries (South); concerning cultures and philosophical product of the developed countries (North); applied with little evidenced consultation to non-developed based cultures. It should be noted that many cultures in the developing world live and work sustainably, and have done for hundreds of years. However, Buddhism can offer a methodology, potential guiding principles of conduct, and provide insights for the developed world from an alternative paradigm.

The Four Noble Truths

Before considering how the tenets and precepts might apply, the most important premise of Buddhist philosophy is The First Noble Truth, the concept of dukkha, often identified as suffering, and mentioned earlier. It is the prime acknowledgement that spurs the practitioner to pursue the philosophical practice, and/ or manifest it in external work as SEB. The Second Noble Truth is that the origin of dukkha is a form of thirst, craving (tanhā), desire and attachment to objects, ways of thinking, emotions, and people, and this causes suffering: imbalance, anxiety, and unease. The interpretation that The First Noble Truth is an instigator to become socially and environmentally active, could be perceived as being in contradiction to the direction that attachment is to be avoided. However, if the attachment or desire is a ‘good’ desire (chanda), there is a different way of responding as explained by Keown:

… Having positive goals for oneself and others (such as attaining nirvana), desiring that others should be happy, and wishing to leave the world a better place than one found it, are all examples of positive and wholesome desires which do not count as (tanhā)… (1996 p. 39)

In turn, the benign intent relates directly to The Third and The Fourth Noble Truths: the Third is the cessation of suffering, and the Fourth is achieved by practicing The Eight Fold Path. It could be interpreted as follows: that there is solution to the inequities and behaviours, which establishes a need for sustainability, and there is a way forward through practicing the eight guidelines. The examples from The Noble Truths indicate a synergy of impetus with the holistic aspect of sustainability. To achieve a fuller understanding of Buddhism, further explanations of other key philosophical beliefs are necessary.
Vinaya and Śīla and The Eight Fold Path

The foundations of traditional Buddhist ethics as defined are either vinaya or śīla, and there five basic śīla, which the laity observe (Keown 2000). Vinaya were rules that were collected during the Buddha’s life for the monks to follow. These were derived from the surrounding cultures and were, as Santikaro Bhikkhu wrote: ‘… unwritten and customary…’ (Bhikkhu 2002 p. 302). They are of particular contemporary use as Santikaro Bhikkhu identified the vinayas as having:

… applicability today within Western consumer societies among “convert Buddhists” coping with modernity and postmodernity, and in traditional Buddhist societies among those who are struggling to come to terms with rapid modernizing change. (Bhikkhu 2002 p. 301)

Furthermore, he observed that: ‘the fundamental operative principle that gets us to the heart of vinaya is non-harming… non-harming is the best principle on which to base moral and behavioural standards.’ (Bhikkhu 2002 p. 302). The non-harming principle aligns closely to the proposed new reading of sustainability. The vinaya comprise initially of the Five Precepts, which as he acknowledges, are ‘… the most common expression of vinaya…’ (Bhikkhu 2002 p. 302). Śīla are called morality or moral virtues but are also ‘ethics’, and refer to three elements of The Eight Fold Path, which are as follows: Right Speech, Right Action/Conduct, Right Livelihood. Bhikkhu saw vinaya as a potential social critique and wrote that they ‘… can provide concrete standards with which to challenge society in order to flesh out the abstract virtues that Buddhism is pointing to.’ (2002 p. 304). The Śīla must be supplemented by another component prajña: wisdom, as Keown explains further: ‘Wisdom’ in Buddhism means a profound philosophical understanding of the human condition.’ He later compares it to ‘gnosis’, (1996 p. 44). These are all part of Dharma which refers to Buddha’s teaching regarding living well (appropriately), but also living ethically, both of which refer to natural law of things (causality).

Precepts

It is likely that there has been some transference if not appropriation of the monastic rules to (or by) the contemporary (predominately western) laity in an attempt to define their practice as more ‘authentic’. As mentioned previously, the application of the precepts and tenets within Buddhism is particular to teachings, lineage, culture, sect, teacher and practitioner. It is linked to the expectation that the practitioners do not practice by belief, but from the veracity of the precepts and tenets through application. Buddhist precepts are divided into five sets according to Keown (1996). Featured first on Figure 20. are The Five Precepts which are no killing, no stealing, no telling of lies, no unlawful sexual conduct, no intoxication (alcohol or drugs), which conform to many other philosophies, not least those of Indian religions. The first three precepts are directly relevant to the proposed reading of sustainability. The recognition and acknowledgement of suffering of all sentient beings can be interpreted as inclusive of the need for human rights, and possibly the stewardship of (group, and or individual) creation and property. Surveying these tenets, it is apparent that they support the expectation and necessity of the close scrutiny of thinking and actions also required in design for sustainability. The first three (of five) tenets; no killing, no stealing, and no telling of lies are more directly relevant to human rights and the environment, intellectual and cultural copyright than are the rest. The Third and The Fourth could be interpreted as follows: there are inequities and damaging outcomes that establish the need for sustainability, and there is a way forward through practicing the eight guidelines: Right Understanding, Right Aspiration/Intention/Aim, Right Speech, Right Action/Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort/Perseverance, Right Mindfulness, and Right Samadhi/Contemplation of life.
**The Five Sets of Buddhist Precepts**

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<td>The Eight Precepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Ten Precepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Ten Good Paths of Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Monastic Disciplinary Code</td>
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**Figure 20. Five Sets of Buddhist Precepts.**

Fundamental to Buddhist practice are the first two tenets of the Eight Fold Path; firstly, having *Right Understanding* and secondly, *Right Aspiration, Intention, Aim*. Their application along with the other tenets supports a requirement within Buddhism to maintain an overview of the consequences of personal choices and actions. Within the fashion industry there are numerous choices with corresponding consequences that can be destructive, and or proactive for the environment and the lives and rights of the beings within. Using sustainability theory and via close analysis, it is possible to see the interconnected nature of decision-making and the subsequent outcomes. The analysis of intent and consequences of thoughts and actions is part of Buddhist philosophy, and meditation practice. The importance of causality; the belief that everything has a cause is an underlying premise. The principle is held as well as the belief in interconnection or inter-being - as Thich Nhat Hanh stated, we ‘inter-are’.

Buddhist ethics are based firmly in the teachings and instructions to the monastic communities; these precepts would appear to have little applicability to the Twenty-first Century fashion industry, and even less to the investigation of fashion. The writings are concerned with the behaviour of the monks and nuns and to a lesser extent with the lay people. In a contemporary reading of ‘ethics,’ it would be for monks, nuns, and laity all to embody Buddhist ethics. Accordingly, a Buddhist practitioner would engage, apply them: to live and observe them. Therefore, an examination of the ethics in order to propose them as a method of navigating the international fashion supply chain could be a form of engaged Buddhism.

**Socially Engaged Buddhism**

To situate the phenomenon and its evolution, a brief background will provide some insight. Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB) is a response to inequity: a practical engagement or manifestation. A relatively new area of Buddhism in the West, it started in Asia, further developed in the Western laity (North American), and then evolved around the world with offshoots in Australia. As Keown observed regarding lay involvement in Buddhism: ‘One of the prominent features of contemporary Western Buddhism is an increasing emphasis on lay organization and participation.’ (2000 p. 2). The writing regarding SEB has grown from US academic research into Eastern religions, specifically Buddhism, due to a diversity of Buddhist teachers visiting the USA during the Twentieth Century, and the resulting developed body of thought from lay thinkers and teachers. There are peace and environmental organisations lead and/or supported by Buddhists in addition to groups working with pain management, the aged, dying, and prisoners. Many of these forms of engagement develop from the practice of ‘witnessing’, (Thomas 2007) therefore, action and/or intervention is not part of the response, yet the debate is ongoing in regard to the amount of intervention were it appropriate. As mentioned, witnessing (an apparently passive response) is part of Buddhist practice, to simplify the theory, it relates to what Joanna Macy termed ‘… don’t turning away. Stay present…’ (Macy 2004 p. vii) from the difficult, the unsolvable, the cruel and dreadful: recognising there are victims and harm on all sides. Kraft described the Buddhist response thus: ‘… don’t deny that reality, don’t run away from it – instead find ways to be with the suffering,’ (2000) which affords an influential insight.

The question has been asked whether Buddhist social engagement is any different from other forms of social engagement. Kraft responded thus: ‘… engaged Buddhists’ insistence on linking inner and outer transformation differs from the forms of social, activism that have predominated in the West’ (2000 p. 497). He
wrote that Engaged Buddhism was ‘inner and outer work,’ and that they were not separate: ‘…we must change the world, we must change ourselves, and we must change our selves to change the world’ (2000 p. 497).

Christopher Queen discussed styles of Buddhist ethics practice in relation to Engaged Buddhism:

… It is possible to identify four distinctive styles of Buddhist ethics: discipline, virtue altruism, and engagement. I prefer to describe them as “styles of practice” rather than “historical stages,” for they may be seen as overlapping and cumulative. (Queen 2000 p. 11)

Furthermore, Queen notes that engagement was a recent style of practice in regard to the philosophy and he adds: ‘It may even be accurate to say the fourth style, “engagement” has few precedents before the Nineteenth Century…’ (Queen 2000 p. 1). Justifiably, he noted ‘today’, drawing attention to the time lapse of approximately two thousand years since the writing of the canons, and societal and technological changes. Apropos of this, Keown writes: ‘… there are many possible pitfalls and dangers, and it is far too early to speak of definitive solutions.’ (2000 p. 1). Keown taps into a dynamism regarding contemporary Buddhism: ‘This kind of work requires imagination and creativity, not the passive ‘transmission’ of scripture but an active engagement with it.’ (2000 p. 3), which lends itself to application within the fashion supply chain. The lack of passivity appeals to the contemporary laity which bridges the meditative philosophy and the society of the developed world.

There is debate amongst writers on Buddhist ethics as to whether morality is the spontaneous transcendent outcome of Buddhist practice, whereas others perceive it as a result of repeated training in moral and virtuous acts. They question the role and importance of will and reason. Keown's writing can provide some encouragement, and cautioning: ‘… the task that faces students of Buddhist ethics today, therefore, is to generate a response to new problems that are consistent with the spirit of Buddhist values and in harmony with its extensive scriptural tradition’ (2000 p. 1). The ‘new problems’ may be located in the fashion supply chain. Correspondingly, the SEB studies would appear to be in a creative, proactive state of flux, as Kraft writes:

Topics that were formerly out of bounds are taken up by senior scholars, and forms of discourse once shunned – normative, prescriptive, pastoral, and confessional – are increasingly tolerated… Fresh voices are entering the discussion, cherished superstitions are being called into question, and brand-new subfields are proliferating.' (2000 p. 491 – New Voices)

The quote reveals a potential, which is small but worth pursuing: SEB offers a dynamic framework in which to place ‘ethics’ with regard to sustainability in the fashion industry.

In the theoretical flux and ‘new problems,’ there has been a recognisable growth in the latter part of the Twentieth Century of Buddhist laity-driven initiatives and enterprises. A variety of new Buddhist movements has emerged from the dynamic and the ones which are of interest include Eco Buddhism and SEB; both of which are aspects of a Western engaged (laity enacted) approach to Buddhism. Together, they indicate the potential to address the core ethical issues in sustainability and the fashion supply chain, previously identified from a designer practitioner’s perspective, such as intellectual and cultural property, social and environmental impact, and rights. One of the vital issues from a Buddhist ethics perspective in relation to the supply chain and sustainability is the environment.

Environment

Employing the first precept of ‘no killing or harming’, and the first paramita, that of ‘generosity’ in a broad, holistic manner addresses both the current and future environment. The deeper principle underpinning the precept is respect for life, which if perceived as broadly and encompassing as in general Buddhist practice will include all life/sentient beings: humans, animals, and insects. Furthermore, because of the profound philosophic principle of interdependence: plants, bodies of water and the earth itself are part of life in their provision of succour. The compassion and acknowledgement of life in the other is central and part of the
principle of interbeing, enabling intent to nurture the environment. Kraft has written regarding the greening of Buddhism (1994) and later provided an explanation of interdependence:

… Everything has multiple causes and conditions, and the existence of any given thing or person is dependent on those causes and conditions. For a modern Buddhist, one of the clearest demonstrations of that concept is our relation to the environment … if the air I breathe depends on oxygen-producing forests, those forests are as crucial to my health as my own lungs. (Kraft 2000: From Internal to External)

Following on, Kraft had identified the role of Eco Buddhists in realising interdependence: ‘Contemporary Buddhist environmentalists are seeking to actualize that vision with a concreteness that seems unprecedented in the history of Buddhism.’ (Kraft 1994). He acknowledged responsibility and the Buddhist principle of causality, and the applicability within sustainability practice and also consumption. By designing and manufacturing, it is possible to debilitate the other, both in terms of practical environmental resources, but also through depriving others by poor terms of employment and disregard for their life and future. There is a need for sharing and generosity, which would address The First Paramita. Furthermore, it could be extrapolated that sustainability is a model of sharing and generosity and serves as a mandate for interdependence, and the interbeing of life.

A perspective of SEB, which is an acute parallel with an aspect of design for sustainability is the concept of localisation (Fletcher 2008, Popcorn and Hanft 2001).15 Harriet Kirkley referenced localisation her writing:

… Socially engaged Buddhism as it exists in the West at present seeks either to act locally (somewhere on the planet) within a Buddhist framework and/or to bring Buddhist perspectives to bear on the problems created by a predominately Western Ideology of technology and secularism. (Kirkley 2000 p. 215)

Helena Norbert-Hodges also mentioned the concept. Her thoughts work to delineate how the consumer/user could become more connected to the industry, and make airfreight and the consequent polluting fashion miles unnecessary. She states that Buddhism can ‘… illuminate a path towards a localization based on human-scale structures – a prerequisite for action rooted in wisdom and compassion’ (2002 p. 19). The concept of engagement and action as philosophical and spiritual practice has validity, as Kraft explicates:

Green Buddhists no longer assume that spiritual practice can take place in a social or environmental vacuum. Moreover, they believe that an overly individualistic model of practice may actually impede cooperative efforts to improve social conditions. (1994)

Kraft also raises an interesting point here regarding group or individual engagement extending beyond environmental concerns to social issues. There is still tension between individual practice and group practice, meditative and active. The logic supports Kraft’s point: if an individual desired to enact interbeing for a holistic outcome, then it would be best served in a cooperative collaborative engagement. The notion of collaborative engagement is at odds with the current attitude to intellectual copyright in the fashion industry.

Copyright (Intellectual & Cultural)

Ownership of design and technology are very important in the contemporary world as it directly equates with fiscal value, and within the fashion industry it is vital to possess and protect intellectual copyright. To be first with a particular look; shape of sleeve, specific colour, type of fabric, or method of assembly reflects in the company profile, consumer/user response and shareholder profits. However, there is frequent copyright theft within the industry to gain advantage. In general, it sometimes occurs between competitors usually in lower levels of the industry, but also from one level to another. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a prêt-à-porter look to appear in a High Street or chain outlet before it is presented in the designer’s own store. These practices are an obvious contradiction of the Second and Third of The Five Precepts: no stealing, no telling of lies, both in practice and theory. Moreover, copyright theft fails to address most of The Eight Fold Path and furthermore, the act of theft
is the opposite of ‘generosity’ in absenting another’s right to the benefit of their endeavour. The act contradicts interbeing by disrespectfully ignoring the rights and needs of the other: the creator/author of the idea.

Cultural Property

Copyright forms a continuum in the argument: as it is related to a social endeavour (relating to humanity), continuing the subject of ownership and copyright continues to cultural property. It is an area that has pertinence in the fashion industry with its history of sourcing indigenous, cultural and religious imagery and objects for a season’s look. Similar to the theft of intellectual copyright, the theft of cultural copyright contradicts important principles in Buddhism. Ownership of cultural pieces is not usually by an individual: a family or a tribe can own them, thus theft is a loss to many. The images or artefact can be irreplaceable and/or sacred, and part of a shared history. Furthermore, it can perpetrate long term colonial cultural appropriation: the loss or misuse of an artefact can have more lasting harm and damage than copyright theft. The principle of interbeing is not of lack of ownership, rather, it is stewardship: respecting, acknowledging and being mindful of the life of other sentient beings. Thus theft of their history would be an inconsistency.

The underpinning argument for utilising SEB and Buddhist ethics in the fashion supply chain rests on the principles of interbeing, compassion and empathy for the other. Referencing The Eight Fold Path, The Five Precepts, and The Six Perfections (paramitas) offers dynamic guiding principles, especially when couched in causality: which recognises the necessity of mindful intent, responsibility and outcomes of thoughts and actions. The association of ethics with action is mentioned in the writing of A. Nyanaponika (1975), quoted by Watts: ‘I am owner of my actions, heir of my actions, actions are the womb from which I spring, actions are my kin, actions my refuge…’ (2004). Buddhism proffers a versatile model of ethics that have philosophical and practical application in design practice and the supply chain.

CONCLUSION

Reviewing the content of the chapter, it is apparent that the research topic and associated questions are on the margins of a variety of disciplines. The philosophical reflection and speculation in the chapter, and later in Chapter Eight, is core to the research arguments laid out in the thesis, challenging boundaries of practice and application. The introduction of Buddhism to arguments concerning sustainability and ethics regarding the fashion industry questions several paradigms. Consequently, the exploratory hypothesis enables the design practitioner, or stakeholder to take responsibility: that is, look beyond self and participate in interbeing (with all sentient beings) for the benefit of the planet now and in the future, and paradoxically, the fashion supply chain. To facilitate the arguments within the chapter initially, the meanings of the terms ‘values’, ‘morals’ and ‘ethics’ were established. The nature of ‘ethics’ and their role in responding to inequity, and responsibility in the supply chain were the subjects of analysis and reflection. Buddhism was introduced as a response to two of the research questions: as a source of guidelines informed by compassion and empathy, with relevance to workforce. Furthermore, the specific areas of attention in which Buddhist ethics could be of guidance were identified, as was their pertinence to sustainability and applicability to the supply chain. SEB was proposed as a provocative model due to its principle of engagement and being in the world, its readiness and flexibility of interpretation. Not dissimilar to design for sustainability, SEB in the West is still in the relative early stages of theoretical debate in fashion design practice and the supply chain. The coverage of Buddhism, Buddhist ethics and SEB has not been exhaustive as the intention was to introduce applicable concepts. However, it is understood that the use of specific Buddhist ethics could be perceived as a ‘pick and mix,’ an approach that is in contradiction to several scholarly theories. Similarly, presenting Buddhism as a philosophy and not a religion may be seen as problematic. While the rituals and beliefs are integral to a practicing Buddhist, it is proposed that the principles stand alone, and are highly practical. Indeed, the unfamiliarity of Buddhism itself may encourage non-Buddhist managers in the developed world to reflect on their personal philosophical and spiritual beliefs, and revisit and reappraise them looking for synergies or replacements for Buddhist ethics.
By opening a discourse regarding the gaps in ethical practice in the supply chain, there is a new space for philosophical reflection: providing a rationale to reflect deeply on how a designer practices. The choice of Buddhist ethics makes sense when considering the geographic location of manufacture and the proportion of the workforce involved. However, it challenges the paradigm of the fashion industry’s concentration of influence in the developed world, the constituent’s enacted principles and ‘ethics manifested’ (Fry 2009 p. 50). It forces the stakeholders to look broadly, define and include all sentient beings in their vision, intent and the impact of their actions, or inactions.

The strengths of the arguments of the chapter are positioned in the ‘flaws’, or more specifically, in their marginal nature. The dynamic synergy of the shared principles of sustainability and SEB is exhilarating, and the prospect of utilising them in such an unlikely industry is paradoxical, reminiscent of the creative process in its surmise. Furthermore, a questioning of both design practice with its driver in the self/ego, or interventionist problem-solving is inherent, as is the fundamental principles of being: personal, professional and corporate within the supply chain. As a hypothesis, it may be hopeful, yet it provides a way to regard work as philosophical practice, and living as a source of integrity and authenticity. Observing an ethical life, Singer wrote that it ‘is one in which we identify ourselves with other, and larger goals, thereby giving meaning to our lives.’ (1995 p. 24) It is understood Buddhism is not alone in proffering compassion and empathy, or a workable ethical framework; for example, Christianity in its many forms, and the other Abrahamic faiths in Judaism and Islam all provide altruistic guidelines. However, SEB appeals, or recommends itself because of the ‘call’, or requirement of practitioners, to ‘not look away’, to take responsibility as part of interbeing, and to be deeply aware that action and inaction have results (causality). It is the respect for and response to others: recognition and realisation of our communality (interbeing) that makes SEB a viable option. Furthermore, for the hypothesis to be appraised honestly, stakeholders within the debate must be free to make choices, free to experience their own responses and mediate their practice. What is proposed is calling for a review of the ‘style of practice’ (Queen 2000) as a designer, and/or as a Buddhist, which is not separate from meditative practice but another ‘manifestation’ (Fry 2009 p. 50).

Having presented SEB ethics as a source of guiding principles for design practitioners within the fashion industry, the hypothesis needs to be extrapolated. To comprehend the synergy of SEB ethics and design for sustainability, Chapter Five will analyse sustainability’s potential in the fashion industry. Following in the methodology of the thesis, the meaning of the term will be revisited and the broader reading proposed in Chapter Two will be explored. Sustainability will be investigated both in theory and practice of the manufacture of garments within the industry as a life cycle analysis. The analysis will be accomplished by revisiting and deepening the analysis of the Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Koppen 2005) to answer one of the principal research questions: how can ethics in the (FD/PL), and sustainability design serve the fashion industry, humanity, animals and the planet? This will also provide a context for the guiding principles to be elucidated in later chapters.
1. **Interrelationship** 1989
   You are me, and I am you.
   Isn’t it obvious that we “inter-are”?
   You cultivate the flower in yourself, 
   so that I will be beautiful.
   I transform the garbage in myself, 
   so that you will not have to suffer.
   I support you; 
   You support me.
   I am in this world to offer you peace; 
   You are in the world to bring me joy.

2. Baron-Cohen writes about empathy erosion occurring for a variety of reason including; … ‘bitter 
   resentment, or desire for revenge, or blind hatred, or desire to protect.' Baron-Cohen, S (2011), Zero 

3. The rock mentioned references aspects of both Deep Ecology and certain Buddhist beliefs 
   regarding all aspects of the environment being worthy of reverence.

4. The concept underpins Client Earth an NGO and was addressed in the opening of an article about 
   them: ‘What if the polar bears were sick of drowning in melting ice and decided it was time to do 
   something about global warming? How could they best confront the bosses of multinationals 
   whose power plants pollute the atmosphere? By hiring a damn good lawyer to fight in the courts for 
   the law to be changed or enforced and for the emissions to be stopped, that’s how. And that man 
   would be James Thornton’. ‘Advocate for the Planet,' Cole Moreton, published in New Statesman 
   08 January 2009 http://www.newstatesman.com/north-america/2009/01/thornton-clientearth-
   law-legal accessed 08.01.2010

5. This is not ignoring or undermining the growing influence of the Christian church in Asia.

6. There are 360 million followers in countries that are involved with garment manufacture: China, 
   Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Burma, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Taiwan, Cambodia and India. The 
   cultures of the people making the garments may be Buddhist whether spiritually or secularly, fully 
   (Thai) or part (Chinese).

7. The research has revealed similarities with other belief systems which may form a source of further 
   research.

8. Siddhartha Gautama was born in 543 BC to a high caste (Ksatriya) family in India. He married 
   well had a young son and enjoyed a very comfortable life. His father is said to have made special 
   arrangements so that he may not witness or experience the hardships of life. Nevertheless, 
   when he did leave the family compound and witnessed ageing, sickness and death, he was 
   shocked by the suffering and impermanence of life. Prompted by this experience, he left his home 
   and commitments in search of a deeper understanding of life. He pursued various avenues of 
   experience and teachings from hedonism to aestheticism and decided that the middle way of 
   moderation was preferable.

10. ‘1 a command: a rule of conduct. 2 moral instruction’. ibid.

11. In certain groups or sects of Buddhism, a great deal of importance is placed on the passing down of the teachings (Dharma) of the Buddha via learned teachers. It is perceived as being more ‘true’ if coming from a lineage teacher who could trace the passing of teachings back to specific figures in the beginnings of Buddhism.

12. Particular traditions of teaching, such as Hinayana (which led to Theravada) are sometimes known derisively as the ‘lesser vehicle’ and also as the way of the elders, the ‘great vehicle’ Mahayana and Vajrayana or ‘Diamond Vehicle.’


14. Generally, it is interpreted as meaning suffering, but it is also thought to mean imbalance, anxiety, unease or ‘dis-ease’ and ‘unsatisfactoriness,’ (Keown 1996 p 46)

CHAPTER FIVE

Negotiating Contemporary Sustainability Thinking
INTRODUCTION

People need, and acquire fashion garments for reasons of climate, modesty, comfort, culture, identity and identification. On Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs pyramid diagram it can be argued that clothing is at the base; a physiological need along with hunger and thirst; it is a necessary body protection and comfort. Whereas fashion is a want thus occurs on the third or fourth levels ‘Belongingness and Love: affiliate with others to be accepted’, and ‘Esteem: to achieve, be competent, again approval and recognition’ (Huitt 2004). The garments are worn whilst they fit the wearer’s perception of use and fashion relevance, which can be as little as three or four wearings, or twenty-five washes (Allwood et al. 2006). They are then discarded in a variety of ways, whether to the back of a wardrobe, or to a waste bin (and eventual landfill), or to a charity shop for re-entering the retail cycle. Every discarded garment is a further opportunity for the consumer to make a purchase of another new garment. Dr Luz Claudio wrote on disposability in an article Waste Couture – Environmental Impact of the Clothing Industry:

… In Tanzania, a young man proudly wears a T-shirt imprinted with the logo of an American basketball team while shopping at the local mitumba' market for pants that will fit his slender figure… How does a T-shirt originally sold in a U.S. shopping mall to promote an American sports team end up being worn by an African teen?... Globalisation has made it possible to produce clothing at increasingly lower prices, prices so low that many consumers consider this clothing to be disposable. (Claudio 2007 p. A 449)

The purchase perpetuates a manufacturing industry located predominately in developing countries around the globe; but depletes the environment, infringes upon or ignores human and animal rights, and flouts the consumer/users’ conscience. In general, the model for the fashion industry follows a process in which management; design, sales, administration and sourcing take place, or are directed from the developed world. Manufacture is organised to occur wherever the labour and manufacturing prices cost the least which is usually in the developing countries. It is necessary to question how, who or what does the system preserve, and where alternative drivers, strategies, and methodologies are located.

In the previous chapter, Buddhism was explored as a potential philosophy from which the ethical direction of fashion design practice could be sourced. It is particularly suited for a global industry with most of its employees located in South East Asia and China. It was proposed that the industry would benefit from an analysis situated in Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB), and the application of empathetic methodologies, management, and behaviour as part of personal and corporate responsibility and ethics. Ethics seem an unlikely requirement in the fashion industry, yet due to the speed, impact, and inherent waste as a result of the consumption; alternatives are needed, which leads to questioning sustainability and its role in the industry.

To comprehend the situation, it is useful to revisit the academic discourse and writing relating to sustainability and the fashion industry. As explained in Chapter One, academic writing in regard to fashion and sustainability has fallen approximately within two arenas. The first arena relates to the environmental discourse, often interpreted through fabrication, running the gamut from refuse as clothing, to the selection of organic fabrics, and the natural fibre lobby. To recap, the research and writing relates to the environmental impact of fibre and fabric selection, disposal, and latterly, wear and laundering. The second arena is human and animal rights, global equity/social justice, ethical clothing sourcing and fair-trade. This area has been predominantly claimed by the American academics, and international NGOs referencing the fashion global supply chain, from the sourcing, buying and merchandising perspectives. The origin of the discourse is located in teaching vocational skills for the contemporary market, as opposed to evolving from focused philosophical questioning. Much of the writing from both areas does not interrelate with other aspects in the industry (specifically design), or question the paradigm: they are subject specific rather than holistic. As yet, there is very little writing regarding sustainability and fashion in which the two arenas are addressed, or their connection delineated. It is the contention of the hypothesis that they are not in fact, separate arenas, and
furthermore, to truly engage with the industry issues, a holistic approach is crucial to grasp the breadth of problems, but also as a requirement for change.

Part of the first research question of the thesis asks how the ethics in ‘… sustainability design theory… serve the fashion industry, humanity, animals and the planet?’ The question can be answered by examining sustainability specifically in regard to the fashion industry. The chapter will be divided into three parts; the first will identify the theoretical writing within the two arenas affecting sustainability and its relationship to fashion. Currently, there is lack of cohesion of ideas, relating to the breadth of the supply chain. To comprehend the absence it is useful to investigate the process of manufacture of garments within the industry, as a life cycle analysis. To explore the circumstance, the second part of the chapter will consist of an analysis of the potentialities of the Fashion Design/Production Loop FD/PL (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005). Theories of design for sustainability will be addressed, and the meaning will also be revisited and explored via the proposed broader reading of the term ‘sustainability’ as mentioned in Chapter Two and proposed in a paper in 2007. The chapter concludes with the third part, which involves reflections on the possible applications; specifically, how the process offers a solution to the research question, which is to examine the FD/PL for ethics, either, their necessity and/or their existence. Furthermore, the findings will contribute to the new reflective reading of fashion design for sustainability posited later in the thesis. To inaugurate the process, texts that contribute to fashion and sustainability require further exploration.

CONTEMPORARY SUSTAINABILITY WRITING AND THEORIES

The current writing pertinent to the thesis topic and the subsequent research aim and questions were identified in the literature review in Chapter One. It is the intention to revisit selected design texts in more depth and explore their content. From reading popular culture and media, it would appear that the negative aspects of the fashion industry relate principally to human and animal rights, followed by the environment. However, in writing by design academics, the principal concerns are reversed.

The first issue to be addressed is that these texts have their genesis in theory, politics and writing specific to the environment and environmental issues. The title ‘environmental’ denotes writing that can relate to sustainability, but has its beginnings in the environmental/green movement. Indeed, these texts have their philosophical and theoretical roots in early green/eco/environmental politics of the early 1960s, as identified by Nigel Whiteley (1993). Fashion writing came late to the discourse, in comparison to some design disciplines. To initiate a fashion specific dialogue regarding sustainability, an understandable methodology is required in order to review and experiment with the established texts and methodologies of other disciplines. The interest in environmental theory by fashion industry stakeholders may originate in a concern for the impact of production; specifically, the effect fashion industry has on the environment.

Sustainability and the Environment

The key texts relating to ecological/environmental design with the greatest potential for transfer to fashion are located in the discipline of product design. Architecture based writings have some merit, however, the inherently slow nature of architectural production, longevity of the product, the fewer transportation routes, and the rarity of multiple consumption, make it a less comparable industry and discipline. Therefore, product design theory relating to sustainability is more likely to yield transferable concepts and methodologies. In regard to design for sustainability theory, or sustainable design theory, according to Alistair Fuad-Luke (2005), it emerged late in the Twentieth Century as a result of questioning. Key schools of thought emerged in Europe and writing in English began to gain critical mass in the early 1980s with Papanek’s books Design for Human Scale (1973) Design for the Real World (1984) and later The Green Imperative (1995). Fashion’s fairly recent status within sustainability is notable, but does not mean that the other areas are long established: Chapman and Gant have referenced the newness of the area of study (2007).
The spur for design for sustainability in the past was the impact of production and the ensuing waste and contamination on the environment (Tischner 2001). Subsequently, the primary interest for designers was reducing the use of resources, the reduction of waste, and enabling the product to be disposed of without harm to the environment. A seminal book on sustainable design relevant to all disciplines was, written by architect William McDonough and industrial chemist Michael Braungart entitled: Cradle to Cradle – Remaking the Way We Make Things (2002). It concisely encapsulates the idea of a designer being aware, if not responsible, for all of the product life cycle and beyond. Their theory working with the earlier concept of ‘cradle to cradle’ is based on the observation of how nature disposes of its produce to form new life; it is the hypothesis that directs their work. The concept is inspirational, and although not situated specifically in fashion it is applicable in part, for example: their partnership has worked with Nike on their shoe production loop. McDonough and Braungart clearly identified the onward journey, or more specifically, the future role(s), of the product, as part of a designer’s skills and practice, and consequent responsibility. They utilised the terms ‘upcycling’ and ‘downcycling.’ In the context, these terms were used to highlight the difference between recycling (which is usually ‘downcycling’): the product does not have an equivalent second or third life. In the case of clothes, their next ‘life’ has been in a recycled state, as rags or fibre stuffing, which is not equivalent in worth to the original garment. The requirement to think beyond as part of design practice, and project past the first life of a garment was quite radical because in 2002, fashion as a discipline and an industry was still struggling with the ‘cradle-to-grave’ concept, let alone ‘cradle-to-cradle’. It is their contention that ‘less bad’ does not make a product good: working towards a ‘less bad’ industry is not a tenable premise and that a new paradigm is needed. The question of whether to change the current system, or start anew was echoed later in Fletcher’s writing (2008). Of the environment and sustainability theories, theirs is atypical in that it acknowledges the usual adversarial approach taken by many critics towards industry. McDonough and Braungart’s perception is that a collaborative approach offers more potential for a beneficial outcome for the planet, its current and future occupants. Understandably, their work has an American perspective, due in part to the US base of McDonough’s established practice and teaching.

A great deal of the writing in the area of sustainability and design comes from Europe Papneek, Charter, and Tischner. Ezio Manzini is notable for his many projects and publications, but it is his work concerning ‘product services’ which holds special interest. The concept of designing a ‘service’ as opposed to a ‘product’ is provocative in general design, but is hugely subversive within a fashion industry setting, as fashion is concerned with possession, self image and consumption. Manzini is an unusual sustainability theorist in that he used clothing as a viable example in one of his modules. It could be proposed that the notion of either not purchasing, or of keeping a garment, is more revolutionary than, for example, not retaining a washing machine, steam iron, or a car because of how the consumer society is currently structured. Manzini’s work has further merit in that he recognised early on that for sustainability to occur it would be both a ‘… socio-cultural and a technological change as coupled in the sustainable challenge for design,’ (Fuad-Luke 2005). For industrial designers, technological change may be paramount, however, for fashion, technological change can translate into fabrication finishes rather than operation formats. However, the exact expectation of ‘socio-cultural’ change is more intriguing to consider. It is possible to speculate that Manzini refers to consumer/users’ potential ‘social’, or ‘cultural’ behaviours and expectations changing to address the needs of the planet and its various inhabitants.

Writing in Emotionally Durable Design (2005), Jonathan Chapman included fashion as an example: one of his theories of design is to create a product that has a resonance with the consumer/user that establishes an emotional bond. The notion has potential within the fashion system (Fletcher 2008, Black 2008) and it could be interpreted as already occurring in haute couture. Perhaps, the price of the garments does play a role in the strong relationship between client and garment. The experience of ordering, being measured, and fitted for the garments, interacting with the ‘vendeuse’ at the salon, adds to the haute couture experience. Indeed, the price is reflected in the skills, care and attention given to making the garments, as well as the service for clients. Following on, it could be that the garment’s association with pleasurable and/or important events, for which they were purchased, would foster a positive emotional connection with the garment(s). Furthermore, the association would add further significance to both the wearing of the garment(s) and of keeping them. The emotional significance prolongs the relevance, and thus the life of the garment; extending its viability and
slowing down consumption, and the necessity for recycling. Like Manzini, writer/theorist Edwin Datschefski used clothing (not fashion) examples in his writing on sustainability in *The Total Beauty of Sustainable Products* (2001). The book was timely in that it outlined the principles of sustainable design which he identified as: ‘cyclical’, ‘solar’, ‘safe’, ‘efficient’ and ‘social’, in a wide variety of design contexts. The principles are not explored in depth and the book functions as an inspiration and provocation, while indicating directions but not defining methodologies. The variety of examples in the book does broaden the scope of participating design disciplines, including product, clothing and automotive design. Datschefski uses a Patagonia garment as an example made in knitted ‘fleece’ fabric from post consumed and recycled (PCR) polyester soft drink bottles. Unfortunately, the example adds to the consumer/user’s rationale for purchasing soft drinks and ‘downcycling’ the bottles, and thus functions as a palliative to design for sustainability and a spur to purchase bottled water and soft drinks.

Within the discussed sustainability texts, there are a few fashion specific detailed examples, or inspirations, which can be gleaned. As a result, it is left to fashion designers and industry stakeholders to extrapolate how ideas from various texts may be applied within their practice and the industry in general. It may be that in *Cradle to Cradle*, McDonough and Braungart make the most demands on a designer currently practicing within the industry, which is to design beyond one life for a garment. According to Fuad-Luke, Manzini perceived design for sustainability as socio-cultural change, but it is likely it was perceived for the consumer/user although it could be argued that the most important change has to be undertaken by the designers. It concurs with a line of thinking that Fletcher (2008) lays out toward the end of her book where she proposed that ‘design can be activism’; (which Fuad-Luke developed much further in 2009), and that design and action are central to sustainability. In Chapter 2 point 1 of the Brundtland Commission Report – *(World Commission on Environment and Development): Our Common Future 1987* sustainable development is defined:

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:*

- the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and

- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs. *(Brundtland 1987)*

It is interesting to compare this with the D4S definition included in Chapter 2:

*D4S – which encompasses issues such as the social component of sustainability and the need to develop new ways to meet the consumer needs on a less resource intensive way. D4S goes beyond how to make a green product – now it strives to meet consumer needs though sustainability in a systematic and systemic way.*

The rationale for the change to design for sustainability (not to be confused with D4S definition) does not have a deep-seated acknowledgement of social inequality of workers, or of other planet inhabitants in general. There is an unexpected incongruity: that design for sustainability has been accepted as a response to the environmental impact of production and waste, yet the consequent impact on related society is hardly conceded, or addressed. In the Brundtland Report is the intent to support ‘the world’s poor’ but it seems the social aspects keep being parlayed into meaning the consumer in the D4S definition, and the needs of future generations of people but not other animals. This is the first arena; the second addresses what can be broadly termed the ‘social’ aspect. Other than by Fletcher, design as social activism or entrepreneurship is perceived as inclusive design, but oddly, not generally as design for sustainability. It is the contention of the research that inclusive design is design for sustainability and will be explored later in the thesis.
Social Impact and Sustainability

Analysis and imaginative speculation as to the other negative impacts of the fashion industry have been overshadowed in the past by writing concerned with the environment. A lot of literature still functions with an incomplete definition of sustainability, often just exchanging the term environment by sustainability. It is argued in the thesis that the term ‘environment’ should be more expansively interpreted to include other sentient beings (including humans) inhabiting and contributing to that environment. Thus, if the question was posed: what are the fashion industry outcomes? One of the answers would be social impact; that is, the affect on people, society and culture. Principally, the impact would be felt by the workforce, their families and the neighbourhoods, villages and towns in which they work and live. In addition, there are subsidiary companies, businesses and trades which support manufacture; from transportation for the goods and people, to food providers who experience the impact of the industry in a particular region or a country. Looking further into the social aspects of sustainability, an addition is the outcome of professional practitioners and also traditional creative practice.

Whether opportunistic or unethical, or both, the fashion industry has a historical and an ongoing practice of taking designs from other fashion companies, and indigenous peoples and cultures. At the ‘evolution of the concept’ (within the FD/PL) are the social consequences of an industry that routinely steals intellectual property and appropriates cultural symbols/imagery. The mistakes of fashion houses cause public outcry as commented on by Joanne Finkelstein:

… The fiasco created in 1994 by Chanel’s Karl Lagerfeld, when his tight, low-cut dress bodices which featured Koranic verses embroidered in grey pearls, offended many in the Muslim community. After press reports of the reaction the garments were not permitted to go on sale; indeed, they were destroyed. (1996 p. 2)

The example (shown in Figure 21.) cited offended a cultural and religious minority in France. Furthermore, in regard to the power balance; a smaller company is often copied, or an indigenous culture (a minority) whose heritage is being used for decoration. For the individual or community, the theft can result in loss of cultural identity, and history, personal intellectual property, and means of business. Thus a company’s unethical practice can impact on the good-standing of the fashion industry locally, or globally. It is expedient to employ a copyright and intellectual property lawyer, which can be expensive for small companies, or tribes, particularly, if they are defending their copyright in another country. However, appropriation is not the only outcome; designer and tribe collaboration is another outcome exemplified in Moontide (Aotearoa New Zealand), when the designers worked with a hapu and licensed their cultural imagery for a specified length of time. In Aotearoa New Zealand, apart from licensing their cultural imagery (Shand 2002), Maori designers have begun active sportswear companies (Kia Kaha shown in Figure 22.), and small design labels (Helen Cherry) to enable them to utilise the images and significance of their own cultural artefacts. Peter Shand wrote on the subject in Scenes from the Colonial Catwalk: Cultural Appropriation, Intellectual Property Rights, and Fashion (2002) regarding cultural appropriation, and focusing on practices in the fashion industry both local and international.
HTTP://FLOBROOKS.MYBLOG.ARTS.AC.UK/PAGE/2/

FIGURE 22. KIA KAHA SPORTSWEAR LABEL 2011.
HTTP://WWW.KIAKAHA.CO.NZ/PAGE.PASP?PAGEID=36
It is an extremely useful article in that it identifies the major concerns regarding cultural property for designers and the fashion industry. In certain circumstances, there are a variety of inappropriate behaviours including the appropriation of imagery, but also the improper and insensitive use and placement of images or symbols, which may have gender relevance or religious importance. For example, the image meaning and significance may connote that it is inappropriate for use on specific place on the body. However, it should be noted that it is possible to utilise the imagery or information, but that the particulars of ownership (often communal) and required protocols must be understood and honoured. The role of the designer has a social impact if involved with cultural appropriation, which thus far has not been included in the reading of design for sustainability.

Inclusive design fits within the arena of social impact, as Fuad-Luke acknowledged as ‘inclusive design’ writing in the discourse (2005). The link is logical because of the shared proactive intent, however, early in its history ‘inclusive design’ appeared to be preoccupied with the differently-abled group it was addressing. While apposite and important, the discipline narrowly focussed the empathetic response to one part of the environment in the humans, but not on a holistic reading of life, or the environment. The subjects are worthy of intense focus, but it seems odd that design for sustainability appears to be a recent tool in the inclusive designer’s practice. Following on, another topic that has a logical link to the environment and could form part of the consideration is animal rights, and the subject specific writing. Both areas of design theory are conjoined in the empathetic intent towards the sentient other. It is not a paternal inclusion, but a clear-sighted recognition of equity and justice and opportunity of choice.

**Animal Rights**

Animal rights is an area discussed in Chapter Four under *Reverence for Animal Life*, however, it warrants further exploration. It is an issue closely associated with fashion in the public domain in the UK, via an extremely graphic and compelling advertising campaign in 1985 (as mentioned earlier in that chapter). The images for billboards/hoardings, magazine advertisements and a video were photographed by David Bailey (for Respect for animals, an anti-cruelty organisation 1985) shown in Figure 23. Yet, there is hardly any academic writing relating to animal conditions and design specifically for the fashion industry. Peter Singer writes on a variety of subjects pertaining to ethical behaviour. His writing closely addresses the food industry (2006) and the farming of animals, vegetarianism and consequentially, bioethics. Although not directly addressing the fashion industry, his arguments on valuing (animal) life do not support the farming of animals for fur, or the killing of animals for leather. Singer identified that in relation to farming chickens; the ethical issues could be divided into ‘… three categories, according to whether they most immediately impact the chickens, the environment, or humans’ (2006 p. 19). Animal rights infringements are global, and like human rights, are scrutinised and documented in NGO reports, websites and popular media. Most recently, the WWF-UK report *Deeper Luxury - Quality and Style When the World Matters* (Bendell and Kleanthous 2007) analysed, and subsequently critiqued the luxury goods industry for a variety of behaviours and practices, including the use of endangered fur and hides. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is responsible for monitoring and controlling the trade internationally. Jem Bendell and Anthony Kleanthous writing for WWF-UK stated: ‘For some species, *CITES certificates are needed to prove that products are derived from captive-bred populations, rather than wild ones*’ (2007 p. 29). They summarise by asserting that, ‘*Luxury brands will continue to be criticised until they provide independent guarantees of the sustainability and ethical credentials for their animal-derived products*’ (2007 p. 29). The same can be said of any fashion label, not only those classed as a luxury brand. ‘*Captive-bred* relating to animal conditions does not offer a preferable alternative to wild animals being hunted: both shorten their natural life. As stated earlier in Chapter Two, there are two central issues underlying animal rights; firstly, the killing of an animal; and secondly, the conditions (animal welfare), under which the animal is kept; that is, whether the animal suffers. Australia, or more specifically, Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) has been the subject of much debate and accusatory rhetoric relating to the practice of mulesing sheep (Paulins and Hillery 2009), as mentioned previously. However, there is a further issue specific to Australia: the hunting and/or culling of kangaroos. The quality of kangaroo leather has several desirable characteristics (to the shoe industry, and
the consumer/users) that make it a popular, if contentious choice. Animal rights as part of sentient rights as a sustainability issue will be addressed later in the thesis, and to contextualise animal rights, it is appropriate to look at the rights of other sentient beings in the environment: humans. In so doing, the overlap, or cohesion of sustainability issues will be further defined.

Human Rights

The infringement and exploitation of the human rights of workers within the fashion industry had been an ‘open secret’, well before the Shirtwaist Fire\(^3\) of New York in 1911. The fire at the Triangle Waist garment company with the loss of one hundred and Triangle Waist Company forty six mostly young women was a major incentive for union movement among the women garment workers. In fact, in Henry Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854), the conditions of British workers are remarked upon, when commenting on those of their American counterparts:

> I cannot believe that our factory system is the best mode by which men may get clothing. The condition of the operatives is becoming every day more like that of the English; and it cannot be wondered as, since, as far as I have heard or observed, the principal object is, not that mankind may be well and honestly clad but, unquestionably, that the corporations may be enriched. (Thoreau 1854 p. 24)

Within an industry escalating in its intent to make clothes for as little money as possible, infringement of rights becomes a strong likelihood. Fashion is global and machinists are often unfairly paid, and poorly treated throughout the developed and developing world: either as home-workers, or in sweatshops, or in large internationally run factories. Proportionally most (but not all) of the human rights infringements take place in the developing world; consequentially, some of the best-informed published writing originates from NGOs who are local to the situation (tending to a variety of needs originating in poverty). However, there are sweatshops and poorly paid outworkers (home-workers) in most major cities of the developed world (ed. Rath 2002). Even with unions there are still infringements for example in London; ‘… 40 hours a week for between £3.75 and £4.10 an hour …’ reported in the London Evening Standard (Fetcher 2002). Of particular use in relation to the issue is *Well Dressed?* (Allwood et al. 2006), not because it addressed human rights specifically, but it set a precedent of including human rights as part of a holistic approach to establishing a sustainable industry. The Australian information contained in the research by Cregan (2001), and later included by Diviney and Lillywhite (2007, 2009) brings the issue into close focus: outworkers were (in 2001) paid on average $AUD 3.60 per hour to sew a shirt in Melbourne, and there are no indicators that it has
improved. According to the War on Want information regarding Bangladesh; ‘… while the national wage is US$20 per month, the clothing industry workers monthly wage is set at US$14.’ (Allwood et al 2006 p. 59)

People have been poorly paid, treated unfairly and worked in unpleasant conditions in various industries and trades since ancient times. According to Paul Hawken (2007), the change of perspective on human rights could be traced to the Abolitionists of England in the Eighteenth Century. He identifies them as:

… The first group to create a national and global movement to defend the rights of people they did not know. Until that time, no citizen group had ever filed a grievance except as it related to itself. (2007 p. 5)

The perspective of caring for the other resonates with the Abolitionist cause, and can be heard in Singer’s (2002) arguments relating to impartiality when he references R. M. Hare as having argued for a moral judgment that was ‘universalisable’ to be used in all situations: if one benefits, but also those when one does not. For the argument to contribute to the hypothesis, the word ‘ethics’ needs to be substituted for moral(s) and thus, to paraphrase: for ethics to be ‘universalisable’ they may not favour an individual, or group. It is possible to question whether we have, as Singer wrote; ‘… special obligations to those nearer to us, including our children, our spouses, lovers and friends and our compatriots,’ and thus do human rights only apply to ‘… our own kind…’ (2002 p. 169-170). Should the argument be that human rights and ethics are only in regard to ‘our own kind’? If this were the case, the fashion system would remain the same with people (and children) we do not know, and may never see, continuing to live and work in conditions and circumstances we would not wish for ourselves or ‘our own kind’.

Pursuing the argument, it is understood that ‘ethics’ are the entitlement of all as there is an implicit acknowledgement of a need for impartiality in our actions. Furthermore, it becomes identifiable that a fundamental cornerstone to the hypothesis is that impartial ethics are sourced from empathy. The work of Raimond Gaita provides an Australian flavour and context: his writings are directional for the research because they distinguish what most Australians would recognise as the espoused egalitarian nature of the Australian psyche. He writes both pragmatically and tenderly about the common good, and fairness within the Australian context (Gaita 2004). His reflections have an intimate practicality and a human scale, or what he called ‘common humanity’ (Gaita 2004 p. 11). Writing about responsibility, he speculates that theorists prefer rules and principles rather than promoting ‘… constantly modulated answerability…’ (Gaita 2004 p. 12), and answerability to the question, ‘why are you doing this?’ (Gaita 2004 p. 12-13). The argument he presents is not for situational ethics, but rather for a human scale of self-questioning and accordingly, he proposes that in business, a man does not have to separate the ethics and honour of his private self (Gaita 2004). Surely, there is a parallel to the designer: should s/he separate the ethics and honour of her/his private self from design practice? This facet of the hypothesis will be examined more expansively in Chapter Eight. The writing and ensuing arguments discussed here have addressed human rights with applicability to the fashion industry, yet there are few books relating to fashion and sustainability.

Fashion and Sustainability

Regina A. Root recognised the newness of sustainability to design theory in fashion and speculated that: ‘The culture of sustainability also promises to redefine our scholarly approach to issues related to dress, body, and culture…’ (2008 p. 420) so acknowledging that it was a point of departure for scholarly fashion writing. To recap on Chapter One, Fletcher (2008) has written the key text on ‘fashion and sustainability,’ combining the environmental impact of fashion specifically in regard to fabric. Of crucial relevance to the thesis is that Fletcher addresses design and includes the other significant ramifications of the fashion industry in regard to human and animal rights. In the book, her vision is broader, embracing diversity, almost holistically without arenas and separation of issues. Sandy Black's book has useful editorial text identifying design methodologies to address sustainability (2008). It functions as a form of catalogue and a series of interviews with very attractive photographs, serving mostly as an inspirational need not unlike Sass Brown's recent publication Eco Fashion 2010. In addition, it provides a valuable counterbalance to Fletcher’s book, as they
were both published in England in the same year; although their approaches and organisation were quite
different, they processed similar data and ideas. Their rigour, authority and intent differed markedly, but it was
a boon for the research to have two texts available where there had previously been none.

There are very few international scholarly journals relating to fashion, and even fewer with an issue dedicated
to sustainability. One of the few journals is *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, which
published an edition on perspectives of ‘ecofashion’ (acknowledged in the text as interchangeable with
sustainability) in 2008. However, in regard to reports, PAN UK is a source of practical information relating to
design for sustainability via fabrication. As mentioned, the Cambridge University report *Well Dressed?* (2006)
has proven a useful resource collating and supplying extremely valuable data, and providing an overview and
summarisation of methodologies relating to sustainability and the UK fashion and textile industry, within a
global context.

Scholars from other design disciplines have briefly mentioned fashion (as opposed to clothing) when writing
about sustainability; for example, Fuad-Luke, Manzini and Chapman. Inherently, within sustainability theory
there has been a critique of the fashion industry, and the fashion system that it requires to exist. Thus, it
is possible to ask two questions; firstly: why it has taken so long for fashion design and consequently the
fashion industry, to catch up to the other disciplines? The second question follows: why have the other
disciplines not demanded, nor challenged fashion design to join them in their quest? The likely reasons are
similar to those regarding the late arrival of fashion theory and academic writing. However, rather being seen
as a drawback, the tardiness enables fashion theorists to benefit from disassembling, testing, critiquing
and collaging other theories to develop a fashion specific dialogue. The critique is not only external: Fuad-
Luke critiques certain approaches to design for sustainability theory. Fashion has a unique breadth of
requirements to be considered and aspects that are particular to the discipline: such as human and animal
rights, intellectual and cultural property; all of which need auditing. Fashion is faster and more wasteful
than industrial or product manufacture. When an average size high street fashion company puts new 30-40
new styles each week, in their stores (all over Australia) 50 weeks of the year. It is difficult to match that in
product design in kettles, furniture, iphones. Furthermore due to the extended practice of subcontracting,
and low tech supply chain, young and mature women can be exploited and abused, trafficked children are
employed, all over the world. The fashion industry has a history of intellectual and cultural appropriation.
Moreover fashion excludes potential customers both in size and age; it has on occasion sexualised children
in advertising and does not represent the diversity of cultural or racial background of the population in its
extensive branding. Fashion is lionised and pilloried by the popular press, pursued by bloggers and ngos. It is
different from other forms of design.

Fashion has maybe more of an ‘act to clean up’; therefore a specific version of design for sustainability is
needed. would be useful. In conclusion the driver for the thesis is the notion of socially engaged (empathetic)
fashion design refers to a deeper ethical reflection and philosophical questioning, by all designers, so perhaps
it could be useful in industrial/product design. Consequently, it could be stated that in answer to one of the
thesis research questions: current design for sustainability theory is not broad enough to ‘fit’ fashion.

Due to the fashion industry’s inherent methodologies, sourcing, and frequent infringement of rights, it is
argued that fashion could merit from philosophical analysis and reflection more than the other disciplines,
and it is this potentiality that is being addressed. An example is provided by McDonough and Braungart
in *Cradle to Cradle*, enabling a larger holistic reflection on sustainability, linked with the power of the
designer to make informed choices to ensure a wholly sustainable outcome. However, the breadth of the
responsibility and the need to change the paradigms of the industry makes embracing the entirety of the
*Cradle to Cradle* theory daunting. Manzini’s theory of ‘service’ as opposed to ‘product’ design offers potential,
however, it also requires a gargantuan shift of thinking regarding fashion and possession by consumer/
users. The theory could be championed by specific fashion markets contemporarily, but they are a relatively
small (although influential) section of the market in the developed world. However, the methodology could
eventually become a contagious socio-cultural trend, spreading into other markets. The Chapman and
Fuad-Luke theories relate closely to fashion: specifically design for establishing an emotional connection
with the product, and designing to address fast fashion consumption. Both perspectives apply to the fashion
industry, and offer flexibility in their interpretation. In addition, Fletcher’s book offers alternative principles
to design for sustainability for fashion, providing choice of methodologies rather than definitive rules. She
catalogues the theories, the perspectives and their applicability to the fashion industry and fashion design
practice; thus permitting choice and flexibility of response. However, although labour conditions and workers
rights are acknowledged, she does not include animal rights or intellectual or cultural property in her book.
Fletcher’s work enables a deeper speculation on what the fashion industry could be in the future; indeed she
advocates a holistic approach encompassing diversity as an agent for change, thus making it possible to think
reflectively and speculatively, and consequentially investigate the philosophical motivators and drivers for
sustainability.

To comprehend the ways to advance and apply, or engage these perspectives whilst considering the
potentialities of sustainability, a closer analysis of the life cycle of a fashion garment and the respective ethical
issues will be embarked upon. The order is dictated by following the garment through its various stages. The
consequential ethical concerns will be identified and explored as the garment travels around the Fashion
Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005).

**FASHION DESIGN/PRODUCTION LOOP (FD/PL)**

An overview of clothing production in the fashion industry and the life of a garment will provide a deeper
context to comprehend the holistic nature of manufacture in the FD/PL (Figure 24.). Revisiting the loop,
it became clear that it could be divided into four parts, which illustrates the cohesion of the ideas argued
within the thesis, progressively ordered within the life cycle. It provides a stage-by-stage illustration
of fashion garment production, and accordingly identifies the related ethical issues. The nuances and
definitions of ethics, morals, and values will be discussed in later chapters. Unethical behaviour is here
defined as choices made with disregard of the negative consequences or outcomes on others in the short
and long term. As has been noted previously, the environment and animals are included with humanity in
the definition of ‘other’ within the hypothesis; thus, the other is all or part of the environment, and animals.
The unethical behaviour will be identified in the analysis of the FD/PL (2005). Within the loop, which is
conceived from the designer’s perspective, there are thirteen stages that have related outcomes and
ramifications. However, to follow them in order of the life cycle of the garment, the original FD/PL (2005)
has been revised and four headings added: The Design Phase, The Production Phase, The Pre-Purchase
Phase, The Post-Purchase/ Consumption Phase.
The Design Phase

The FD/PL represented Figure 24. is an illustration of a circular loop linking thirteen separate smaller circular stages; which describe the progress of a garment from evolution of concept to disposal, and is a progression of an earlier version (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2005). The first of the four stages: ‘The Design Phase’ relates directly to choices made or options taken by the designer. The term ‘designer’ is used throughout the thesis to describe the role of the individual making the choices: the ethics and sustainability knowledge of the designer is tested at this juncture. Should the designer not be aware of the issues influencing designing for sustainability, (whatever their ethics are), there are few beneficial changes and many consequences, such as the garment might utilise an appropriated image embroidered (by underage girls or boys) on a fabric that has to be dry-cleaned.

The first stage as shown in Figure 24. in the FD/PLP is ‘evolution of concept’; which is the beginning of the design process and offers a wide variety of choices that in turn have ramifications and potential consequences. It is the stage that has been the focus of writing regarding fashion and sustainability via the selections a designer makes; from inspiration source, fabric selection, size range to intended consumer/user
and can involve intellectual copyright/property, cultural copyright/property, sizeism (sample & production),
ageism, sexism, and racism. John Thackara wrote in the Foreword for Designers, Visionaries and Other
Stories (eds. Chapman and Gant 2007 p. xvi): ‘Eighty per cent of the environmental impact of the products and
buildings that surround us is determined at the design stage after all.’ The influence of choices made at that
point has impact throughout the FD/LP relating to fiscal, or environmental outcomes, or human or animal
rights.

The second stage, closely associated to ‘evolution of concept’, is ‘fabric selection’. The choices are derived
from perceived future cultural and fashion trends, and new fabrics available. The fundamental environmental
choice is synthetic or natural fabric; the choice relates to environmental impact, animal rights and reference
Specism. Moreover, the fabric and/or materials and substances pose health hazards to the growers,
employees and consumer/users and eventually the global population in regard to disposal. Similar to the first
stage, ‘fabric selection’ has repercussions throughout the loop, especially in stage twelve: ‘wear and care
conditions’ and stage thirteen: ‘disposal’. In addition, it effects the workers working with dye or bleach still in
the cloth so it relates to stage seven: ‘…employment conditions…’.

The third stage is ‘size selection’, which has been included here in the event it may be a separate issue
dictated by the company, and not be the decision of the designer. Designers, labels, brands and companies
by the choice of size range (for example; women’s 8-12 - Aus.) exclude many women both larger than size 12
(as are a majority of women) and substantially smaller. In 2000 in the UK Marks and Spencer’s conducted a
survey and found the average women is size 14 (36C-28-38), and 60% of women were size 14 and over5. It
can be rationalised as an economic choice by the retail sector that hold that smaller sizes (8-12) sell better,
howerver it is not the case in all geographic locations, market levels or demographic groups. It excludes women
who do not fulfil the restricted size range and is exacerbated by vanity sizing and poor fit. Vanity sizing occurs
when a garment is labelled a size lower than its real measurements to enable the consumer to purchase a
‘smaller’ size thus maintaining the illusion of being a smaller size physically. The matter of sizing came under
the scrutiny of the Textile Clothing and Footwear Industry Review in 2008: the standardisation of sizing is
included in their recommendations: Recommendation 10: a new Australian National Standard Sizing (Green
2008). Theoretical research and academic writing relating to size in both men and women is usually situated
in gender and women’s studies, or increasingly, in psychology relating to body image, rather than the practical
choices of the fashion industry. The restriction of the range of sizes available to the consumer/users could be
perceived as sizeism; a denial of their right of access to and provision of good design. Thus it is a social justice
and human rights issue located within the holistic reading of sustainability, or an inclusive design issue.

‘Fabric utilisation’ is the fourth stage of the FP/DL and addresses how, and what, quantity of fabric is used
within the garments designed in the range. At the design stage, an experienced designer can determine the
amount of fabric that may be used in the garment(s); for example, the amount of flare in a skirt is determined
by the designer and pattern cutter. The amount of fabric needed to interpret the flare and the amount of
fabric waste left, (after the garment has been cut) is dictated by the skill of the designer and/or pattern
cutter. It occurs in both the cutting of the pattern and how effectively the patterns are laid on the fabric to
be cut out. This is referred to as a ‘lay’ and can be done by the hand and eye of a pattern cutter, or usually in
large-scale production by computer. The economy of a lay (the percentage of the fabric utilised and wasted)
has a fiscal impact on the company. Fabric not utilised can be wasted, which can be expensive financially;
furthermore, it can be have environmental impact, wasted resources and potential pollution in landfill. Thus, it
is expedient to save fabric, which is one of several examples when an environmentally positive outcome can
have financial benefits. It is an area (no waste,) that some designers including Timo Rissanen and Mark Liu
(their work is shown in Figure 25.), are exploring as part of design for sustainability practice. In the case of
MATERIALBYPRODUCT, they have designed the negative cut out (left after the garment had been cut) and
included it as part of their collection (Pomazan 2005).
The Production Phase

‘The Design Phase’ is followed by the fifth stage involving ‘garment construction methods’, and the first of ‘The Production Phase’. It should be noted that in the design process the methods, order of construction and processes could be planned to address both the design aesthetic and sustainable objectives. The length of time a machinist or piece of manufacturing equipment is engaged in the construction process dictates the financial outcome, in that if the garment can be made quickly it costs less. For example, a pair of jeans can
take as little as thirteen minutes construction time. However, the construction methods have impact in other areas, for example, labour conditions. Following on, if the garment construction is labour intensive in any other way, it may require intensive mechanical or technological manufacture, and thus consume more energy with a resulting environmental impact. In the past, the construction tasks have resulted in some manufacturers utilising ‘child labour’ according to the International Labor Organisation under fifteen years of age, (ILO 2010) unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to poverty in a specific country. It is worrying to note that although not all employed in fashion manufacture the largest region near to Australia; ‘… it is the Asian-Pacific region that has the most child labourers ages 5-17 (113.6 million)...’, that so many children are working (Diallo et 2010, p. vi) If the garment is labour intensive, the manufacturer (to achieve the expected price point), may contract or subcontract to factories or outworkers, which operate as sweatshops and provide poor, exploitative, or harmful labour conditions. The stage has further repercussions beyond the economic in regard to global equity/social justice, human rights and environmental impact. These issues can be interpreted as the domain of the company production-manager, or co-ordinator, however, it is proposed that it is a design for sustainability issue.

At the ‘evolution of concept’, or in the designing of the range, an aware, conscious designer could select a method of production that would cost less, or have a smaller environmental impact, or be less likely to be made by child labour, and could be accomplished locally. This is dependent on the size of the company, its practical corporate responsibility and social leadership. Within a small company, all these choices are likely to be made by the designer/owner: in a larger organisation, they may become the responsibility of others: the production manager, general manager, or even the sustainability manager, if they have one. The sixth stage, which is the ‘selection of manufacturing equipment’ and running of the production unit, is closely linked to the fifth stage because it relates to the design, and thus construction of the garments and the interpretation of manufacture. The equipment required to manufacture the garments will determine the environmental impact, and energy utilisation, and moreover, the physical working and safety conditions of the employees, the wholesale price of the garment and the financial impact.

Similarly, the seventh stage within the FD/LP - ‘recruitment, employment conditions and pay’ of staff directly affects labour, health and safety conditions and rights: child labour, sweatshops, and outworkers. As discussed earlier, the employment conditions have environmental and social impact whether positive or negative. The question could be posed: what are the likely results of a female workforce, poorly paid, working long hours, with enforced overtime, on the community and families? The answer is likely to be; impact on the welfare of children and the elderly, religious observance, assisting in small money-making enterprises: growing crops and tending animals. The type of employment (fulltime or outwork) and pay can decide if the employees receive a fair return for their work (a living wage), and influences if they live above, or below the poverty line in their country. Furthermore, they may not given their employment contract, and or know their employment terms and conditions (Chung 2008).

Although not a listed stage, this is a new addition to the loop. Two of the most pressing areas of concern in relation to the stages in the phase are ‘global equity’ and ‘social justice’. The expectation of fairness and justice for the employees in regard to conditions and pay is common amongst lobbyists and NGOs. The recruitment, conditions and worker retention may reference some issues relating to gender and ageism: a predominance of young women are recruited for superior hand/eye skills, and are vulnerable to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Furthermore, as could be expected, consumer/users are highly sensitive to these issues; therefore, if instances of the above come to their attention, one of the many negative results could be a consumer boycott as in the UK (Cooperative Bank 2007):

… 2006 did see the emergence of a significant number of ‘low-cost’ clothing boycotts. For a number of consumers it would appear that low cost is now a potential indicator of poor labour conditions. Subsequently, overall clothing boycotts grow by 20 per cent in 2006 to reach £338 million. (The Ethical Consumerism Report 2007 p. 16)
The Pre-Purchase Phase

The eighth stage and ninth stages - the ‘transport’ and ‘distribution’ of the product are also the first two stages in The Pre-Purchase phase, and are interrelated. Both have environmental impact and resource consumption, firstly; the method of transport selected: airfreight, sea, or road, and secondly, which system of distribution is chosen. One of the choices available to the company, or label at this stage is the location of manufacture: local or global. For example, the garments may be made overseas, freighted back to the country where they were designed, then packaged and redistributed locally, interstate or globally. The journey could be from India to Australia, to North America. It is a great distance to travel as a garment, but becomes an even larger consideration if the growth and/or manufacture of the fibre is included in the calculation of the ‘journey’. Writing about the then Melbourne independent label Gorman, Diviney and Lillywhite stated:

All manufacturing processes apart from patternmaking and the production of some of the samples are outsourced to suppliers in Australia and overseas in Vietnam, China Japan and New Zealand... (2009 p. 28)

It is possible to make the comparison to the food industry and question whether there could be ‘fashion miles’ as there are ‘food miles’; relating to the distance travelled from growth or manufacture of the fibre and fabric via garment manufacturer to the consumer/user. Even though Allwood et al 2006 noted that the impact of garment transportation was lower than domestic laundering the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs UK in 2008 calculated: ‘... transporting ‘one tonne of garments 100 kilometres emits 1.4 kg of CO2 by ship, 2.1 kg by train and 143.0 kg by air ...’ (Diviney and Lillywhite 2009 p. 58). Where the fashion industry may use shipping for bulk orders the just in time approach to orders and shrinking lead times mean airfreight is the fallback option. The argument however is not black and white; for example if the local manufacture is poorly organised and environmentally damaging or is made by poorly paid workers. The option might be to have the garments made overseas where a factory was more environmentally responsible and the workers were paid a living wage and thus supporting developing countries. This could work if social entrepreneurship were the driver; however most off shore manufacture is about chasing lower (not always fair) prices. An unexpected example of localisation in manufacture is Zara which keeps its production close to enable rapid response to trends (Allwood et al 2006, p.60).

The tenth stage is ‘merchandising’ and has a variety of meanings within the fashion industry internationally. It relates to garments when they are in-store, which can be selection, store and product layout, and display, pricing and in-store promotion. There are areas of crossover of the role of the buyer, and the merchandiser, described as follows: ‘In retailing, the process of anticipating customer demand and procuring goods to meet that demand’ (Cash et al 2006 p. 263). The selections and product presentation may endorse sizeism, ageism, sexism, and racism. In addition, there will be environmental impact in choice of display equipment, ticketing and packaging, which may overlap with the next stage.

The eleventh stage is ‘marketing’, which in terms of the FD/PL, is quite a distance from the ‘evolution of the concept’. Thus a designer in a large organisation may no longer have a primary, or even a secondary role to play; depending on the structure and size of the company. In a small company, the designer/owner may be directly involved. The narrow perception of sustainability as only an environmental issue may regard the advertising, packaging and transport as of primary impact in the section. In terms of energy and other resources utilisation, it may be true. However, employing a broader holistic reading of sustainability, there are significant issues relating to inclusion, diversity and social impact, these are sizeism, ageism, sexism, racism. Most of these issues occur in advertising and media via the depiction of the garments on models, and through model selection. The company or designer can effectively manage the label or company image and how it is promoted. Through choices made in ‘marketing’, sections of the population (local and global), can be included, reflected, celebrated, excluded or degraded. Which size, age and racial origin the models (female or male) are, and how they are depicted is rationalised as an aesthetic and economic choice, however, it can also be a model of inclusion and diversity. Predominantly, the fashion industry status quo is that the female (and increasingly male) models are European-looking, tall, slender, pale and young, whereas the population of intended market for the garments may not be. There has been a recent challenge mounted in the UK in 2009 Caryn Franklin,
Debra Bourne and Erin O’Connor started *All Walks Beyond the Catwalk* an initiative to celebrate diversity of model sizes and ages. However the young, pale, slender ‘fashionable’ body image perpetuated in the developed world is unfortunately, increasingly endorsed and propagated in the developing world.

### The Post Production and Consumption Phase

Primary in *The Post Production and Consumption Phase* is the twelfth stage within the loop - the ‘wear/care conditions’ of the garment, and more specifically of the fabric and fibres (due to their environmental impact). Firstly, the care (washing, drying and ironing) of the garments will have a profound effect. The expectation of the Twenty-First Century consumer/user to wear clothes regularly cleaned through water immersion has a crucial effect on energy and water availability, consumption, and the cleanliness of the waterways. Furthermore, the rise in usage of domestic tumble dryers has resulted in increased energy consumption (Allwood et al. 2006). Working women in the developed countries in the Northern Hemisphere rely heavily on hot air tumble dryers as an alternative to hanging out clothing (if they have a washing line), and watching the weather, and bringing the clothes in between showers, waiting for it to dry. In less than fifty years in the developed world, the societal expectation regarding hand-washing and the ironing of clothing has changed. The perception is that it is not a valuable use of time. Therefore garments (due to fibre content or construction), which require extra care in laundering, may not be popular with the general consumers/users. It may relate to dry-cleaning which is financially expensive in comparison to water immersion, and also has environmental impact due to the use and disposal of sometimes hazardous cleaning agents. There have been some developments of more environmentally friendly methods of dry-cleaning, but they are not in general usage. For the designer, or the company, the knowledge of fibre and fabric laundering requirements, and customer/user preferences and lifestyles comes to bear in the sourcing and selection of fabrics. The aesthetics, and the handling during manufacture may be favourable, yet the long term wear/care methods may damage the environment. The secondary aspect is the wear of the fabric and fibres. Through composition of the fibre, the construction of the fabric and the treatment(s) of the finished fabric, the end performance and longevity of the cloth during use can be predicted, thus is possible to plan obsolescence. The laundering can increase, or decrease its potential longevity in terms of appearance and functional usage. The stage raises further important issues regarding consumer/user expectations of cleanliness, interaction with, and use of their garments. Should the garments be washed after each wear, as opposed to being aired, or spot-cleaned? Alternative practices have been researched and proposed (Allwood et al. 2006). Due to the carbon footprint of regular laundering of small loads in a washing machine in hot water and subsequent minutes in the tumble dryer, there is a higher impact on the environment than garment manufacture:

… *Elimination of tumble drying (which uses 60% of the use phase energy) and ironing, in combination with low wash temperature, leads to around 50% reduction in climate change impact of product.* (Allwood et al. 2006 p. 40)

The thirteenth and final stage within the loop is ‘disposal’ and the resulting issue is environmental impact. The dichotomy for the designer and/or the company is, firstly; whether it has been possible (via the choices or methodologies made or used earlier) to insure a long life or future lives for the garment. Secondly, the question is at the end of the ‘life’, whether and how a further ‘reincarnation’ as a technical or as a ‘biological nutrient’ (McDonough and Braungart 2002) is possible. Is the life cycle of the garment ‘cradle-to-grave’ ending in landfill, or alternatively, ‘cradle-to-cradle’, thus the garment lives on in another format, either to be ‘up-cycled’ or ‘down-cycled’. Simply put, the debate lies between synthetic fibres offering a long life of usage (for example, polyester), with environmentally problematic manufacture and disposal. Whereas natural fibres can mean shorter life of usage, environmentally problematic growth and laundering they have a more pleasant handle but with a less difficult disposal. In addition, there are other outcomes from the manufacturing processes that require disposal: water, dyes, other chemicals and waste from scouring, finishing and packaging. In these cases, reuse could be possible, or the substance(s) could require further processing before use.
It is at this stage that a significant amount of the discourse relating to fashion and the environment is centred. The arguments hold the industry responsible for being too ‘fast’ in the changing of design trends, and poor in quality of manufacture. It creates short-lived garments which contribute to landfill, whilst continuing to pressure customer/users to consume. Furthermore, it is possible here to comprehend the holistic impact of the production loop: in disposal, it can be comprehended whether a sustainable outcome is achievable, and if sustainable design has been achieved. ‘Disposal’, the final phase of the FD/PL and the thirteenth stage, highlights whether the intentions and outcomes are ‘cradle-to-grave’, or the holistic ‘cradle-to-cradle’ (McDonough and Braungart 2002). Accordingly, it is also here that reverse design is possible: that is, if the outcome is undesirable, it is possible to gauge what can be done within the FD/PL and process to make improvements, and is therefore, of particular significance for a designer. This is a stage which designers may not be familiar with yet it is an area that there is supporting research, the Salvation Army in the UK have done analysis of environmental impact of disposal and recycling in comparison to the manufacturing of the fabrics:

All the processes, including the energy burden associated with retailing and distribution and the donations have been shown to be insignificant compared with the energy consumed during the manufacture of these items from virgin materials. The reuse of 1 tonne of polyester garments only uses 1.8% of the energy required for manufacture of these goods from virgin materials and the reuse of 1 tonne of cotton clothing only uses 2.6% of the energy required to manufacture those from virgin materials. (Woodridge et al 2006 p. 102)

A knowledge and understanding of the outcomes can contribute to the ‘evolution of a concept’ and sourcing at the beginning of the design process to avoid some of the negative outcomes that can occur. The completion stage of the loop and cycle is traditionally where the environmental impacts are measured. Progressing around the FD/PL, the relevant ethical issues have been identified; however, further depth of reflection is required to comprehend more soundly their origins and what they entail.

**REFLECTIONS ON MAKING A SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY**

In part, the chapter has consisted of an exploration of a key analytical tool (FD/PL) for ordering the fashion industry manufacturing supply chain, which has potentialities to guide designers in their practice and process choices. The FD/PL functions as a flexible means for reflection, speculation and interpretation: by enabling the designer to direct and focus her or his reasoning, and externalising the decision-making process. Progressing around the FD/PL, the issues not addressed in depth in other versions of sustainability are brought into focus: those particular to fashion are revealed enabling a fashion dialogue relating to sustainability. It does not function as a replacement to other theories, but is an addition, and an extension. Utilising the FD/PL, can initiate a beginning for designers, either individually or with stakeholders, to situate and chart their creative and ethical decision-making. It is an outcome of identifying issues surrounding the loop stages that require decisions that have life-threatening or enhancing results. It develops a discourse about the designers’ perspective on ethical decision-making. Furthermore, the process permits a philosophical space to reflect and speculate on the source of the ethics for personal, professional or corporate use. The argument presented in the chapter questions the current practices and methodologies within the FD/PL and the fashion system.
Possible Applications of Ethics Within the FD/PL

With the knowledge of the ramifications of her or his choices, the designer’s perspective of the issues is challenged, both as an individual and as a professional. For example, a designer may not personally be at ease with working with fur; however, the company she or he works for may use farmed fur pelts in certain seasons. Another issue relating to rights is when a company subcontracts manufacture to another company in a developing country that pays its workers poorly, but privately, the designer may sponsor children in that same country. These are not isolated examples, but serve instead to illustrate the conflicting issues that challenge a designer (and other stakeholders) to reflect on their role in the problems within the industry. It references the feeling of unease which Hawken called blessed; the more contemporary terminology might be cognitive dissonance when issues in this case when personal philosophical beliefs or ethical guidelines do not match practice.

Contributing to a New Reading of Fashion Design for Sustainability

A different philosophical perspective is required: the rights and the issues of the planet's inhabitants are not separate arenas; they are interdependent and inclusive, as described in Chapter Four. As a result, a new look at sustainability is needed, as the current interpretation is too narrow and reductive for the fashion industry, and the planet. By approaching sustainability with a receptive, holistic viewpoint, there is a potential for change: alternative methods of design practice and innovative thinking can be embraced.

Identifying a new reading of sustainability is one of research aims of the thesis, yet it was necessary to understand and consider the current theories within the chapter. Theories regarding design for sustainability relate predominantly to architecture and industrial design, although Root recently acknowledged sustainability as a ‘… point of departure for scholarly analysis…’ for fashion (2008 p. 420). Indeed, writing regarding sustainability located in industrial design does have several transferable ideas for fashion, relating particularly to design, for example ‘inclusive design’, ‘slow design’ and ‘emotionally durable design’. In examining previous sustainability theories (prior to Fletcher) from the perspective of the fashion industry, it became evident that crucial aspects were not pursued. Neither industrial design nor architecture engages in the accelerated rate of consumption and disposal as the fashion industry, or the complexity of issues relating to the labyrinthine international supply chains. However, an exhilarating opportunity is presented to look further into the other issues that merit consideration in a broader reading of sustainability. Most of the sustainability theories from other disciplines are located in environmental concerns, which are appropriate as there is a great need to address the topic successfully.

CONCLUSION

The chapter has explained the dilemma of designer’s choices (and other industry stakeholders) and their ethical responsibility in design practice and the fashion industry. To enable an initial reading of the fashion supply chain, the FD/PL was revisited and mapped to facilitate design practitioners’ understanding of the responsibilities and ramifications of choices they and other stakeholders made. By recognising their potential, it became possible to acknowledge the ethics that would come into play in the design reasoning. Therefore, it begs the question whether fashion designers in their design practice are aware of their ethical choices, and the subsequent consequences.

From analysing the FD/PL and reflecting upon the content, a much broader responsibility for a practicing designer is indicated. The length of the supply chain and the separation of the ethical issues within have made possible the sectioning off of responsibilities. For example, the environment is without doubt of primary importance because without it none of the issues are able to exist. Unfortunately, the demand of the environmental concern has facilitated a myopic perspective of the sustainability in regard to the
fashion industry. The environment is the start but not the finish of the problems; there is a further underlying framework of ethical choices to be made. A stakeholder could be preoccupied with a particular section, rather than a holistic view of the entire chain; the chapter has then provided an alternative way of looking at social responsibility in industry and explained in an uncomplicated manner, the role of the designer and the progression of the garment in the supply chain.

The discussion of the designer’s role has been expanded: it is the first time the fashion industry supply chain has been analysed from a designer’s perspective with an intention to review the path of ethical responsibility. In the FD/PL as described here, there is more accountability beyond the usual narrow view of sustainability, taking the hypothesis beyond the environmental debate and re-establishing the link to the global equity and social justice discussion.

The proposition leads to the opportunity to open and establish a fashion specific dialogue, with broader applications for other disciplines. It is not difficult to slip into fashion descriptors for how the new interpretation might be: simple, generous and flexible. ‘Simple’ in that to care for another human is an arc of empathy, but to limit caring only to humanity defies the initial compassionate intent and implies specism: the logic being to care for others, whatever the perceived quality of sentience. Similarly, how can caring not be ‘generous’ and inclusive: inspired to look kindly and actively at the world for opportunities to ‘observe, reflect and respond’ (Thomas 2007)? Following in that vein, ‘flexibility’ is necessary due to the scope of the industry, and the various particular concerns: be it the use and disposal of water, or the working conditions of machinists in Mongolia, or the utilisation on a garment of a moko (traditional Maori facial tattoo) of a deceased relative of a living person.

A designer can reflect on whether ethics are embedded in FD/PL, and question if they serve the fashion industry, humanity, animals and the planet. The contentious issues seeded by analysis of the FD/PL: property, exclusivity, labour, social justice, global equity, human and animal rights have a fearful breadth, and were it appreciated more widely, would encourage a holistic approach. If it were to happen, the stages within the FD/PL could be construed as opportunities for ethical intervention and a negotiating space. Alternative and complementary guidelines can be sought, but it is important that these not be ethical absolutes. There is a need for flexibility because the acknowledgment of the multiple issues can overawe and paralyse concerned stakeholders. In the field of analysis, a debate has been described and an area of applied philosophy in practiced ethics has been posited.

Within the chapter, a need for further recognition and understanding of the ethics in practice within the fashion industry has been argued for, in that designing for sustainability supports making ethical choices. Accordingly, it is challenging to speculate how the ethics may evolve, by whom they are owned, and what the intrinsic assumptions and expectations may be. The proposed reflective reading of sustainability (and the ethical choices therein) within the fashion context will continue to be developed within the thesis, providing a chance to reflect creatively on the needs of the industry. Consequentially, the review of the FD/PL will continue in the next chapter to advance analysis and reflection, and to develop an understanding of the principle issues requiring ethical choices. The emerging issues touched upon briefly here will be explored in more depth and organised under headings ‘Property’, ‘Exclusivity’, ‘Labour: Social Justice and Global Equity’ in Chapter Six. The chapter opens with an exploration of sources of ethics that will provide fashion and the designer (designing for sustainability) with fresh insights, or alternative viewpoints, and significantly, a new paradigm to guide the decision-making.
1. *Mitumba* is Swahili for ‘second hand.’

2. *Vendeuse* is, in general, taken to mean a sales woman, but in a couture atelier she can be involved with other tasks; assisting the client through the fittings process etc.


CHAPTER SIX

Seeking the Social and Sentient in Sustainability and Fashion Practice
INTRODUCTION

Writing in the introduction of his book *Design Futuring: Sustainability, Ethics and New Practice*, Tony Fry remarked that: ‘The enormous power of design for good and bad has to be brought out of the shadows’ (2009 p. viii). He was commenting on design in general rather than a specific discipline, however, it is entirely accurate regarding fashion. Fashion design and the fashion industry offer multiple scenarios for new interpretations, in this case sustainability, to be applied, challenged and tested. Previously, as was identified in Chapter Five, within sustainability writing and theory, clothing is rarely mentioned, and even fewer still examples emerge from the fashion industry or fashion design practice. The absence raises one of the underlying research questions of the thesis: how does ‘sustainability theory… serve the fashion industry…?’ Within the chapter, there is an imperative for reflection and refinement of the term as used in fashion and beyond. It would be useful to reiterate the research is situated in the fashion industry and fashion design discipline in Australia and beyond. The research has utilised available literature relating to fashion design, the fashion industry and sustainability. Contemporary literature sources have been sourced where possible from British and American and some European publications. Specifically, the analysis questions the current components within sustainability, challenging their importance, whilst identifying new key aspects that have not previously been situated in this context. From the questioning, it will become clear that complex social and sentient rights issues are situated in production and consumption and this establishes a precedent to discuss the designer response, role and participation.

Previous interpretations of sustainability have referred to ‘sustaining’ subjects, the most common usage refers to the environment; meaning the earth, plants and water; these are vital to sustain. However in the Brundtland Report (*Our Common Future, From One Earth to One World*) originally the criteria and the issues were more inclusive and holistic.

1 Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains two concepts:
   - the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority given; and
   - the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environments’ ability to meet presented and future needs …

3 Development involves a progressive transformation of the economy and society… Even a narrow notion of physical sustainability implies a concern for social equity between generations, a concern that must logically be extended to equity within each generation.

The mentions of equity and the poor may surprise many designers working on sustainability. Perhaps even more surprising on the list of Agenda 21 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Rio de Janerio, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992):

Section I – Social And Economic Dimensions;

3 Combatting poverty

4 Changing consumption patterns…

Later in the same document is listed the following:

Section III – Strengthening The Role of Major Groups …

24. Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development

25. Children and youth and sustainable development

26. Recognising and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities …

29. Strengthening the role of the workers and trade unions
Contemporary sustainability design is highly selective; where are the poor, the women and children, indigenous peoples and trade unions? However, in regard to the fashion industry the process of consumption is escalating, widespread and the effects are multilayered: the resulting negative consequences and outcomes can be severe and far-reaching. Indeed, because of the fashion cycle, companies design and manufacture new garments so there can be a delivery or new drop every month and many new pieces per week. The subsequent consumption of fashion and disposal of resources offers more opportunities for mindful intervention, design for sustainability and ethical behaviour. There is a strong case to be made for responsible fashion design because fashion is a faster process from concept to retail: a mere thirteen days in the case of the Spanish label Zara. Furthermore, the fashion industry as it is presently constituted has an inflated need for resources and materials, and the consumers discard the products with faster and thus present an unprecedented model to which a holistic reading of sustainability can be applied.

As outlined in Chapter Five, a revisit of the concept is necessary because of the narrowness in the current theoretical, philosophical and practical interpretation that occurs in an industry where ethical issues are not adequately understood, or addressed in the design process. Originating in the concern and care (stewardship) of the planets' existing and future environment, it was an entirely suitable interpretation. However, as both the theory and practice advance, the interpretations are applied, explored and importantly robustly challenged for relevance and applicability in a number of diverse fields. To enable these complex subjects to be addressed, the chapter has to be constructed firstly to identify the inherent ethical dilemmas and trace how sustainability could be used to address the new ethical issues found in the reflective analysis of fashion design practice and industry. It is constructive to gain a clearer comprehension of sustainability and its drivers and the development of the more common terminology will be traced. Revisiting the analysis of the life cycle of a garment using The Fashion Design/Production Loop: Version Two (FD/PL: V2) shown in Figure 26 it will be possible to address the ethical issues. The constituent stages previously identified the associated integral issues, and their phases will be isolated and analysed for a clearer comprehension. Consequently, later in the thesis, it will be easier to define what sustainability, and a fashion design practice for sustainability could be, and hypothesise a new model of a sustainable fashion industry with social aspects repositioned and the concept of sentient rights as mainstream.
READINGS OF SUSTAINABILITY

To recap, sustainability has been in use as a term referring to the planet, environment and design for some decades. First employed in this capacity in the Brundtland Report in 1987, it has grown and developed in its meaning, breadth and application. In June 1992, the Rio Earth Summit declared that ‘... the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.’ (Brundtland 1987). The simplest interpretation can mean to maintain and continue the status quo, thus the phrase ‘sustainable fashion industry’ could refer to perpetuating the current industry with its outcomes and principal foci on profit. However, in an environmental discussion and in relation to corporate social responsibility (CSR), (referring to business), ‘sustainability’ refers to perpetuating the environment. Following on, a more contemporaneous interpretation of ‘sustainability’ most often refers to both sustaining the environment, but also to giving back more than has been used. It has been posed that the reading is too constricted as stated before, for fashion both now and for the future of our planet and all its inhabitants. The interpretation is too restrictive for design, which can be local, global, empathetic, philosophical, spiritual and ethical. The prescribed nature of the reading and application does not reflect the expansive or generous
intent of its potential meaning, therefore a new perspective and interpretation is required. Here, common meaning will be challenged and new links and cohesion established. Correspondingly, societal concerns have developed and groups (consumers and NGO’s) have become both more ardent and articulate regarding ethical concerns, some of which are innate to the fashion industry. For example, the principal groups working with animals are the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Humane Society, The Royal Society for the Protection and Care of Animals (RSPCA), People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and Greenpeace. Finally, in the NGO sector are the environmental groups: The Wilderness Society (Australia), Friends of the Earth, Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK), and The Sierra Club, (USA). Moreover, there has been a focusing of the recognition of the role of the individual stakeholder: the responsibility to lobby, or agitate, or act ethically. Hence, the ethical issues; human rights, animal rights, social justice and global equity, and intellectual and cultural copyright have grown from awareness, a social conscience (individual and group) and are now combined with an availability of information. The issues originated firstly from the appreciation of (an)other’s (human or animal) right to existence, to an absence of suffering and potential well-being and happiness. Later in Chapter Seven, there will be a discussion concerning ‘empathy’ bringing an end to suffering: there is a synergy between Buddhist teachings that work towards an end of suffering, and the intent underpinning sustainability. The notion of ownership of the process and origin of the creative, intellectual product, indeed the concern for property is extremely familiar territory in the field of design. Within the industry there is a strong focus on individual and company profit, thus the theft of intellectual property is not uncommon within the field of design. Furthermore, the attractive and thus desirable visual nature of some cultural property (images and artefacts) and its apparent ‘lack’ of identifiable ownership make it the subject of frequent appropriation.

The location of the change in the interpretation of sustainability from the common terminology begins to diverge with the expectation of social sustainability. It raises the first set of issues, not regularly addressed as part of sustainability: human rights. These have particular pertinence to another area of design-related theory that of inclusive design. A fairly recent addition to design theory, ‘inclusive design’ refers to the recognition that all humanity has a right to appropriate, good design. Initiated by product designers to address marginalised groups in the aged, the intellectually and physically less able specifically, inclusive design can be interpreted in a broader and more holistic manner. The theory can enable a designer to build a more humane response to design. For example, consumer/users are sizes that do not correspond to the standard sizes 8-12 most often used in the fashion industry. A revision would entail the focussed addressing of garment design for the various sizes both large and petite, by the directional designers and labels, rather than only in a niche market, as presently practised. Surprisingly, until quite recently ‘inclusive design’ did not have a sustainable perspective. In addressing the differently abled consumer/users needs, and human rights through design, might they not also wish to support and maintain the environment, and add to, rather than waste its resources? ‘Inclusive design’ offers a unique sympathetic and complementary relationship to sustainability. To truly engage, challenge and progress sustainability, it is proposed that ‘inclusive’ theory and intent be added, to achieve a genuine sustainable and inclusive objective, and outcome. In the spirit of analysis and critique, exploration and challenge, it is timely to question where else there could be a synergy with the issues of preservation of the environment and human rights: that is, human rights as social justice. Therefore, if a designer is to address the human rights of the aged, of the intellectually and physically less able consumer/users, the logical progression is to consider the rights of the other stakeholders. Of particular sensitivity within fashion manufacture are labour rights, including child labour, sweatshops, and outworkers; “… 61% of women feel “It is important that a company acts ethically”. (Mintel, Ethical Clothing Report, UK 2009 – Ethical Fashion Forum - The Market for Ethical Sustainable Fashion Products Briefing Report 2011). In deed Cooperative Bank stated that; ‘Sales of ethical clothing grew by 72 per cent to reach £177 million while charity shop sales grew 62 percent to £340 million.’ (Ethical Consumer Report 2010). Accordingly, it is possible to pose the question: would the consumer/users be interested in the sustainability of the planet and the environment, but not be concerned by the human rights of the workers? It is probable that many would not support the use of child labour and/or sweatshops, if they were aware of the likelihood. This was born out in the conclusions of the research organisation TNS Worldpanel Fashion UK;
• Year by year, most of the ethical criteria have become more important, community benefits in particular are becoming more important,

• But a fair price to producers and the sweatshop elements remain by far the most important. (Ethical Clothing Report 2008 - Ethical Fashion Forum - The Market for Ethical Sustainable Fashion Products Briefing Report 2011).

These concerns link with the growing societal unease regarding the lack of global equity and social justice, that Paul Hawken described as ‘… coherent, organic self organised congregations involving tens of millions of people dedicated to change’ (Hawken 2007 p. 4). The unease relates to choices made on ethical or moral grounds, by the designers, manufacturers and the consumer/users. To expand the argument further, there is another area where the right to existence and to an absence of suffering is pertinent that of animal rights, as mentioned in Chapter Five. Reflecting on the fierce campaigns concerning animal rights that have been orchestrated and targeted against the fashion industry, it is apposite to address the area. The shades of both discourse and the actions by designers and consumer/users in regard to those arguments are quite diverse; from militant vegans, to fur-wearers ‘who draw the line’ at endangered species. It is possible that some of the consumer/users, who are concerned about the welfare of working children, the quality of water, and use of resources, would be similarly distressed by animal suffering.

Whether the consumer/user or company wishes to engage in all proposed aspects of the revised definition of sustainability will rely on their knowledge and their ethics or values. Tony Fry wrote: ‘Design ethics is massively underdeveloped and even in its crudest form remains marginal within design education’ (2009 p.3). The topic of ethics in design has only recently arisen in mainstream discussion, and does not constitute the usual moral quandary because it is not dry philosophy with a series of theoretical absolutes. Rather, it has been linked to business ethics; thus, not only must the individual, or company, intend to do good, but it must also be seen to have good intentions/outcomes, and make a profit. It is an instance of the application of both theoretical and practical ethics within fashion because consumer/users are shopping with their psyche and their consciousness. When shopping they use their intellect, but are often shopping in response to a want rather than a need. In this scenario, their emotions may be uppermost, which relate strongly when forming opinions, philosophy and actions regarding human and animal rights, so that the decision is not one based on intellect principally, but often on an emotional response. Accordingly, bundled within the decision-making process for the designer is the opportunity to make exceptional positive impact on an industry, its consumer/users, stakeholders, the future of the environment and its inhabitants.

ETHICAL ISSUES RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY
IN THE FASHION DESIGN/PRODUCTION LOOP: VERSION TWO

Within the process and manufacture of garments as indicated by the FD/PL: V2, the described stages have corresponding choices to be made and consequences. The loop maps the journeys of garments that are commercial processes governed by profit. However, the choices made by members of the industry have a resonance with moral philosophy, values and ethics: a scenario where fiscal concerns intertwine with personal, societal, and corporate moral considerations, and the expectations and needs have become more complicated. In the recent past, the making of ethical decisions related to production within the fashion industry was as a professional choice guided by fiscal expectations. In the changing zeitgeist of the industry, and in a growing number of conscious consumer/users in the developed world, there is a hope, if not an implicit expectation of ethically and sustainably manufactured garments. The outcome may be perceived as part of the informed consumer/users response, and the consequential growth of corporate social responsibility. Accordingly, a further development in ethical perspectives is indicated, as is an awareness of the consuming developed society. Within the revisited the loop (FD/PL: V2), there are specific stages with issues related to them. For example, intellectual and cultural property, has specific relevance to the ‘evolution of concept’. Alternatively, environmental impact is an issue that has bearing in several areas, and occurs
several times within the loop. Choices made by employees whilst the garment progresses around the loop, relate to three interrelating aspects of ethical response/practice that were mentioned in Chapter Three: personal (or individual), professional and corporate ethics.

The response is determined by empathy; firstly, there are the ‘personal’ ethics and philosophy of the employee whatever their role in the FD/PL: V2. The second aspect of ethical practice relates to ‘professional’ practice. The third and final determinant is ‘corporate’ ethics, which will match the fiscal and legislative profile of the company. Which set (or sets) of ethics have been the driver for the choices depends upon the perspective(s) of the viewer, or the analyst. From an empathetic response come protocols or strategies that may become business ethics in a corporate environment. The perception of industry issues, their hierarchal importance and the designer response are significantly defined by ‘personal’, ‘professional’ and ‘corporate’ empathy and thus, ethics. Prior to starting the overview of the issues, it is pertinent to revisit the FD/PL: V2 and the factoring in of ‘inclusive design’ philosophy as part of the analysis because the loop thus far, has been analysed and evaluated for sustainability issues relating to; intellectual copyright/property, cultural copyright/property, labour, child labour, sweatshops, outworkers, animal rights. Whereas analysing the loop from an expanded ‘inclusive’ sustainable perspective the new reading of sustainability includes, ‘sizeism’ (sample and production) ‘ageism’, ‘sexism’ and ‘racism’. It is the intention in the chapter to focus on an ethical analysis of the stages of the loop, and the effecting issues. To comprehend more fully the dynamic within the FD/PL: V2, it is necessary to examine the corresponding issues and choices to be made.

PROPERTY

Property refers to the notion of an idea or concept belonging to the originator, in this case the designer, and it being bound by moral and judicial law to that originator unless it is sold or licensed. Within the fashion industry, ideas and concepts are highly valued property, and as mentioned, theft is quite common. Not surprisingly, the value of the property, particularly in the competitive High Street chain stores, is often time-related and thus within six months of delivery, it may be worthless.

Property: Intellectual Copyright

Progressing around the FD/PL: V2, the first ethical issue that requires a stance is intellectual copyright/property. Principally, the stance applies to the first stage from a designer’s perspective which is called here ‘evolution of concept’. Fashion is a competitive industry that trades in ideas: a particular design and its ability to capture the desire of the consumer/user are extremely valuable and have substantial financial worth. In the High Street fashion labels, the value is short term, and long term in aspects of prêt-à-porter and haute couture. Therefore, the ownership of a particular design is an investment: it offers the potential for manufacture of the design, and thus profit from the subsequent sales. However, the speed of the fashion industry seasons means new ideas are needed monthly, rather than every six months. As the industry is more pressured for the delivery of new ideas that will sell, there is a great deal of speculation when putting a new range in the shops. Financing a particular look and fabric can be expensive (ordering fabric, booking production), particularly if it does not sell well. An alternative to the gamble of original design may be theft, either by copying an actual garment or look, the concept or theme behind a range or collection; this translates to theft of copyright or intellectual property. It should be stated at this point that it is not the practice of producing fakes; rather it is of copying a garment and sewing the new company label on the imitated garment. In such a competitive industry, this kind of industrial espionage, theft or appropriation of ideas is not uncommon, and may become even more commonplace. Due to the speed of transfer of digital imagery, the practice seems to have a higher prevalence amongst the labels supplying the High Street stores. It is most common when a designer, product developer, or other industry members from one country (perhaps Australia), visit overseas shops or attend shows (in France, UK or the USA). They buy the bestselling garments, bring them to their home country as samples, unpick them, cut a new pattern, source very similar fabric and have them remade with
their own company's labels sewn in. In Australia, it is particularly tempting to the less scrupulous members of the industry. Due to the season's reversal in the Southern and Northern Hemispheres, a garment that has sold well in Europe or the United States can be bought in retail, copied, manufactured and delivered for the following season in Australia. The process of 'knocking off' designs (Thomas and Van Kopplen 2002) may work within a local market, but for export overall, it downgrades the design and business practice reputation of a country. However, as the pressure for new clothing escalates, copying takes the 'difficulty' of conceptualising and design development out of the design process, saving time and money. It was identified as a popular methodology among ethnic entrepreneurs in the UK as commented upon by Prodromos Panayiotopoulos and Marja Dreef:

*Pinching the designs of the latest fashions has become widespread among minority entrepreneurs in the London women's wear sector and this can be seen as perverse reflection of the differentiation of the milieu. As manufacturers, many emergent ethnic contract enterprises now use design as a negotiating lever with the buyer… “Design pinching” represents considerable and strategic saving for emergent entrepreneurs. (2002 p. 55)*

Identifying the successes of one's competitors is effective market practice, but the theft of intellectual property does not represent an ethical, or fair method of trading. Intrinsically, it is denial of another person or company and the right to own their creativity. By the practice, there is an implicit indication that the designers are incapable of anticipating their customer's needs and societal trends, and furthermore, it is unethical.

**Cultural: Copyright and Property**

The issue of cultural copyright is similar to intellectual copyright and property, but markedly different in others. Again, the notions of ethical behaviour and practice, fairness and honesty enter the argument. The similarities lie in the intention of theft, or appropriation of a visual concept. However, the many differences lie in that cultural objects, particularly when they are indigenous to a specific country, are assumed by many in the fashion industry as not having an owner, or artist with the consequential expectation of authorship. Within the fashion industry there is a tradition of appropriation of cultural imagery and clothing of encountered cultures, enabled and strengthened by the ease of travel and digital technology for inspiration. Both Jean Paul Gaultier and John Galliano have sourced broadly for their collections from a diversity of cultural imagery. In developed countries such as Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, United States of America and Canada, which have an indigenous, or first nation population, there has been a history of cultural appropriation by the colonising country or culture. However, there are laws and practice which protect works to varying degrees. In indigenous cultures with a decorative tradition, images, stories and practical craft methods are shared within an extended family or tribe, and are not perceived as owned by a particular individual or by the colonising nation or culture (Shand 2000). There is a delineated contrast between indigenous and non-indigenous concepts of intellectual and cultural property with regard to the law (Shand 2000), which is not widely understood or addressed within the fashion industry.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the ownership (particularly in the case of customary pieces or imagery) rests with the tribe (*iwi*), or sub tribe (*hapu*) and extended family without a sole artist or craftsperson. As such, an individual is not able to furnish permission for the use of the method, or manufacture of the images and shapes. Often, within the iwi the pieces are seen as living treasure (*toanga*) and are thus sacred. If an individual or company wishes to utilise an image or methodology from the culture, fair and ethical protocols can be followed regarding cultural property. The protocol is to prepare by researching the meaning and use of the image from creditable sources, then approach the iwi elders respectfully, explain the intent and ask for permission. It is only with their knowledge, consent and sometimes involvement, that it is appropriate to proceed. The Aotearoa New Zealand swimwear label Moontide represents a successful negotiation between a Ngati Ranginui *hapu* and a non-indigenous swimwear manufacturer (Shand 2000). Moontide licensed a Paparoa Marae *kowhaiwhai* (*a marae* building ceiling decoration) design for a specified number of years.
The garment and source are shown in Figure 27. Moontide print and a kowhaiwhai design. Unethical and inappropriate behaviour regarding creative or cultural property can be harmful to the designer, label and company image, and be a source of expensive litigation and subsequent loss of reputation. There are further topics to consider regarding the social aspect of sustainability.

EXCLUSIVITY

In the fashion industry the word ‘exclusive’ is perceived as desirable: meaning ‘rare’, and infers ‘special’, characteristics that are prized within the industry. Furthermore, if a style or range is ‘exclusive’ to one store, it means other stores in the locale, city or state or country may not carry the garments. Thus others are excluded from owning and being able to wear them. Yet, on analysis there are many exclusive aspects relating to fashion and the fashion industry that are not desirable.

Sizeism (Sample & Production)

Within the list of ethical issues relating to the FD/PL: V2 stages are a number that have their beginnings in ‘inclusive design’ theory: that is, in the recognition that design has excluded many members of the population, which is consolidated within the fashion industry. The FD/PL: V2 issues that exclude sections of the population need be identified when analysing and addressing the philosophy behind the genesis of sustainability. Sizeism is ubiquitous within the fashion industry and is not often linked to sustainability. However, if a holistic perspective is taken, ‘inclusive design’ and ‘inclusion’ become part of the informing philosophy, and thus sizeism is a factor which inhibits the ‘inclusion’ of major parts of the consumer/user population. Sizeism relates to the industry practice of sampling in a size to fit an anatomical figure that is considered to optimise the appearance of the garment. Supposedly, long, slender body types show
fashionable design most effectively, yet empirically, it is not always the case, as models with larger bra cup sizes are recruited to model high fashion lingerie and swimwear. The selection of the size of a sample/prototype in the toileting stage can predict the demographic and psychographic of the market in which the garment will be sold. Women’s wear is often sampled in size 10 or 12 (Europe) yet the average European size is 14 or larger. In the developed Western world, the majority of adult women are larger than these sizes due to plentiful, affordable processed food, and the lack of regular sustained exercise. Larger women looking for fashionable clothing are excluded by companies putting into production and manufacture garments in a limited range of the smaller sizes; 8 (or 10) to 14. In sampling only those sizes there will be aesthetic and proportion problems in larger (or smaller) sizes when grading the patterns for production. It is because design lines and detailing will not transpose aesthetically, and or proportionately when enlarged (or decreased by grading), unless time is spent checking pattern design proportions often via sampling. Detailing has to be scaled up or down; for example, shoulder and hip yokes, neck openings, pockets may need to be moved and scaled up or down. In the selection of sizes, - it could in fact, be perceived as ‘exclusion’ of sizes - there is denial of the same rights that other consumer/users have. Following on, it could be construed that the subtext of the practice of sampling in a smaller than average size, is the understanding that larger (or even extremely petite) sizes, whatever their financial state, are not ‘worthy’ of fashionable design whether good, or bad. In terms of numbers there is a market for larger-sized affordable fashion clothing, which is currently poorly served, particularly by the designers, brands, and companies positioned at the high end of the market. Sometimes, designers use larger models but this can appear as something of a novelty with an element of patronisation.

Ageism

The provision of clothing for older markets is a contentious topic of discussion, as traditionally, in other design disciplines, ‘older’ has meant post fifty or beyond. However, in a youth-orientated fashion industry, there would be many women post forty years of age in the developed world, who would contend it was difficult or expensive to find fashionable clothes to suit and fit them. As a phenomenon it has been referenced in educational (US) texts referencing marketing and ‘the gray market’:

*Fashion advertisers have stereotypical ideas about style sensibilities of people over 40 and are also afraid of alienating younger customers with multigenerational ads. However, a few advertisers are using older models, such as Sharon Stone for Badgley Mischka and Madonna for H & M. Baby boomers have distinct and firm ideas about what they want. They expect service, comfort, and quality, but they want the same fashion as young people with appropriate fit and length.* (Stephens Frings 2004 p 42)

Ageism is closely related to other issues in the realm of ‘inclusive design’, in that it can occur in an early stage of the FD/PL: V2. In the generation of a concept, theme, or direction, the designer then considers the consumer/user. For the most part, it is doubtful whether the designer may consider or meet with and discuss the needs of a consumer/user over forty, and/or over fifty, yet they make up a significant percentage of the population who are also still consuming. Older people want and need clothes, and have increased disposable income. They may have individual movement limitations (post seventy years of age), or social/cultural requirements regarding body exposure, but these are not exclusive to an ageing population. Currently, even when that market is addressed, functionality is deemed the principle factor for consideration, whilst innovation and creative style are often under-utilised. Similar to sizeism, ageism can be construed as a denial of their rights.

Sexism

A surprising addition to the issues group affecting the loop, as it may be perceived that ‘sexism’ is no longer a subject of concern in the early Twenty-first Century. It might occur in the ‘The Pre-Purchase Phase’ section within the FD/PL: V2, but there is more likely to be sexism in recruitment, employment conditions, pay and
promotion in ‘The Production Phase’. Regarding the earlier ‘Design Phase’, and later ‘The Pre-Purchase Phase’, certain clothes and collections can still be questioned as to whether their design and marketing demean and objectify, rather than empower women (or, more recently, men). There are in fact menswear designers whose clothes challenge images of men that may not be inherently wrong, but in so doing can work to trivialise and objectify the male gender. Whether it was the intention at the design stage, or the impetus for the representation of the collection, the sexist perspective could originate from the marketing department within a company. It may be intentionally provocative, or ironic making a commentary on the industry, or underlining a developing societal trend. Nonetheless, it can and does occur. However, if the outcome is demeaning to whichever gender is the subject; it is difficult to argue that the design impetus is sustaining or ethical.

Racism

As in the previous case, racism is an issue that can occur later in the phase of the FD/PL: V2 at the marketing stage. Again, it is an ‘inclusion’ related issue: the intention is to ‘include’ rather than exclude consumer/users and workers. The fashion industry functions globally for markets that live with global perspectives: consideration of those markets; their needs, expectations, worldviews and life experiences are vital. In the fashion media, advertising and editorial, there is a lack of representation, or reflection of the racial/cultural breadth of the population, and thus potential consumer/users. There could be a possible loss of revenue from the under-represented market, but also from markets that consider themselves ‘citizens of the world’ and are not threatened by images of people other than their race, or culture. Consequently, they may look for diversity of people in the representation of the brands they purchase. An absence of diversity diminishes the generous, holistic, philosophic intention of sustainability by the designer, label, and company. Furthermore, ‘excluding’ images of the diverse peoples of a country, or the world, because of their race or culture is not ethical. The prior three issues have ramifications in the areas of social justice and labour law: they are ethically challenging; furthermore, they alienate the informed and directional fashion markets of the developed and developing world.

LABOUR, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND GLOBAL EQUITY

These issues may not be experienced directly by the consumer/users, however, as the markets in the developed and developing world become better informed, these practices have quickly appeared in the public domain. Consequently, the consumer/users can express their distaste for unethical behaviour by boycotting the label with extremely expensive consequences as noted by The Co-operative Bank (UK) in the ‘Ethical Consumerism Report’: ‘Subsequently, overall clothing boycotts grow by 20 per cent in 2006 to reach £338 million’ (2007 p. 16). The first issue is probably one of the most provocative stages within the FD/PL: V2.

Child Labour

Children have good eyesight, are manually dexterous - ideal for clothing manufacture, and are inexpensive to employ in developing countries. They are easier to persuade (or intimidate) than adults, and can be made to work long hours for a low wage. Therefore, it is unsurprising that they have been in the past, and are currently employed in the clothing, textiles and footwear industries. International law defines child labourers as under the age of fifteen, however, in circumstances of extreme poverty within a country, thirteen year olds are permitted to work. In addition there is issue of children being trafficked. Child labour is a highly sensitive issue in the fashion industry. Working can be harmful mentally and physically to the children and leaves them poorly or entirely uneducated and is ethically unsound. Moreover, it is extremely disturbing and offensive for the consuming public, and consequentially to the company, if the media discover that children are being used. The ensuing negative press coverage affects sales and loses credibility for the brand; which is extremely difficult to rebuild, even if ethical strategies are put in place. Due in part to the echo-like effect of bad news stories;
they carry on in the public imagination and in redundant web pages, and are difficult to erase from the public memory. Several major sportswear brands have experienced it in the past, and many invest time and money in monitoring their company's progress to ensure the international guidelines are followed. The developed world perception of a country that has children employed in one of its industries is not positive, so it is not only a company, or industry problem; it is a national identity problem. Accordingly, certain countries have worked with NGO's to enable them to achieve premium price. Furthermore, if it is an expectation for adults to support and nurture all children, then child employment is a global ethical problem, which should be addressed by all, not only the International Labor Organisation (ILO) and associated charities.

Sweatshops

There are further issues linked to social justice and labour law. The conditions and situation in which workers produce garments can contribute to their well-being and maintain their human rights. The term ‘sweatshop’ refers to a manufacturing environment (which can be in a factory, or a worker's home) where there are inadequate facilities for the health and safety of the employees. The term can refer to insufficient lighting, heating, and ventilation (hence sweatshop), space for movement, poorly maintained and unsafely installed equipment, toilets (inadequate breaks), lack of eating facilities and no freedom of association (usually interpreted as union membership). Furthermore, inadequate safety provision for evacuation in case of emergencies; for example, fire (not uncommon in the fashion industry). ‘Sweatshops’ as a term may also include, by implication, the working hours and provision of payment for overtime, or lack of it. In addition, it refers to the amount of working hours should they exceed the ILO agreement. Yet sweatshops are not uncommon in many developed countries in major cities (Rath 2002). Garment manufacture has historically represented a method of earning money for unskilled women; sometimes immigrant workers who, in addition, may wish to work in a familiar environment with family members.

Outworkers

The wish to work from home is common among women, enabling them to fit in with family commitments, child and aged care, education and cultural requirements or expectations. An industrial sewing machine and an overlocker provide an ongoing employment opportunity for many women and men. An outworker2 - sometimes called a ‘homeworker’ - is usually a machinist working, but predominately in their home environment. They may also work in another person's home or premises; for example, a garage. Such a means of employment is common among unskilled married women without education, or a good standard of spoken English (or other language), and these can often be recent migrants. They may have limited knowledge of employment laws and can thus be vulnerable, and prey to less scrupulous, unethical people due to their lack of knowledge and means. The production of garments is often subcontracted several times, which enables a lack, or obfuscation of knowledge at both ends of the process between the machinist and the designer.

Due to the potential degrees of separation within the FD/PL: V2, the designer and/or production manager may not know the conditions of their employees due to the extended nature of the loop. It could be an industrial norm, but also a convenience because the lack of knowledge can, as a result, demand neither ethical response nor intervention. Similarly, the employee at the end of the subcontracting chain may not know for whom they are working, other than the name (if they can read the language) on the label they sew into the garments. Their deficit of knowledge can contribute to the shortage of global equity and social justice, and leaves workers vulnerable to mistreatment and manipulation. Hence, they can be paid poorly and be pressured, bullied, or tricked into working beyond the legal requirements of a factory machinist meeting unreasonable deadlines and unpaid remaking/mending demands. The group represents the most vulnerable stakeholders, other than children, in the FD/PL: V2 as they have the least amount of knowledge and influence. Furthermore, the adults in the family could not be the only outworkers: children can become involved with home production, performing small tasks to assist their parents (not all outworkers are women).
in finishing batches of work and meeting short lead times. It is a practice that can be based on convenience; traditional cultural ways of working (within a family unit), or necessity due to pressure of deadlines.

**Social Justice and Global Equity**

These are two terms that serve as ‘umbrellas,’ which may not occur to all observers, or participants, in relation to the fashion industry. Global equity and social justice refer to that which may be considered as human rights issues but not immediately associated with commerce. However, it is posed here that if human beings, (in this instance, workers) are badly treated, it is not solely an industrial issue. The fair, equal, ethical treatment and access to resources for all human beings underpins the premise of global equity. The topic would be worthwhile to analyse in most circumstances, however, in an industry in which one company, or label, could be employing or subcontracting workers in many countries, it therefore becomes not just a humanitarian intent, but an industrial requirement. Consequently, it is an imperative when a company is auditing for corporate and social responsibility. Whatever role the employee plays, there can be a hope, if not an intention, for similar conditions to be available to them regardless of the country of their workplace. A disparity of working conditions internationally could have problematic and unexpected outcomes: it could be argued that it is necessary to avoid worker unrest, negative press and consumer campaigns. It is worth noting that clothing industry workers are not heavily unionised. Furthermore, even with reasonable conditions, if there is inequality of provision; the developed world employee may find the situation ethnically unconscionable and experience cognitive dissonance, particularly under a wave of negative publicity. How would a designer respond to working for Nike whilst the parent company was being lobbied for worker improved conditions? However, in the developing world, workers may have fewer expectations, and options. The poor conditions of their employees can undermine the public image of company. In an industry enmeshed by image, it could be disastrous should the circumstances come to the broader attention of lobby groups, NGO’s, charities, stakeholders and stockholders.

Equality and fairness are extremely volatile elements within the definition of global equity, particularly in Australia due to the iconic status of the perceived Australian character value and the societal expectation of ‘a fair go.’ The individual, or organisation within the Australian culture who does not provide ‘a fair go,’ would be perceived as deficient in that one may be profiting by denying others, and perhaps may even be defined as ‘un-Australian’ (Thomas 2006). The nature and application of a ‘fair go’ and its particular Australian context will be explored further in Chapter Seven. Equity could be interpreted as a commercial expectation, to be translated in a fiscal sense, or via planning by a production manager. However, if translated into a more humanitarian realm, it can become a social justice. Conditions of work, treatment and respite, regarding societal, cultural and spiritual associations and practice, relate more to the definition of this social justice. It is a sensitive area, as a particular workforce, (or section thereof), may have an expectation of certain behaviours and options. The more supportive and inclusive methodology of negotiation with the workforce of either the worker’s country (assuming it is offshore), or the country of the management base, should be pursued.

Bearing in mind there can be different perspectives of fair and appropriate that may have societal, cultural or philosophic roots. In Sri Lanka, there is the phenomenon of ‘Juki girls,’ a term of derision, used to describe female garment workers. Because they make underwear with Juki sewing machines (for global companies like Victoria’s Secret and Marks and Spencer), their association with these garments is construed, as morally lacking in a conservative society. Utilising the terms: ‘global equity’ and ‘social justice,’ the fiscal, physical, mental, cultural and spiritual well being of the worker(s) can be addressed in an international setting.
Animal Rights as a Sustainability Issue

The moral debate over whether it is ever appropriate to take the life of another living being for one’s own decoration when other materials are available is a vital foundation to the sustainability discussion. If, as the thesis research aim posits, that there is to be a new reflective reading of sustainability, perhaps if it is to be holistic; that with human rights, animals must be included. An empathetic, compassionate and ethical response by the employees and employers to other humans’ experience of life can prompt fairer conditions and improved wages. The response is motivated by the recognition of others and their ability to feel discomfort and distress: in short, empathy for them. Yet, if observation, imagination and empathy are applied, it is possible to interpret that not only humans but also animals can experience these feelings. As animal welfare has become a greater issue, the anticipated consumer/user response can be applied in various ways: the avoidance of certain products such as fur and leather, or even silk and wool. The argument referring to animal rights in regard to such a reading of sustainability could be divided by protection of endangered species, and recognition of sentience. It can be an informed choice by an employee(s), or a company value and policy, depending on the management and the consumer/user. The interpretation of the individual or the company can be seen as against using any animal product, or by-product; or in opposition to using fur from an exotic protected species, or indeed any form of fur.

The issue is problematic because unlike other issues, it is the application rather than commitment that is prone to the vagaries of fashion and ethics. In the late Twentieth Century, fur was extremely unfashionable due to the perceived cruelty of the conditions of the fur farms and the circumstances of capture. The view was promulgated and supported in Europe by a sensational advertising campaign featuring internationally known fashion models in the PETA campaign (See Figure 3.; ‘Here’s the rest of your fur coat’). However over the intervening years, the public perception, in general, has appeared to change to the point in which fur as trims and accessories (fake and in some cases, real) have become the norm. This example demonstrates the problematic nature of competing in an industry that fluctuates – as do the public ethics in their tolerance of dead animal body parts as decoration.

Many of the corresponding discourses are cyclical and interrelated, and one of the primary examples is the environment. It can be difficult to position where the discourse area begins and ends: it could be imagined that it involves trees, rivers, the sea, and the sky, in general: or the ‘outside’ environs. However, we as humans inhabit the environment whether inside or outside of our dwellings. Animals are likewise part of the environment, so if this is the case, are animal rights or sentient beings an environmental issue? The question highlights the need for a new interpretation of functional sustainability in order to address the broad scope of need and application. The answer relates to both rights and environment; if animals have rights, experience suffering and pleasure, then they are an environmental issue because they contribute to, and utilise the environment.

ENVIRONMENT AND ITS PLACE IN THE IMPACT HIERARCHY

The final issue in this ethical analysis interacting within the FD/LP: V2 is the environment. Traditionally, it is the most important and well known of issues relating to sustainability, referred to as ‘environmental impact’, and also as a ‘green’ or ‘ecological’ concern (Thomas 2008). The influence of fashion as a global industry utilising (but not replacing or improving) resources is significant, and a recurring issue within the FD/LP: V2. From a designer’s perspective, the choice, utilisation of fabric, and waste avoidance have been the measures of environmental impact of a garment, as has been covered in earlier chapters. Traditionally, fabric and its environmental consequences have preoccupied companies, designers and the media when contemplating a sustainability analysis. Likewise, early attempts to address the fashion industry in regard to sustainability theory, or include it in design and sustainability overviews (Datschefski 2001) have emphasised fabric. Fabric is not the only resource used by the industry: others include water, heat, energy and dyes as part of fabric processing, garment manufacture and transport. These can be divided into four processes; the first is the growth/manufacture and processing of the fibres and eventual fabric are one section. The water and energies used in the manufacture of the garment comprise the second section. The third section includes
the energies used in the packaging promotion and transportation of the garments whilst the fourth and final section would concern the processes undertaken in the disposal of the garment, all of which contribute to the environmental impact of a garment. With so many highly debateable and contestable issues identified within the FD/PL: V2, the question arises as to how they can be addressed, and additionally, which are of most concern and profound impact. To manage these matters an impact hierarchy should be considered.

Impact Hierarchy

Identifying which issue has the largest impact can be an imprecise attribution, determined by causative factors such as the analyst, the location of decision, (whether geographically, or the stage within the FD/PL: V2), within or outside the fashion industry. In addition, the specific subject of the impact needs to be nominated; for example, what might be the impact of the FD/PL: V2 on machinists in Lesotho? The importance and the perception of the impact can vary according to available data, information and informed knowledge of the analyst and participants. Individuals and companies can have disparate or interrelating hierarchies of worth and impact. Impact hierarchy sounds as if it is formulated on negative results and is dependent entirely on perceived loss or damage to the environment (if that is the subject of the impact). However, the question also relates to the eleven ethical issues in the FD/PL: V2 and their precise order placement in terms of negative impact. Consideration of how ‘impact’ is defined is necessary, whether it is gauged by physical damage to the environment, measurable harm to workers, paucity and frequency of wages, or by suffering of animals, or loss of company profile through negative media coverage. Therefore, the company or label that pollutes may perceive the environment as having the largest impact because for them it represents a significant loss of positive profile and potentially, a source of state, national or international fines. If the analyst was a furrier using exotic pelts, consequent animal rights and the amount of suffering (animal welfare) caused might be higher on the negative impact hierarchy. Does the poor working environment of a clothing worker compare with sexism in promotion of the garment she, or he may have made? These questions illustrate the multifaceted nature of the industry, and the layering of individual and corporate perspective, and value criteria. Companies and labels operating in the industry need to be conscious of the different criteria that serve to construct the impact hierarchy. These criteria can stand on their own based on a combination of company values, corporate social responsibility, and financial imperatives. Alternatively, they can be those of their consumer/users; competitors, their employees, or the NGOs, and/or lobby groups observing the industry. The order of the issues identified in the FD/PL: V2 is not composed by impact, but rather at the point they occur within the creation, manufacture and disposal of garments as listed below in Figure 28. Ethical Issues Related to the Fashion Design/Production Loop: Version Two.

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<tr>
<th>ETHICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE FASHION DESIGN/PRODUCTION LOOP VERSION TWO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 INTELLECTUAL COPYRIGHT/PROPERTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 CULTURAL COPYRIGHT/PROPERTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 SIZEISM (SAMPLE &amp; PRODUCTION)</td>
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<td>4 AGEISM</td>
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<td>5 SEXISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 RACISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 CHILD LABOUR</td>
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<td>8 SWEATSHOPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 GLOBAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ANIMAL RIGHTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</td>
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FIGURE 28. ETHICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE FASHION DESIGN/PRODUCTION LOOP VERSION TWO
Within an industry based on profit, it could be dissenting to suggest a hierarchy that does not relate to finance. The following Figure 29. (Ethical Issues in Order of Impact on the Planet and its Inhabitants) depicts a suggestion, not as a solution, but as a demonstration of the arguments at play; and at this point, it offers a less complicated option. The formulation of a hierarchy of impact of the issues is dependent on the attribution of their importance. For example, it is proposed that the environmental impact on the land, water, atmosphere and the animal ecosystem is the most important issue; because for the other issues to exist, the environment must be thriving, unpolluted, nor degraded or squandered. These elements are measurable; land, water and energy used can be counted and recorded, and thus consumer/users can be accountable. It is proposed that second in order of impact is global equity and social justice because in a similar way to the environment; if global equity and social justice are high in the hierarchy, it follows that other issues will not arise. For equality and fairness to be foremost indicates a compassionate intent, and thus could imply a potential for empathetic sensitivity towards others, facilitating an absence of child labour, sweatshops and unfair treatment of outworkers. Following on, for there to be social justice there could be expected to be respect for and protection of cultural copyright/property and intellectual copyright/property. However, it could be argued if social justice has been integrated then the following issues would not be present: ‘racism’, ‘sexism’, ‘ageism’ and ‘sizeism’. Other hierarchies may vary considerably; if compiled and directed by finance, or alternatively, by media profile, for example. These impact hierarchies represent the last aspect of the FD/PL: V2 (Figure 26.) to be considered. The issues contained are crucial to the industry; nevertheless, reflecting on their possible order of importance brings into focus the questions as to what is deciding their selection. Financial reward for the investors and the participants is expected to be the primary but not sole motivator, however, the likelihood of other motivators warrants further close analysis of the industry, and the empathetic arc of intent to sustainability.

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<tr>
<th>ETHICAL ISSUES IN ORDER OF IMPACT ON THE PLANET AND ITS INHABITANTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. GLOBAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE</td>
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<td>3. CHILD LABOUR</td>
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<td>4. SWEATSHOPS</td>
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<td>5. OUTWORKERS</td>
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<td>6. ANIMAL RIGHTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. CULTURAL COPYRIGHT/PROPERTY</td>
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<td>8. INTELLECTUAL COPYRIGHT/PROPERTY</td>
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FIGURE 29. ETHICAL ISSUES IN ORDER OF IMPACT ON THE PLANET AND ITS INHABITANTS.

CONCLUSION

The intention of the chapter was to examine the fashion industry and fashion design practice, using the FD/PL: V2 as a guide to better understand the contingent issues, and whether current design for sustainability practice addressed them. With its labyrinthine supply chain zigzagging across the globe, the industry is replete with issues that challenge ethics of participants and observers, and likewise sustainability theory. To establish an awareness of the depth and complexity of the issues within FD/PL: V2, the stages have been analysed and explored. As the FD/PL: V2 identifies, there are many issues not addressed by sustainability theory and these are most often: ‘intellectual and cultural copyright/property’, ‘sizeism’, ‘ageism’, ‘sexism’, ‘racism’, ‘child labour’, ‘sweatshops’, ‘outworkers’, ‘global equity, social justice’, and ‘animal rights’ as discussed herein.

Living in the developed world, the change and effect on the environment of increased consumption, and corresponding escalated manufacture is not routinely seen or experienced firsthand. It is therefore possible...
to avoid (or conceal from the consumer/user) the impact, and this avoidance can be strategically perpetuated or initiated by industry. By mapping the influences at work within the industry, it possible to distinguish the urgent need for an alternative interpretation of sustainability, or invoke another term to encompass a holistic, proactive approach to the breadth and variety of issues at play. The generous intent towards the environment (implicit in sustainability) needs to be expanded to include other constituent issues of concern within the industry. The usual interpretation of sustainability is without doubt vital, however, the negative issues embedded in both practice and rationale within the fashion industry have further diverse and harmful outcomes. The powerful issues engendered within the supply-chain of the fashion industry require more than just a desire for a kinder outcome; they require guidelines or protocols with which the responsible design practitioners can engage. To be able to apply sustainability principles or protocols to individual, or company practice, it is productive to comprehend the possible deeper roots of the sustaining motivation.

The reflective ethical analytical progression around the FD/PL: V2 has specified the significant ethical issues in play within the contemporary global fashion industry. It illustrates the complexity of the key issues involved and makes a case for informed responsible design practitioners. The process has assembled a list of disturbing issues that are rarely revealed in association, and even less often connected to the designer, in addition to establishing a precedent to discuss the designer response, role and participation within these ethical issues. Furthermore, the chapter has situated at the forefront of the hypothesis of the new reading of sustainability, the repositioned social aspects and the concept of sentient rights in the argument.

Even when equipped with a consciousness of these issues and detailed information, the response (personal, professional, or corporate) is dependent on the individual, the corporate ethics, values and theory, or guidance available. In this and earlier chapters, there have been references to ethics governing choices made professionally and privately, but where do the ethics originate from? To provide an example: a child, (perhaps pre-verbal), witnessing the distress of another and motivated by empathy will acknowledge the other child by touch, or perhaps the conciliatory offering of a toy. Following on, it could be asked whether empathy motivates adults to behave as kindly, responsibly: sustainably. Unlike the child, adults may adhere to ethics in times of decision-making due to maturity, experience and socialisation. Their ethics could be a product of philosophical deliberation, or learnt behaviour, societal or cultural norms, or religious practice. The resulting ethical behaviour towards the environment and its current and future inhabitants underpins design for sustainability, and, it could be argued, originates in empathy. Therefore, empathy is the next aspect of a sustaining response to be investigated. Thus the role(s) of empathy, its meaning and applicability bear closer scrutiny and understanding in order to fully comprehend its potential role in design for sustainability within a new paradigm of the fashion industry.
1. It could be asked whether fashion editors are not fulfilling their role of being fashion forward by using film actors because they are a proven quantity (their popularity has been tested in the film industry).

2. It should be noted that the majority of outworkers or homeworkers are exploited or badly paid.

3. There has been a disturbing rise of human trafficking or slavery; therefore, a worker may not be working in her or his country and they may be there against their will. See HELP WANTED: Hiring, Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery in Global Economy, 2010 Verité. http://www.verite.org/helpwanted/reports (Accessed 3 November 2010)

4. Animal welfare has been recognised as important and as a result, was included as part of the recommendation for an Australian Ethical Quality Mark: Building Innovative Capability 2008.

5. ‘It has been estimated by WWF that 20,000 litres of water are needed to produce just one a T-shirt.’ (Hickman 2005)
CHAPTER SEVEN

The Role(s) of Empathy
INTRODUCTION

With a current global population of between 6,894,583,166 people and 7.5 according to the US Census Bureau and 9 billion predicted for the 2050, human beings are rarely alone, now or in the future. To enable individuals and communities to function and the planet to flourish, it is necessary to negotiate with care; and design is part of the interaction. Looking deeply into design for sustainability and beyond is an ongoing aim of the hypothesis. The previous chapter sought to examine the social and sentient in sustainability, and fashion practice, whilst raising the critical humanitarian and animal issues which prompt consumer/user unease, activist petitions, and media headlines. These issues extend beyond the usual readings of sustainability relating solely to the environment and look further to the rights and philosophies of life. If ethical issues are to be borne in mind and addressed, then sustainability must be explored further to its roots, beyond ethics to a primary source: empathy.

Due to the percolating consumer/user awareness, the concerns of local and international government, and the scrutiny of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), industry lobbyists, and shareholders, it is posed that there is a need for responsibility and ethical behaviour on personal, professional and corporate levels. To achieve a proactive response, there needs to be an impetus, whether inspired by personal recognition of unfair practices, or a corporate acknowledgment of a necessity for a kindly response in the interests of a positive PR company profile. One of the identified drivers is empathy: a reaction to the perceived lack of equality, or unfairness. This characteristic will be defined, analysed and explored, whether in a personal, professional or corporate context. Reflecting on the state of the industry and comprehending progress, it is clear that it is not possible in the current manner without jeopardising the well being of the planet and its future inhabitants. Furthermore, the question of how a change will occur and in what manner underpins the chapter. It will address in part, one of the thesis research questions in: What is empathy…? It will analyse ‘empathy’ and speculate, and reflect on its potential roles in the future industry. To begin the analysis, the history and meaning of empathy will be explained. Following on, the close connections of empathy, equality and fairness identified in Chapter Three will be developed and explored. In addition, empathy and equality in particular, will be explained and their relationship deliberated upon. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a notable proximity between equality and fairness. Within Australia specifically, the notion of fairness is considered a fundamental national value, and reasons why this is the case will be identified.

The importance of empathy as professional practice will be explored; demonstrating its various potential applications as a design methodology, from the designer to the consumer/user’s perspective. The possible uses for an empathetic response or viewpoint will then be explored throughout the industry and to broaden the discussion, it will be considered in regard to the planet and its living inhabitants. Finally, to appreciate the full potential of a contextual empathy, there will be speculation on implications of its uses in the larger industrial arena.

To understand and apply empathy and attain a perspective of the way it may impact on the industry requires the individual designer to look beyond their immediate personal experience. That is, looking beyond self-regard to the experience of ‘the other’ or (an)other. It may be queried how, or whether, the requirement sits within the normal expectation and practice of a designer within the fashion industry. In the traditional fashion designer-client relationship, the designer would consider his/her client to be wealthy and/or aristocratic, however, would they necessarily empathise with him/her? Could their relationship be described as equal? In essence, the designer is performing a service yet, in contemporary society and media, the haute couture designer is a celebrity: an object of admiration, fame and often celebrity in their own right. Thus the roles are changed but not reversed. Today, the fittings for a gown are part of a privileged and rarefied experience, rather than simply a service alone. Realistically, there is requisite communication and rapport with the client, otherwise, however spectacular the garment, it would be unlikely for repeat business to occur. In the other levels of fashion design, the system does not require or encourage contact with consumer/users: the relationship is no longer client and designer, it is between designer and market. To broaden the discussion, professional relationships are not balanced in the structure of other areas of the fashion industry.
The Western business model may not be a collaborative, cooperative process with equal time, decision-making, or voting rights for all participants. To speculate on the influence or power available to company employees may serve to inform the argument; for example, the amount of power the Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director have depends on the management structure. Unless he/she owns the company/label, the designer may hold very limited influence. Working within the structure, the conscious individual within the process may have qualms about certain practices, but have limited power to address them. These misgivings may arise as a psychological unease from an awareness of or witnessing a system that in its darkest rationale triggers mass consumption, gratification and disposal. From the generation of a concept to the disposal of the garment, the Fashion Design/Production Loop Version Two (FD/PL: V2) offers many examples of an absence of fairness whether to the consumer, the workers, animals, the environment, or the owners of cultural or intellectual property. An expectation of fairness by the designer or consumer/user may be naïve in an industry where an individual designer label can make more money than the Gross National Product (GNP) of a small African country (Coleridge 1988). The incentives to pursue the same methodology, or orchestrate it further may be too great. Nonetheless, due to the growing acknowledgment of the long term damage of industry practices, and of more significance here, the effects certain management philosophies are having on the planet, there is a crucial imperative to enquire further.

If a designer works for, or owns a company that treats its workers unfairly; wastes fabric, perpetuates unrealistic body ideals/norms through advertising, or utilises environmentally unfriendly materials and practices, a variety of unpleasant outcomes arise. These pertain to the individual, the corporation, society and the environment and the future. The mismatch in a working setting between personal and professional philosophies may bring about an unanticipated outcome: for the individual, a disquiet that may be construed as a psychological unease. The thesis proposes that it is both an individual's awareness, but also a group consciousness (Hawken 2007) prompted by a variety of signifiers, that is culminating in an increasing growth of concern. A designer may look to counteract the behaviour by imbuing the design experience and methodology with authenticity: a further connection with the humane and beyond. The intent reveals itself in a need to identify more closely with the other: in an expression of empathy. Thus it will be possible to look more broadly and deeply into the nature of empathy, and its potential role within the fashion industry.

**EMPATHY, EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS**

There are many areas in the fashion industry that have drawn negative comment and these have been identified and reflected upon in Chapter Three. To comprehend the alternatives further, it is suggested that there can be some practical and philosophical insights gained from examining the role of empathy, and its relationship with (in)equality. The discourse will be geographically contextualised by an examination undertaken later in the chapter of the espoused traditional Australian value of 'a fair go,' or defined fairness.

**Empathy**

In order to generate empathy, there needs be at least two involved parties: the self and another, and this could be interpreted as the beginning of recognition of ‘interbeing.’ The recognition of the other(s) is integral to the process: the other can be a known or unknown human, an animal, or an environment. As an emotion, feeling, or a psychological response, empathy is usually manifested as a response to disquiet. When an individual observes another’s existence and then projects their emotional and psychological experience of living into the other as empathy (Koss 2006); in the act of projecting into another, an empathetic arc is made. Thus, seeing (an) other in pain, or giddy with pleasure, and imagining oneself in their position prompts one's own feelings and perspective of the events, or surroundings, evoking empathy. Whether the other is an injured friend, a famine victim, or flood survivor, or wounded dog, they may all be worthy subjects of empathy. In determining if empathy could in fact, be the driver for professional behaviours or enactment it is useful to comprehend the essential meaning. As stated in Chapter Three, a dictionary
definition of empathy is: ‘... the power of identifying oneself mentally with (and so fully comprehending) a person or object of contemplation (Thompson 1995).

In definitions and terminology, there are various interpretations and nuances particular to specific areas. On investigation of the available literature, it is apparent that some useful discussion relating to empathy resides within medical writing. The breadth of information was written to enable a focussed and accurate diagnosis because a medical professional must establish trust, and understanding, for the patient to communicate freely and fully. Medical discourses are located around the utilisation of **empathy** for effective communication, leading to a clearer understanding of the patient's situation, and enabling more accurate diagnosis and treatment. Of equal importance is to establish and maintain an ongoing honest, trusting and supportive relationship between doctor and patient. Thus, there is a stronger likelihood that the patient will fulfil their treatment. Honouring the other (the patient) and his/her agency is perceived as very important (Hardee 2003) and a crucial function of empathy. The relationship desired by doctors is therefore an advantageous model for designers connecting with consumers/users. The fundamental ability to respond with empathy to another usually occurs in child development at approximately 24 months of age. The primary response to (an) other's unhappiness in a child is the seed to the empathetic adult offering assistance.

The word **empathy** has both an unexpected source and a relevant short history. Theodore Lipps, an early Twentieth Century psychologist, utilised the word *einfühlung* with the enigmatic meaning: 'feeling into' a subject. Empathy is the English translation. A relatively new word, it was first used in 1910 and co-opted from aesthetics to interpersonal communication. *Einfühlung* has been defined as part of German Aesthetic art theory and could also be described as a phenomenological methodology. In writing about empathy, Robert Vischer described it as projection of one's soul into an art piece (Koss 2006). For a fuller understanding of the elements involved in its translation, it is worthwhile considering that sometimes empathy is misinterpreted as **sympathy**. Sympathy is a spontaneous simultaneous feeling of, and with another's emotion; for example, a friend cries in genuine sorrow, it is difficult not to sympathetically cry with them: their emotions become one's own. It is the inclusion of self in the experience that renders sympathy different from empathy. Empathy can be a spontaneous or considered choice: one person projects into another's circumstances, not in an attempt to experience them vicariously, but for the empathiser to understand: the identity of the 'empath' is neither subsumed into, nor imposed upon the other. In its simplest form, there is no agenda other than caring, understanding and compassion. The key is absence of self, a concept that at first sounds like a contradiction, in that to appreciate the other, it is necessary to identify them as other. Yet, to experience an absence of self requires a person not to feel for themselves but for the other; a suspension of the self - filling their consciousness with that of the other. Empathy is a more effective tool for assistance than sympathy because it is not engulfed by self-related experience. However, there is still a self-presence, and perhaps, an acknowledged equality.

The definition of empathy provides further insight into its possible role in decision-making for design for sustainability within an industrial setting. To formulate empathy for another life requires social imagination: a person must be imaginative about, and for the other(s). As a beginning, relating to another life is immediate to their particular experience, rather than the entirety of the environment, which may require a broader focus. Empathy can drive the projecting of emotion(s) into (an) other being, and function in regard to animals, (domesticated or wild), or in its broadest holistic interpretation, the environment. How an individual acknowledges life in themselves and (an) other, directs their capacity to appreciate life. The ability to project into valuing the life and life experience of another is paramount for empathy.

Empathy shares the same stem of inspiration as sustainability; that is, the recognition of an absence of the most generous option to live and be; the potential to share, to establish equity. However, sustainability is different in its holistic interpretation: there is an expectation to preserve, contribute, and share both now and with the future. The driver for **empathy** may be personal; a keen appreciation the inequality of rights, of opportunity, of services, or of environment. However, it should be remembered that the motivation for **empathy** is not lodged only in the individual. Corporate drivers can be initiated by individuals, as occurred in the greening of the U.S. modular flooring company Interface when their chairman, Ray Anderson experienced a personal epiphany regarding the environment his impact that of his company and the industry as a whole,
which he discusses in the documentary *The Corporation* (Achbar and Jennifer Abbott 2003). Interfaces' change of paradigm became a sector innovator and established a new sustainability level for the international carpet tile industry. Alternatively, another instance could be a board of directors who identify the need for a kinder response to the consumer/user, or the worker, and this could be seen as an act of altruism. Conversely, a company or individual designer may recognise that an empathetic inclusive response will provide added value to the product, or a current point of difference in the industry sector. Allison Barnes and Paul Thagard (1997) identify another advantage. As a method of predicting user/consumer behaviour via empathy, it is possible to anticipate and possibly predict certain responses. A future driver could be legislation: in enacting environmental laws, an empathetic methodology could thus be audited. ‘Empathy’ can be a holistic emotion crossing borders and time; acknowledging the environment, peoples, cultures and their future(s) and thus contributing to the proposed new reading of sustainability. Empathy, and its close proximity to compassion, form one of many synergistic links between sustainability and Buddhism being explored in the thesis. It is defined by the Oxford Concise Dictionary as: ‘...the power of identifying oneself mentally with (and so fully comprehending) a person or object of contemplation.’ Generating an empathetic response may inculcate compassion, which is the paramount intention of Buddhism; endeavouring to help the essence of sustainability. Thus, if compassion is fundamental to sustainability, it may be conjectured that sustainable design could be an enactment of Buddhism. Furthermore, it will later be proposed that in its practical application, it could be Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB). These statements are possibly surprising and require further explanation and exploration in later chapters. A fundamental aspect revealed in the experience of empathy can be an absence of equality.

### Equality

To establish an instance or situation of equality, it may be a required to reject constructs of self-importance to identify with the other; their experiences, and their perceptions. Reflecting on it and the self, Carrie Lambert described empathy as ‘... a fellow-feeling that exceeds the rational boundaries of subject and object… a determined demolition of boundaries of self’ (2002 p. 15). If a person feels empathy for (an) other and recognises an inequality in their experience in comparison to their own, that person may experience unease, concern and disquiet, even a righteous outrage. To appreciate the experience more fully, it is valuable to consider the feeling of disquiet, stemming from a consciousness of inequality, which may occur and take root. It is proposed that the genesis of the empathetic response is the recognition and value of life, sentience and worth in the self; and then perception, understanding and acknowledgement of it in others. The paramount motivator is the perceived inequality of experience, or provision for (an) other. Indeed, the response to inequality may vary widely according to the individual and the overriding social and cultural environment. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the experience of the private individual may be different from the response of a designer as an independent practitioner, and different again from that of the designer employed within a corporate setting. All of these personas may be the same person at different stages, or in different roles in their life, or perhaps, at times of the day. There maybe a mismatch or disparity, if not complete lack of connection between the responses of an individual. Is this then selective concern? In an example previously posited, he or she may privately feel prompted to sponsor a child in a developing country, but professionally, attach little importance to poor working conditions in the subcontracted factories where the sponsored child may later work.

The discussion of inequality within the fashion industry can be alarming to stakeholders due to their investment in the status quo of the system. It could possibly be because if an inequality is acknowledged, the next step must be to remedy the situation, which may be disruptive, or at odds with the current professional environment. There are structures that provide equality, such as a cooperative: defined as: a business owned and jointly run by its members, with profits or benefits shared among them.’ (Oxford Concise Dictionary 1995), as for example, the earlier mentioned COOPA-ROCA, Rocinha Seamstress and Craftwork Co-operative in Brazil (Clark 2008) (Figure 30.). A very linear interpretation of equality may not be the goal. Although some interesting examples of cooperatives in the fashion industry exist, and are worth exploring further, an initially
more workable goal may be fairness. Equality can be fair, but there are instances when the share of the outcome may be equal, but not fairly represent the work and/or effort involved. It is an equal provision for all parties, be it of workload, payment or food. The meaning be broader: equal access to the environment, to other cultures and future generations. Fairness represents the notion of equal chance and opportunity: the concept of fair pay for work, fair arrangements relating to use of land, water, and energy for a variety of cultures and future generations.

Following on, it is provocative to question whether fairness is more difficult to establish than equality. To treat workers equally in regard to pay might not reflect their experience, ability, skills or productivity; however, fairness and social justice could address these factors. Moreover, fairness could also relate to the stewardship and allocation of resources. There may be other viewpoints to the argument: the expectation of equality may offend certain stakeholders, such as shareholders and subcontractors who may support fairness and social justice. In the English speaking world fairness is of particular pertinence, and specific importance in Australia.

Fairness and the Australian Milieu

To comprehend the pertinence of fairness specifically to Australia, it is germane to understand the meaning of a ‘fair go’ (Thomas 2006). The phrase is a reflection of the Australian egalitarian interpretation of equality, and is very often used in relation to Australian values, character and attitude to living. Essentially, the Australian ‘fair go’ is grounded in a version of social justice: it relates principally to fairness—equality of opportunity for all. It may originate from the early culture of Australia, from convicts and homesteaders feeling disenfranchised by the rules and privileges of the English class and justice systems, politics and law by distance and inclination. The concept has been perceived as originating in Nineteenth Century bush culture, and perpetuated by the Diggers (experienced Australian servicemen), along with two other crucial Australian values; ‘mateship’ and ‘she’ll be right’ (Salt 2003, p. 2). The idea of ‘a fair go’ continued into the mid Twentieth Century and has been accepted since then by the waves of immigrants from Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia. The concept is highly attractive to anyone who has experienced oppression, or disadvantage; the idea of being given opportunity unaffected by prejudice. Living within Australia (or settling here from another country), a fair go is a cultural belief: an espoused national value and a practical expectation be it in business, sport, politics, spirituality, or the arts. However, the value has been co-opted and
reinterpreted for contentious political ends as Andrew Robb (then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in the John Howard Liberal government) wrote in a discussion paper in 2006:

... Our respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, support for democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, the equality of men and women, the spirit of the fair go, of mutual respect and compassion for those in need.

The discussion paper was written as a rationale for a citizenship test for immigrants that would bundle questions on ephemera and nuanced perceptions of the Australian national identity. It may be deemed an Australian right, an antipodean echo of Article Two in the United Nations Declaration of Rights, referring to rights and freedoms. The importance of 'a fair go' to the Australian character can be acknowledged and when there is a denial of opportunity it can be described as 'un-Australian'. The individual or organisation within the Australian culture that does not give or provide 'a fair go' would be perceived as lacking, profiting by denying others within the psyche of Australian popular culture where humanity is highly valued (Gaita 2004, p. 11). The contemporary attitude to 'a fair go', and ethnic diversity may have changed from the 'bad old' non-integrated 1950’s. On reflection, there were aspects of society in comparison to now that can be perceived as more egalitarian (Gaita 2004; West 2006). It is questionable whether the robust version of 'a fair go' as a practical or theoretical value has survived into the early Twenty-first Century in Australia, specifically in the fashion industry. The meanings and relevance of 'empathy', equality and fairness can not be fully understood unless they are situated. Specifically, it is necessary to consider them as they may be employed in the industry, starting with a view of them from a designer's perspective.

**DESIGNER**

Although addressing behaviours within the industry, the hypothesis for the research is situated in the practice of a designer. Because it is in the design concept and methodology that the philosophy and ethics are inculcated, this will in turn influence the rest of the FD/LP: V2. Therefore, to grasp the influence that the designer's choices will have on the rest of the supply chain, and the eventual product, it is necessary to address 'empathy' and equality from a designer's perspective.

**Empathy as a Designer Tool**

The role of empathy within the fashion industry, and more specifically within design and design related areas, merits further enquiry. The designer has three positions: private individual, professional designer and corporate designer. In each of these positions, he or she may have a variety of perspectives, philosophies, values, and ethics that are involved. It can prove problematic, as they may not be integrated, hence an empathetic private individual may be working as a corporate designer for an un-empathetic company. Alternately, a company with a strong vision in social responsibility may have to recruit, and retrain their designers to engage with their company vision. Finally, the professional designer may be empathetic, and either freelance for a company without empathetic values or work within their own professional practice incorporating an empathetic design methodology. Accordingly, the designer may experience an unease prompted by a conflict of philosophy, values, or ethics, it may be associated with the disquiet (described earlier) regarding inequality of provision for the other. Designers trained from late Twentieth Century in Western European methodology may have difficulty incorporating empathy within their process. The model of a fashion designer is as artist/creator/author/auteur with an entitlement to utilise expression and function within the outcome. These designers may find it challenging to surrender the outcome to another approach; indeed, there may be a perception of loss of control, and loss of recognition of themselves, creatively. Furthermore, some designers may experience the perspective as being narrow and creatively restrictive. To spur designers to explore and experiment with empathy in their design process, there needs to be prompts or drivers. An experience, personal or professional, in perceiving inequality in regard to a person or an
environment, can trigger an empathetic response to rectify the situation. To enable a response as opposed to a reaction, the perception may need to be explored and verified with the consumer/user involvement. Finally, the empathetic response may be motivated by a desire to be kind, do good, and/or provide a fair go and/or a selfless act: altruism. Therefore, it is crucial to the hypothesis to consider how empathy can further work in a professional context.

As a designer, there may be additional rationales for utilising empathy that do not negate the altruistic intent, but may integrate more with professional skills and intentions. Engaging empathetically with the consumer/user can provide an energising source of creative stimulation and inspiration as part of the design development (Fulton Suri 2003). Quantitative information alone may not be sufficient: empathising with the consumer/user firsthand can provide the designer with a further dynamic to the creative process. The benefits and advantages of empathy as a design tool has been addressed by several writers (Fulton Suri 2000, 2003; Battarbee 2003; and Chapman 2005), and they identified methodologies to promote empathy within the designer (in a professional envir) for the consumer/user. An individual designer may acknowledge that an empathetic response in the design process has the potential to provide consumer/user insight that will provide added value to the product, or function as a point of difference in the industry sector. The practice may enable the product to stand out in the market. As Jane Fulton Suri noted, empathetic designers are able to: ‘...more radically differentiate their offerings from those of their competition and create stronger emotional connections with their customers.’ (2003 p. 39) In addition, there is further commercial advantage in regard to empathy as a method of predicting the behaviour of client/consumer. The ability to experience a perspective of the consumer/users through empathy may provide valuable insights into their life experience and preferences. Thus, the knowledge may not only be of value now, but also of more value in the future, and employed commercially. It is not a rarefied skill, or methodology, but a human emotional response that can be attuned and utilised in a professional environment. Spontaneous intuitive empathy for an individual is possible, however, to be able to extend the response, or learn different methods of utilisation takes guidance and practice. All consumer/users are worthy objects of empathy: they deserve to be heard and understood.

Empathetic Design Methodologies

There are a variety of documented methodologies and tools that are available for designers wishing to learn about empathy. To understand what is available, it is expedient to explain eight of the methodologies identified by Suri (2000, 2003). Firstly, ‘Gathering Experience’ is the way most designers research both their topic and the consumer/user from a personal first-hand experience researching, observing and interviewing. The aspect of interacting with the subject and their world is, in turn, developed further in the second method, which is primary research: ‘Experiencing Directly’. It can not be experienced by a graph, a flow chart or a magazine tear sheet. To enable the designer to fully practice empathy, he or she requires direct experience of the consumer/user group to project their emotions in an empathetic arc: to ‘feel into’ or ‘walk a mile’ in their shoes. ‘Prototyping Experience’ is the third method, which relates to building prototypes to facilitate the designer experiencing the circumstance of the customer/user and identifying the situation(s) that need to be addressed. The practice is laudable, in that the designer experiences part of the initial problem: the exercise may indeed build empathy for the design problem, but not so readily for the consumer/user, or provide insight into their subjective experience. In the case of the consumer/user being less able, or aged with physical limitations, the methodology could be patronising, misleading and negating of their experience. The methodology would have to be soundly contextualised by other means of reference such ‘Gathering Information’ and ‘Experiencing Directly’. The fourth and fifth methods: ‘Role Playing’ and ‘Improvising’, and the sixth method, ‘Body-Storming’ consist of the designer wearing costumes or technology to replicate sensations, or lack thereof. Taking it further, the designers can improvise potential situations of the consumer/user and the potential product, or service. ‘Body-storming’ is what happens between improvisations as participants, energised by the interaction, talk about their experiences or record them. The experience sounds stimulating and may generate ideas, but as with ‘Prototyping Experience’, it is best employed as an extension
of ‘Gathering Information’, and ‘Experiencing Directly’, particularly the latter. It can otherwise distance the designer from empathy, as the designer becomes more involved with their performance of the consumer/user’s life and needs. ‘Story Telling’ and ‘Scenario Building’ are the final two of the eight methodologies. They offer ways for the designer to listen, and explain the research, and then invent or describe actual scenarios the consumer/user will ultimately experience. The absorbing and documentation of the story enables the designer to identify with the consumer/user and further empathise with their experience.

In these methodologies, it is not a case of ‘either/or’, but how many of these methods can, and should be utilised. However, there are potential hazards in not having the opportunity to sit and observe, talk and empathise with the consumer/user: without the firsthand experience, the empathy is not authentically founded. The other methodologies: building of prototype devices and role-playing become games lacking genuine insight, connection and empathetic experience. Another empathy design methodology that may be utilised by the designer are the ‘empathy probes.’ These are packages of material designed to support reflection and documentation by the consumer/user in the market. They can contain maps, stickers, pre-stamped postcards, disposable cameras, journals or diaries for the consumer/user complete, to respond to and record their experience (Mattelmakï and Batterbee 2002). The methodology is specifically organised to energise, if the designers are unable to meet personally with consumer/users. Following on, the designers attend an organised team interaction with the empathy probes information returned from the consumer/users. The game-like qualities and the imagination required to interpret and understand the information is stimulating for the participating designers. It is a team tool for a design studio, (not for an individual designer), as from its use, the desired outcome is for the designers to be empathetic and playful at the concept stage of designing leading to imaginative prototyping. However, it is still a tool to (as opposed to an authentic first-hand experience) to promote design ‘empathy’, one of a battery of ‘empathy’ tools available to designers.

To continue the discussion regarding empathy, a more rounded perspective would be beneficial in order to consider the viewpoint and role of the consumer/user in the process. The generation of perception may happen when further understanding of the part the consumer/user contributes to the process. Writing regarding ‘empathy’ and innovation, Jeremy Myerson describes it as:

… A trigger for design innovation based on empathy. Indeed, empathy is the key word. When combined with creativity, it holds the promise of better and more marketable solutions for everyone. (2001 p. 3)

Myerson’s acknowledgment that ‘empathy’ can originate ‘more marketable solutions’ may seem at odds with several of the arguments within the hypothesis which relate to the betterment of humanity, the planet and the future. It is timely to remember that these arguments are being posed in a highly commercial and almost entirely profit-driven industry. If there is intention or likelihood of subverting the industry, as it is currently constituted, is it probable that there will still be an expectation of selling garments. Thus the term ‘marketable’, as a characteristic can sit within the other outcomes and intentions relating to empathetic design. For a designer to understand and appreciate the consumer/user, empathy enables and supports insights into their physical, social and philosophical needs.

This could enable the consumer/user to form a greater bond with garment and not buy many more and thus apparently lessen profit. However, well made empathetically designed garments could command a higher price. Alternatively because the garments have an extra appeal they may sell more and thus make more profit, but utilise more resources. Yet if the manufacturer has embraced and empathetic perspective the methodology may be part of their fabric sourcing using recycled or organic fabrics. Were the question posed ‘which is more legitimate’ it would be difficult to answer. In using fewer resources in a garment that lasts longer would seem to be the answer. In what is currently a profit driven industry it is a difficult option and there are workers who need work. The answer may lie in designing a garment with more work in it which would in turn raise the price.
Role of the Consumer/User

To connect with an individual, or a market segment requires focus and understanding, beyond the physical to an ability to comprehend their needs and beliefs. In *Textile View*, the trend prediction publication, Sean Ryan observed the rise of the importance of ethics to the younger demographic:

…”Ultimately, youth culture is looking for a new sense of integrity being truthful to its own values and belief systems, whatever that may be.

…”‘Realness’ it seems is a new premium feature of any product. We still want it all and we want it now, but, above all, we want it to mean something…”

…”This desire for lifestyles with integrity leads to a desire for product produced ethically but also with personality and integrity. (Ryan 2004 p. 285)

A perception of how empathy may be utilised by a designer has been established, yet how can the object of empathy, the consumer/user, experience the methodology? The consumer/user can be the other; she or he is the object of curiosity, and conjecture: the motivation for designers to practice inclusive design, and, therefore empathy for (an) other. She or he is thus the instigation to look further, beyond individual satisfaction, or industry approval. The consumer/user occupies a pivotal place in the generation of empathy. She or he is the ‘other’ into which the designer projects to gain insights into their experience and perceptions of life. It is not a passive role for the consumer/user: an isolated empathetic projection is grounded only in the emotions and experiences of the designer. However, the experience is more profound, fruitful and useful when there is interaction with the subject. The experience is more authentic when located and contextualised by observing and witnessing their life in situ (Thomas 2007). Talking with the consumer/user enables a designer to be aware of how they feel, and provides their perspective of their circumstances: a qualitative experience. In the design process the other is real: a person whose life circumstances may be improved by a designed product or service. It is useful to remember there are a variety of other methods of design relating to working with the other in participatory design. Fuad-Luke wrote:

*Liz Smith of the US design agency Sonic Rim who was an early pioneer in revitalising participatory design approaches from designing for user to designing with user, from customer to user to co-creator. (2009 p.143)*

Adding later: ‘Now the participatory genie is out of the bottle, designers need to get a firm grip on what it means to the design profession …’. (2009 p.143). He provided a definition of Co-design noting that it ‘… is a catch-all term to embrace participatory design, metadesign, social design and other design approaches that encourage participation.’ (2009 p.147). Therefore it could be argued that the concepts being promulgated within the thesis are also part of the co-design phalanx.

In fashion design practice, the customer/user may be a demographic and/or a psychographic, or an imagined person in a scenario: face-to-face communication with a customer/user is neither required, nor often sought. Some designers working for a label or shop will visit the store and observe customers, but it is not the norm to interview them about their life experiences or preferences. For the empathetic process to have veracity and generate information, meetings or interviews need to take place to establish authenticity of information. The consumer/user role is crucial to the consultation for the empathetic design process. The designer’s ability to comprehend and appreciate their situation will be evidence as to whether empathy has taken place. As in medicine, empathy enables a respectful and informed dialogue to be initiated and progressed. The knowledge of their wants and needs both now and in the future, are of high commercial value for the fashion industry but working with consumer/user information of this kind is unusual” for a fashion designer. Direct experience of specific consumer/users offers more opportunity to acquire essential knowledge: information-gathering beyond the demographics, or the psychographics of a market. Utilising empathy offers the opportunity to gain deeper insights: comprehending wants, needs and also, their dreams. The consumer/user is the object and the other: it is for him or her that the product or service is being created, therefore the process is further than ‘self.’
The close proximity and/or regular interaction with individual or focus groups of consumer/users could add tension to the creative process. Designers may harbour fears of surrendering the creative role or methodology, or that the consumer/user may take control, thus the designer may have to emulate the bespoke service offered by a tailor. Correspondingly, a consumer/user may have an expectation of receiving a one-on-one bespoke service or product. The role of the designer needs to be re-examined because within the design process, ego can be a formidable driver. A designer undertaking the methodology would not be likely to be self-centred: essentially, he or she would already be taking a risk by ‘letting go’ of known practice. The nature of the methodology and relationship should be considered; empathising with (an) other during the creative process neither abnegates nor challenges the role of the designer. The situation echoes the earlier discussion as to whether fairness means equality. Where an empathetic dialogue occurs between designer and consumer/user, major insights and understanding may be gained. There can be meetings and communication over weeks, months, possibly longer, but the role of designer is not subsumed: the process should be analysed and managed to ensure a fruitful outcome for all participants. Due to the fact that the empathetic design process may be initiated from the designer’s perspective, the consumer/user’s viewpoint is essential to consider in order to ensure a balance of viewpoints. To describe the process, an *Empathy Loop* (Thomas 2007) Figure 30. has been mapped. In utilising the Loop, the ideal situation is to maintain the association (that is, to meet and discuss the progression of the prototype, and refine the idea via feedback, and consultation) until the product or service has been resolved. Within the section of the hypothesis thus far, the discussion has centred on the or participant and/or collaborator. Yet there are other locations within the industry that do not involve the designer or consumer/user directly, and where ‘empathy’ can provide beneficial alternatives to current practice.

**FIGURE 31. THE EMPATHY LOOP (THOMAS 2007).**

**OTHER POTENTIALITIES OF EMPATHY**

Thus far, empathy has been considered as a human-to-human experience: an aid with a range of positive outcomes for both the designer and the consumer/user. These insights have indicated its suppleness of application therefore, it is constructive to speculate on where, and how else, it may be used in the industry.
Corporate

Within the corporate domain, *empathy* may exist in various capacities both seen and unseen: the interpretation and application can be theoretical or practical. Empathy can be utilised by anyone within the corporate structure, which has a diversity of impact on the employees (local and international), animal life, the environment, cultures and communities and customer/users. Linked with the use of ‘empathy’ in corporate governance is its potential use as a corporate model of behaviour. Internally and externally, ‘empathy’ offers a methodology of understanding, anticipation and support, enabling stakeholders to feel heard and understood. In staff productivity, retention and time usage there can be an improvement via involvement and consultation. A variety of similar auditing criteria are currently being pursued in a diversity of methodologies: the Triple Bottom Line (financial, environmental and social), the Three P’s (People, Planet and Profit) and the Three E’s (Economics, Environment and Ethics). These methodologies do not replace the making of profits, but are part of the expansion and improvement on the boundaries of corporate concern in all areas; for example, risk analysis and market development. A product or service that serves the psychological, emotional and practical needs of the consumer/user brings a responsive, engaged and brand loyal consumer/user, which is highly desirable. For example, reporting on a direct, database and internet marketing conference in New York, Dianna Dilworth wrote:

> Firms achieve empathy by addressing individuals with understanding, recognition and demonstration. Motorola and Target were cited as examples of building brands that individuals have identified with good design and achieving a "whoa factor." (2006)

Following on, Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, said: ‘If people believe they share values with a company, they will stay loyal’ (Popcorn and Marigold 2001 p. 201).

To employ ‘empathy’ within a corporate environment may require extensive rethinking of corporate practice and retraining. For the process and the outcome to have credence, the understanding and methodology requires ongoing review: for effectiveness, accuracy and outcome. To support the review process there are variety of secondary research resources available for reference. Firstly, annual company reports of other industry members are useful: they reveal their purpose as a communication and marketing tool for the brand, to consumer/users, stakeholders and NGOs and the general public. In addition, they provide worthwhile information: a company’s perspectives, production location, social justice, and animal rights policies. Secondly, corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports can function for an external reader as a method of understanding company market positioning and differentiation: the reports identify expertise and specialisations: areas of business and excellence, but importantly, the declared areas of ethical (possibly empathetic) behaviours. The reports of primary market competitors may be closely scrutinised and evaluated to understand current practice in the area. There are several other ways to source information: a third option would be industry and governmental bodies that offer guidelines and procedures in ways to initiate corporate responsibility reporting. A fourth option for external research on companies and their empathetic content, are international companies and consultants (Vérité), and non governmental organisations (NGOs) that will guide, establish, or undertake the process of information gathering, report compilation and writing, either publicly or confidentially according to the client requirement. The Fair Labor Association (FLA) is an independent NGO, which sets standards for its industry members, vets them and their reports. The fifth sources of advice are charities and activist groups; for example, Oxfam International, RSPCA, Clean Clothes Campaign, Sweatshopwatch and Ethical Clothing Australia. There are pros and cons for this option: it may place a company in the position to be targeted more closely and carefully by one of the groups. Yet, it may provide an opportunity for both sides to learn more, and in practicing empathy, establish a respectful dialogue. There are contemporary examples: PETA, versus the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) where such a process may have forestalled drawn-out and acrimonious expensive exchanges (Paulins and Hillery 2009). The uses of the corporate responsibility reports can be internal and external to the company. Noteworthy is the fact that the research and reporting process need not be public: the function of the report and publication is the decision of the company. It may be an internal communication device or identifying strategies and goals. They may have an internal trial run, to gauge their profile and compliance with local and international
standards: it can produce disturbing information, which will not be promoted externally. For private companies, there is no incentive to publish, other than as a market expectation, or communication device (publicising successes). One of the reports' functions is to enable a company to analyse, evaluate, and audit the social and environmental footprint as to measure their intention against the outcome. The process that may have started as a tool within an empathetic methodology, or company mission statement, has a variety of other functions; for example, it may diminish their vulnerability to virulent activist campaigns. The report can serve to benchmark a company within their sector: as an incentive for other members of the sector as a model or best practice to improve their empathetic profile.

The shareholders have not been specifically included thus far in the discussion: they are influential members of the general fashion industry stakeholders. Even though they have an expectation of profit, they too are susceptible to the activists' lobbying campaigns. It is relevant to reflect on the fact that they are not necessarily individual investors, but can be larger group investors like pension funds, with a desire for profit, but also an awareness of their investor's ethical requirements and are alert to issue pressure groups. Due to the growth of ethical investment, their investor's may not choose to invest in damaging industries: tobacco, munitions or those that pollute the planet, or oppress humanity, or animals. Whether from a genuine belief in the altruistic worth, or an appreciation of the commercial benefits, the concern for investor's opinions could bring about empathetic design and management in the corporate sector. Empathetic design and the empathetic arc offer the potential to reach further, and empathise with unlikely objects and environments.

**Empathy in the Supply Chain**

Empathy has a much wider application and benefits. Whilst it may not be possible to see the world through the 'eyes' of a tree, if its needs and well being were paramount, it is possible to imagine what they might be. To appreciate the breadth of applicability of the concept, the fashion supply chain and the life cycle analysis may be considered. From cradle-to-cradle, there are many occasions for using empathy: obviously, in the consumer/users' sphere, but also pertaining to the environment, or the country where the garments are being dyed, the cotton grown, or in the localised treatment of sheep. Addressing specific areas of individual concern can provide short term benefits, but for long term holistic perspectives, the larger situation should be considered. It can appear beyond an individual's capabilities to change the supply chain of a company, unless he or she is a CEO, or on the board of directors. Conversely, individuals can make a difference: organising teams of employees, or companies, or subcontractors to change practice. When a designer or production manager gives a company a contract, it provides work, but there can be further ramifications. When situating production overseas, the transportation aspect has an affect on the physical, financial and sociological environment, which can be beneficial: employment enables families to afford healthcare and provides education for their children. Businesses local to the factory may profit from the influx of wages, and government may provide support to facilitate the development of the area. However, the work can be short term and leave the region in a worst state (socially and environmentally), than before. Indeed, many hazardous industry practices are relocated offshore to avoid polluting, breaking laws or harming the local (developed world) workforce; who have the access to unions and to the support of the legal system. Thus, the offshore location of manufacture saves money on production costs and also avoid liability for developed world shareholders. Yet, in a global industry with advanced communications, offshore locations are in no sense 'out of sight, out of mind.' Due to the activism associated with the fashion industry it is unwise to consider that unsound practices or infringements rights will not attract the attention of popular media.

Within the fashion clothing industry, and specifically, the leisure and performance goods sector, there is a great deal of subcontracting. As explained in the previous chapter, it can mean that the company (for example Nike) may not manufacture their product locally or internationally, or at all. They can subcontract their manufacture to another smaller company for a specific item (be it a particular shoe) or type of goods (denim clothing, for example), which can, in turn, subcontract to another company. Nike does not manufacture anything: they have approximately 120 (2005) current active subcontractors throughout the world. The information is public knowledge as they listed their subcontractors by country in a document in...
their Corporate Sustainability Report (FY 2004) in 2005; including nine manufacturers in Australia. Nike identified the extensive standards and conditions desired of their subcontractors. It may appear harsh that a subcontractor previously intent on achieving tight price-points now has to absorb some of the cost of these new standards. According to the Nike Corporate Responsibility Report 2004, they support their subcontractors in addressing the standards; however, the exact nature and the extent of the support are not published. Requiring specific positive conditions is therefore, desirable, but how are they to be achieved? Transferring production to subcontractors to comply, thus exonerating the company from the brunt of any negative feedback or culpability, could be viewed as lacking true commitment and direct involvement, and is thus not empathetic. Nonetheless, a company can publish a corporate responsibility report and be an industry instigator: future companies could construct reports as market differentiation, which could steer the sector to more authentic intention, and raise the standards of human and animal rights and environmental stewardship.

The Planet and its Inhabitants

If adopting a broad overview of the industry and attempting to map where empathy may occur, the other (when discussed) has been the consumer/user, worker, or an animal. However, Jonathon Chapman made further observations that further relate further to the planet and the environment:

… In more contemporary situations our species has moved to separate itself from natural systems, turning Nature into the other – the more that Nature is objectified as an external entity, then the more one is separated from it. (2007 p. 3)

In the constructed, Nature is frequently perceived as an opposing force; a random unpredictable realm in constant rotational flux that must be beaten down and controlled. (2007 p. 3)

As has been stated earlier, empathy emanates from projecting one’s life experiences and feelings into (an) other’s circumstances: into (an) other life. The ramifications can be far reaching, because life is not only humanity, or for that matter, only animals or insects. To apply life or sentience as a term widely in an inclusive and holistic manner opens the debate and potential; not only for dolphins or giant redwood trees, or a mountain river, subjects which illustrate the attractive and substantive examples of the environment. In the discussion, sentience is significant because it is used in Buddhism to describe beings, or life that can feel or register consciousness, feelings such as pain or discomfort. Life is not only animals on the surface of the earth, or under the sea: it encompasses the environment, and the earth itself. It is possible to draw parallels with the theories of Deep Ecology and Buddhism concerning what is ‘living,’ and therefore, merits empathy. If, as Buddhism defines, everything is impermanent, rocks could be living at a different pace to that of humanity, and are part of a ‘living’ earth, albeit, moving at a speed we do not recognise. Within the discourse surrounding empathy, life is the subject of equality, (as discussed earlier), questions then arise that relate to how much life is life worth, and which life is worthy. It is possible to imagine what could happen if (an) other life form had control of the living earth, and its resources. The planet is managed by humans and accordingly, the argument relates to the contemporary hierarchy of worth with regard to life. The positions of humans and animals on the hierarchy are determined by our belief(s) and our culture(s). It is entertaining to surmise whether one human might be ‘worth’ less in regard to empathy than one silver-backed gorilla, or more than three million spiders.

It can be disarming to realise ‘empathy’ or the ability to empathise, may be governed by a perceived closeness in blood, or nationality (culture and religion) to the ‘other’. In the case of animals, or insects, they may be judged by their appearance and rarity, or how noble or cute they may appear to humans. Knowing the potentially highly subjective nature of the attribution of worth, it is germane to consider how designers view their responsibility: whom or what is worth caring for? For example, they do not wash in the rivers, or drink directly from them, and may not allow them to be polluted by effluent. However, subcontracted employees in the developing world may wash in, or drink from a river that carries away dye house waste raising the question: is a river in South East Asia, worth less than one in Australia? Within the application of ‘empathy’ in regard
to the earth as in other areas, it is significant to consider whether a designer, (or the company or governing body) is demonstrating equitable decision-making. It is useful to question if humans acknowledge equality of ‘other’ living things. The questioning relates to biodiversity, interdependency and interconnectedness with fellow inhabitants of the planet, and also the planet itself. Carrie Lambert’s description of ‘empathy’ as ‘… a determined demolition of boundaries of self…’ (2002 p. 15) importantly resonates with interbeing, a teaching championed by Thich Nhat Hanh. Following the hypothesis further, the gamut of the supply chain provides opportunities to explore the potential for ‘empathy’ in wider applications.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of the discipline from fashion to automotive design, designers practising in the Twenty-first Century are required to be cognisant of a wide variety of information and knowledge: the most important being the needs of their fellow humans. The chapter has addressed a relatively new ‘emotion,’ (under a hundred years old) in empathy: beginning as a term used in fine art that was summarily co-opted into inter-human relations. For a better comprehension, a historical background to the term has been provided, and for contextualisation, the connection with equality explored. Situated within the altruistic conversation is fairness, which also has a close relationship with equality. For geographical context the unique pertinence of fairness and ‘a fair go’ in Australia has been described. It has been proposed that empathy (as in the past) be transferred again, in this instance, into the practice of the designer. It has been argued that there is a need for ‘empathy’, whether it is for personal, professional, or corporate purposes; for use in design as a method of connection and being, or as a tool. There are varieties of empathetic design methods, and it has been noted that they function both to prompt empathy via face-to-face engagement and remotely, in a studio environment. Some tools are entertaining, utilising the sense of play and imagination that make a good designer as an empathy aid. However, to fully comprehend and assimilate the consumer/users circumstances, it has been argued that there is no substitute for face-to-face observation, conversation, experience, and contextualisation. The process can be undertaken specifically for the other person(s), but there are alternatives with valuable consequences. The worth of the perspectives of consumer/users and their roles in the process were outlined, and other arenas for utilising empathy were identified and reflected upon. The potential outcomes and advantages of working empathetically within the corporate domain were considered. The final area of application, and perhaps for some, the most speculative and radical projection of empathy was for the planet; both as an entity, and as the sum of its living parts. The line of reasoning does not require of a designer to make an empathetic arc towards an imagined Gaia-like earth goddess, but to a physical river, a tree or a species. However, it is acknowledged that the argument is challenged by a humans’ ability to empathise, which may change due to appearance of object, and where it falls on a particular individual or corporate hierarchy of worth.

The closeness and understanding of the ‘other’ that ‘empathy’ brings has a sound commercial underpinning enabling a designer with an established ‘empathy’ for the consumer/user, to anticipate, or predict their behaviour. It is facilitated by comprehending their circumstances, needs, wants and desires; enabling imagining with accuracy; their consumption patterns and product expectations. Unexpectedly, it puts the ability to empathise onto a commercial footing, rather than only as an altruistic tool with fiscal impact. Even with learned design processes and experience in the methodology, designers are not sure of the outcomes or their reception when they start. The addition of empathetic understanding of the immediate tangible needs and expectations of the consumer/user provides a further and profound dimension to the designers’ capability, and to future planet well being.

Several reasons have been identified and proposed for pursuing empathetic design. On an individual level, working via empathy can address the designer’s experience of a culminating disquiet due to the lack of connection with personal ideals, ethics, or philosophies expected in the contemporary industry. The experience can coincide with a search for a fuller understanding of their fellow humans as a design professional and as an individual. The search is beginning to be articulated in a growing awareness and curiosity regarding the different ways that utilise conscientious, generous, kinder, holistic methods: design
of sustainability. The deeper comprehension and connection with the other, planet, animals and essentially the consumer/user, is constructed by the practice of empathy, which provides the opportunity for authentic engagement with the consumer/user, and facilitates a refreshing alternative to self-concerned design because it requires an absence of self; leaving space to observe, witness, reflect, and respond (Thomas 2007) to the consumer/users' circumstances and experience.

By identifying and examining current theories, it is possible to comprehend their applicability for the future and to speculate upon how (and if) the fashion industry may progress and contribute. As has been mentioned in previous chapters, when confronted by the ongoing behaviours and methodologies within the global fashion industry, alternative paradigms need to be sought, specifically through the conduit of examining design for sustainability. If the planet and other life systems are worthy of our individual, and professional, or corporate ‘empathy’, how and where will it be applied? In the next chapter, the hypothesis will be challenged in the application of the sum of arguments posed within the research. Specifically, design as philosophical social engagement will be explored and current and future models will be examined and proposed: the ‘manifested’ (Fry 2009) or applied ethics, and the empathy in the new reading of sustainability.

2. This could be construed as the beginning of recognition of interbeing.

3. Again, the absence of self in the projection parallels with recognition of interbeing.

4. The word 'current' is used, as this is fast-changing as both industry and government are focussing on ways of incorporating these proactive constructive behaviours. Green, R. (2008). Building Innovative Capability, Melbourne, Commonwealth of Australia.

5. The debate for a citizen test energetically taken up by the media and it was rumoured (possibly mischievously) that there would be questions on cricket referencing the then Prime Minster John Howard's interest in the game.

6. The Role Playing and Improvisation can be psychologically distancing and a barrier to the reality of the consumer/users' experience.

7. Made-to-measure (weddings, 'occasion' garments) designers, and bespoke tailors are more familiar with immediate and intimate contact with their consumer/users.

8. There is a local example in the campaign PETA, mounted against the Australian sheep farmers who use mulesing (cutting un-anaesthetised flesh from the bottom of the live sheep) to avoid flystrike (infestation and death by maggots). Specifically, the animal activists confronted Australian Wool Innovation, which represents Australian wool-growers. The legal challenges between the two parties took place in Australia, but the advertising campaign was fought internationally and all over the US and European media. Using a variety of contemporary methods (including the internet and celebrity spokespersons), PETA managed to appeal to consumer/user sensibilities regarding the treatment and perceived cruelty to sheep. In the knowledge that the consumer/users were confronted by the practice, several large clothing manufacturers in the US and Europe stopped or threatened to stop buying Australian wool, including: Perry Ellis, H & M, The Gap, Liz Claiborne, Next and Marks & Spencer. Perhaps an empathetic analysis assisted by the RSPCA may have avoided the damaging publicity campaign mounted by PETA.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Design as Philosophical Social Engagement
INTRODUCTION

Building on the previous chapters, it is possible to map the individual designer response to inequality of the other, from empathy to a design for sustainability response. The progression from consciousness of disadvantage and empathy to a reflective response mitigated by ethics underlying sustainability is not difficult to grasp. In deed, the parallels of intent between sustainability and aspects of Buddhist principles are comprehensible within a discussion of ‘... ethics materialised...’ (Fry 2009 p. 50). In the following chapter, the premise will be explored and questioned: how would a designer practice from a strong philosophic perspective or a deep faith? Constructed from a standpoint unusual in the design field; the hypothesis’ speculation and reflection start from a different place: the practice and outcome would be an enactment, a realised philosophical response, that of practical empathy and/or applied or ‘ethics materialised’. The radical surmise is pursued further in apparent opposition to the traditional design intent and established industry criteria.

Prior to opening up the argument further it is important to note that at this stage of the research there has been a change of the research design and methodology. As mentioned in Chapter One because of the synergies between the topics there was a tantalising question to be answered what if? So this chapter takes the form of a reflective speculative theoretical discourse concluding with the construction of a proposition for an alternative paradigm of fashion practice; sourcing, formulating and contextualising the theory and guidelines for application.

Design as philosophical social engagement is divided into three sections. Firstly, the motivation for engagement will be considered, and it will be argued that there may be an additional prompt other than rationality to motivate a designer, and that is to serve. The definitions of rational, and rationality being promoted are those of the Oxford Concise Dictionary: 1 of or based on reasoning or reason. 2 sensible, sane, moderate; not foolish or absurd or extreme. 3 endowed with reason, reasoning. (1995) To contextualise the line of argument, ‘rationalism’ (traditional design intent) will be contemplated and its role in design, specifically fashion design, will be interrogated. The popular image of fashion and the fashion cycle is referenced, and the possible deeper alternative drivers identified: these are empathy and sustainability as part of philosophical, (or religious) expression, and practical application. In the second section of the chapter, alternative drivers underpinning the design process will be presented and these address the surrender or suspension of self/ego, and service and philosophically-inspired social engagement. The meanings of engagement will be explored, and their connectivity to factors affecting a social response will be examined. Furthermore, the meaning and connotation of service within the discipline will be questioned: whether the surrender of self (creative) and profit and/or as fashion is design activism (Fuad-Luke 2009). From religion to philosophy comprises the third and final section of the chapter. In addition, the question of ‘which comes first’, in the designers’ response: ‘religion, philosophy or design’, or vice versa will be considered as the considered or unconscious enactment of ethics can occur when maintaining the status quo in whichever culture a designer is practicing. An example of conscious enactment via Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB) is proposed, and the driving intention of SEB is explained. The guiding principles of Buddhism in the Eightfold Path are briefly revisited, and specific guiding principles will be identified. How SEB may affect the stages of the Fashion Design/Production Loop Version 2 (FD/PL: V2) and the consequent list of issues will be considered as will the choices made by designers and other stakeholders. To elucidate the unusual nature of the proposition being made, the expectations of designers, design practice and the design industry are revisited. Following on, to start the chapter and to appreciate what is being proposed, it is necessary to examine one of the primary design motivators and methodologies, which is ‘rationality’.
In an argument focused on addressing philosophy, religion and fashion, it seems anomalous to consider the role of rationality in design. Fry appeared to be unimpressed with rationality when he stated:

> For all the celebration of human intelligence, the culture of Western rationalism that came into global dominance totally failed to comprehend and respond to the innate and subsequently amplified propensity of human centeredness toward being unsustainable. (2009 p.2)

In a similar vein of distrust of rationalism and when writing about spirituality and corporate social responsibility, David Bubna-Litic observed:

> The contemporary aversion towards things spiritual in corporate life can be traced back to early-modern religious ructions in European history, which appear motivated by the rise of the rationalistic secular society. (2009 p.2)

Indeed, the thesis rests on the fringes of various areas of research, and therefore, to establish a comprehension of the unorthodox nature, it is useful to consider what could be argued as the received orthodoxy, which leads to orthopraxy.

### Design Has Been About Rationalism

To deliberate on whether design, specifically fashion design, can be an extension of a philosophy, it is essential to examine what is currently perceived as constituting the driver for design. Rationality within the general design process is perceived as a desirable trait; that is, design decisions made, based upon and guided by reasoned thought. As Chapman and Gant state: ‘Form and function of objects play a central role in the practice of any designer.’ (2007 p. 141) The rational perspective is valued and striven for; objective decision-making is lauded. Similarities may be drawn with the discipline of engineering, in that provided with a problem, the designer observes, analyses and evaluates. Correspondingly, it could be expected to incorporate quantitative research, and/or empirical data in the process. In a different vein, the designer would need to take into consideration the sociological, cultural and political environment, in addition to the current market, and the work of competitors both locally and internationally. Based on knowledge of the problem, her/his professional practice, the client (employing label or company), the materials, the intended market and consumer/user, various solutions are then identified by the designer. However, as distinct from most engineers, the designer will conceptualise and then introduce both personal avenues of interest and design styling.

Furthermore, there is an expectation that the fashion designer will not only resolve the problem in terms of approximate function, but the product will also be wearable, pleasurable in a tactile sense, and ultimately, visually desirable. If the ‘form has followed function’ according to tenets of the Bauhaus theories, it could be said that in the 1980s ‘form followed fun’ and perhaps in the case of fashion that ‘form follows ego’. Contemporarily as reality shows and red carpet ‘events’ dominate popular culture on many formats maybe ‘form follows celebrity’. The fashion industry and media are often in a co-enabler with designers becoming part of the melee; Alex Perry in Australia, Karl Lagerfeld and Donatella Versace internationally. The conceptualisation and design development can be realised in mass manufacture – often in the tens of thousands, or in smaller numbers for a national designer label. However, there are many forms of design intent; for example, a designer could have different intentions towards the consumer/user: to serve, challenge and inspire. In the industry, the designers’ main motivation is to problem-solve, and express themselves for profit. To summarise, design can be about ‘serving’ market needs, the ego (designer and/or client), and the shareholders’ expectation of financial profit.
Fashion and Rationality

Fashion design is neither purely rational nor committed in its approach to wearability or function, but it is to profit. Garments can be hardwearing, easily laundered, or suitable for purpose; but it is likely that these are clothing as opposed to fashion. Furthermore, it could be argued that fashion is not rational as an industry in its misuse of the resources, and the rights of the inhabitants of the planet. It could be argued as mentioned earlier that form does follow ego and celebrity. The elaborate and decorative nature of some fashion garments, in particular, *haute couture*, combined with the extremes of styling in fashion magazines, and the sensational nature of the composition of fashion photography, incline the observer to be challenged when called upon to identify rationality in fashion design, as shown in Figure 32. It could be queried as to what is the driving intention to be rational: for the planet (to preserve and contribute); or rational for the stakeholders, that is to sell units of product that will be replaced in quick succession. The design decisions made to conceptualise an *haute couture* collection are based on challenging the medium, pleasing the consumer/user and creating objects of desire. It is possible to question whether fashion is meant to be rational, or whether it should ever be. Epitomised in *haute couture*, high fashion perceives itself as creative, extravagant and unorthodox in the extending of craft, and does not conform to the traditional expectations of rationality. In some ways, part of the mystique of *haute couture* is the impenetrability of the creative process and its expression, which is expected and fostered by parts of the media and the general public. Joanne Finkelstein identifies the contradictions in the discipline:

*Fashion in the Twentieth Century is big business … At the same time that we accept fashion as a serious economic enterprise, there is a strong contrary intellectual tendency to condemn it as frivolity that bestows too great an emphasis on the trivial.* (1996 p. 3)
As outlined in Chapter Two, the language of fashion in journalism and marketing is unrealistic and this serves many purposes. Within the couture design process, whether challenging the paradigm or pursuing creative expression, the reality of production is embraced: fabric has to be sampled and ordered, pattern cutters and craftsmen instructed. It presents a paradox in that the supposedly irrational and the frivolous are rationalised, interpreted, substantiated, quantified and planned. Fashion design has focused on anticipating and feeding the desires of the market, the building of the brand, the company and financial recompense. The industry is very highly reasoned and rational in its drive to manufacture, sell and make profit.

Rationality, Sustainability and Philosophy

Following on the argument made in Chapter Three regarding time, rationality in a fashion context is challenged by the speed of the fashion industry cycle. Twice yearly collections are presented by haute couture designers, yet the mass production companies place new designs into their stores twice a month, or even, once a week, resulting in the consumer/user's buying new garments that are disposed of whilst they are still serviceable (Fletcher 2007), creating a paradox in regard to sustainability. The methodology sanctions the disposal of clothing, waste of resources and sidesteps the fact that environmental resources are finite: thus the perspective is illogical if environmental sustainability is a desired outcome. Moreover, the argument raises the opportunity for reflective rational thought by the designer, manufacturer, or consumer/user regarding the consequences of their choices in the life cycle of the garment. Rationality relates to short term profit for the shareholders, whereas it could be pegged to responsible choices that augur long term profit for the earth, and its current and future occupants. Choices based on profit alone are understandable within the fashion industry with its acknowledged imperative, but are irrational for the long term sustainability of the planet. As Fletcher stated:

The textile and garment manufacturing industry in general is recognised as both a major user of water and major polluter, scoring worse than any other on the UK Environmental Agency’s pollution risk assessment. (2008 p. 41)

If these choices continue to be unchallenged, the industry will further jeopardise the planet. From the designer's perspective, it is their role in the FD/PL: V2 is the most important; the conceptualisation of the range drives the production cycle, thus their decisions have the most influence. All of these stages require decisions: therefore, a holistic response is necessary to achieve a more sustainable outcome. Within the general fashion industry, choices are driven by focused perspectives of the market and the financial benefits yet there are deeper underpinnings at the human, and potentially, the corporate levels. As outlined and discussed in previous chapters, there are new readings and interpretations of sustainability that are emerging, and this discourse is part of those readings. It is hypothesised that choices guided by both empathy and reason will contribute to sustainable outcome.

It is possible to question if responsible choices relating to sustainability are rational, philosophical, or empathetic. Perhaps, there used to be just one option, say rational but now, over the course of time, it is possible to propose all three. In the previous chapter, it was argued that a paramount motivation for sustainability is empathy for the ‘other’; that is, sentient beings and environment (current and future). Accordingly, the reflected, rational and empathetic response to the fashion industry and the FD/PL: V2 is design for sustainability that is manufacture and disposal, based on ethics. However, there could be another intent that goes further than other readings of sustainability, and that calls upon an additional insight and response. The intent goes beyond the responsible, the reflected, and most importantly, the rational, and is the subject of the chapter. Accordingly, a philosophical expression should be considered in regards to sustainability, rationality and their accompanying tensions. Thus far within the thesis, sustainability has been analysed, and empathy has been identified as the driver behind sustainability. In Chapter Seven it was speculated, that to experience empathy for (an) other’s existence required social imagination; that is, to regard another human, and surrounding society, and imagine their perspective and experience, or more succinctly, to engage in common humanity (Gaita 2004). Equipped with the knowledge or information, the prior intention
has been to design, manufacture and distribute sustainably for fashion markets; that is, employing empathy as a research tool. However, the insight into another’s being provides further unexpected capabilities and methodologies and these are sited in philosophy or religion. To offer conscientious and constructive insights within fashion sounds paradoxical, but it is an alternative goal that is deserving of a deeper, supporting perspective. The question of whether there could be obstacles is worth considering, in that, if there is to be an argument for sustainability, empathy and a new philosophical contribution, then it is necessary to revisit and reflect on the systems and values of the contemporary industry.

ENGAGEMENT, SERVICE AND SURRENDER

The fashion designer practicing in the contemporary industry is challenged ethically by disturbing information concerning the consequences of choices made within the FD/PL: V2. The average fashion supply chain stretches over at least two or more countries whilst the life cycle of a garment is further subject to delivery, disposal and possible recycle imperatives. The question posed is as follows: if the designer is uneasy pursuing the usual design drivers, what then are the available alternatives? Perhaps they should because there is a change as Bruce Nussbaum wrote in Business Week in 2007:

In the name of provocation, let me start by saying that DESIGNERS SUCK. I’m sorry. It’s true. DESIGNERS SUCK. There’s a big backlash against design going on today and it’s because designers suck … Designers are saying that Design is everywhere, done by everyone. So Design is debased, eroded, insulted. The subtext, of course, is that Real design can only be done by great star designers.

In the following section, some alternatives are outlined that explore possible different motivators and outcomes.

Designing as Problem Solving - Social Engagement as a Design Rationale

Design is often presented as a form of self-expression, and fashion designers are portrayed in popular media as quasi-narcissistic in their motivation, thus perpetuating the cult of the individual designer and celebrity as an industry-wide marketing device. Conversely, it is clear that design is problem solving, therefore, aside from the fashion shows, the press releases, stylists, branding and licensing; fashion design is concerned with providing clothing solutions to social 'problems'. Design can be about solving a problem or need, be it in relation to a dress for a specific occasion, a coat for a climate, or perhaps creating a garment in proportion for a specific body size or height. Alternatively, design can be conceiving a garment, or observing particular religious rules regarding body display. These are all solved by clothing; within the problem-solving mode it is possible to imagine a designer who is motivated by empathy for the other, rather than themselves (design without ego); projecting into another's experience. There are no true obstacles in the design process to preclude both objectivity and an empathetic rationale. Therefore, it is proposed that a designer utilising clothing and/or fashion as an expression and a solution, can envisage beyond the personal and the subjective, as in the case of inclusive design. The empathetic rationale does not have to be subsumed by the contemporary reductive expectations of the fashion industry. It is fascinating to speculate on fashion design as proactive in serving social needs: a driver for social good. If there are Médecines Sans Frontières, and similarly, Architects Without Borders, could there be Fashion Designers without Boundaries? Examples of socially responsible and engaged design can be found in several disciplines: Brazilian product designer Paula Dib of Trans.forma; wheelchair designer David Constantine of Motivation, the late Samuel Mockbees’ Rural Studio at the University of Auburn in the US (Figure 33.) which, according to their website, is architecture designed;
…to nudge, cajole, and inspire a community to challenge the status quo into making responsible changes, it will take the subversive leadership of academics and practitioners who keep reminding students of the profession’s responsibilities’ (2011).

It is proposed that the impetus behind design could be conceived of going beyond addressing the issue of sustaining the planet, and embrace something further, something more profound in terms of social engagement, activism and advocacy. Consequently, it is possible for fashion design to be engaged with, and motivated by an empathetic rationale, and a philosophy.

HTTP://RESENENY.BLOGSPOT.COM/2009_03_01_ARCHIVE.HTML
HTTP://WWW.MOTIVATION.ORG.UK/_NEWS/WHEELSOUTOFPOVERTY.HTML
ENGAGED DESIGN

A key word is ‘engaged’, which will be used later, but will be explored here to enable an appreciation of the direction and nuance of the argument. The term is not used lightly but with implication: it relates to being involved or committed to a subject and being useful. Close to the French term ‘engagé,’ meaning ‘morally committed,’ or to pledge oneself, ‘engaged’ has a variety of practical interpretations. One of the meanings of ‘engage’ is to ‘… come into battle …’ (1995), although bellicose in tone, the interpretation is useful because it addresses the premise of two entities (designer and ‘others’) being linked in a task, but not as adversaries. Thus a designer could be ‘engaged’ or ‘engagé’ in a task, or with a topic. Within this concept it is acknowledged that there are similarities perhaps with co-design and participatory design. In the proposed meaning of ‘engaged,’ there is an acknowledged equality of power in decision making with the specific consumer/user, or organisation. It is understood, however, that equity may not extend to resources, such as money or knowledge or experiences. For example, a designer can work with an NGO, or collaborate with and design for a consumer/user with physical or mental impairment. The analysis of the equality addresses in part, the intended interpretation of ‘engaged’ for the research and its differences from philanthropy, and altruism. Unfortunately, in the past these words have been problematic as there is a considerable difference when usage derives from paternalistic stereotypes of philanthropy, because there is an absence of equality between the rich benefactor and the poor/disadvantaged recipient. Philanthropy has been perceived as a duty or an obligation of the rich and at its worst was socially divisive. Several religions including; Islam, Judaism, Hindu, and Sikhism, Buddhism (both historically and contemporarily) expect their followers to donate their labour, and their produce, food or money as soon as they are able, or when they have more than their immediate necessity dictates. Social divides are not, therefore, as pronounced. For example, the practice of tithing (giving a tenth of the individuals' yearly income) was initially used to support the English Christian church and clergy, but is still practiced by individuals, or groups to support the less fortunate in certain circumstances. Papanek was also intrigued by a Finnish practice, and its name which he mentioned:

This word, kymmenykset, means the same thing as the medieval church word tithe. …
Being designers we can pay by giving ten percent of our crop of ideas and talents to the seventy-five percent of mankind in need. (1984 p.68)

To return to an earlier point, it is possible for a fashioner designer to be ‘engagé’; that is to be ‘engaged’ with a person, or a community, or an environment and be socially engaged. Via social engagement there is an opportunity to radicalise, or to challenge the current state of the fashion industry, and the discipline of fashion design. By the choice of social engagement (providing creative, practical skills and knowledge), as opposed to traditional models of philanthropy (finance), a desire for both an alternative relationship and outcome is communicated. In pursuing social engagement, the related areas of social justice and global equity are likely to become considerations; therefore, it is possible to envision engagement as a form of service to the individual, the community, the planet and its inhabitants. To continue the speculation, an exploration of the meaning of the term ‘service’ in the context of the discipline of fashion design is essential to extend the argument thread.

Service

Within the general fashion industry, the norm is to respond to the market's perceived needs, and in previous chapters, it has been established that it does not have to be at the expense of the sections of the market, or the rights of workers, or of other life forms. The industry model of ‘service’ is principally serving the needs of the company, the shareholders and the consumers/users. Within the discussion of ‘service,’ it is interesting that Fry mentions it when debating the meaning of design. His perspective adds another facet to the argument:
Increasingly, design, as a service, acts on instructions rather than taking action in the original sense (the Greek verb archien originally definition action as commitment, leading and completing). (2009 p.25)

Because there are various other interpretations of the term, the use here is specific. ‘Service’ and its meaning, reference points made in Chapter One, regarding the discussion of spirituality and design. An alternative perspective is presented because within design in general, decisions guided by reasoned thought are a necessity, whereas there could be negative reactions and connotations when using the phrase ‘design as service.’ As defined in the Oxford Concise Dictionary, ‘service’ is the ‘… act of helping or doing work for another or for a community etc’ (1995). The definition does not conform to the usual expectation of fashion design. Because of the potential for the designer to make choices with contentious outcomes, it makes fashion an ideal area in which to consider an alternative, less literal interpretation. That is not to say that ‘service’ is not a rational response, but the associations with the motivation to serve require clarity. It is proposed it be interpreted as social engagement, which would mean designing to ‘engage’ and make a positive difference to help, empower and liberate the consumer/user on a profound level. As such, this definition shares similarities to Fry’s definition of service as ‘archein’ (2009 p. 25). Although pursuing the direction does not preclude profit-making, it does require a close scrutiny of current industry methods and intentions. The ‘engaged’ response would be to practice problem-solving with an intended proactive, constructive engagement and outcome, principally for the best interests of the consumer/user, the planet and other inhabitants.

A robust interpretation of the word is proposed because it extends the expectation of sustainability, as defined in the thesis; pushing beyond a kindly continuance of the environment, and even further than an admission of environmental impact, sentient suffering and loss of rights. It is ‘service’ not servile; directed by an intention to be of help and provide assistance. The offer of help is in addition to an acknowledgment (and acceptance) of responsibility for the current situation, whilst working with an alternative perspective and methodology for the future. John Thackara laid out the possibilities: ‘There are three ways for designers to respond to the charge they are personally responsible for trashing the biosphere: argue the toss; cringe with guilt; or become part of the solution.’ (Chapman and Gant 2007 p. xvi) The term service addresses the possibility that design, (specifically fashion design), may be enacted as social engagement, activism, witnessing or advocacy. Indeed, the interpretation takes the argument into unchartered territory, since the idea of fashion design conducted as a social good may seem to be oxymoronic. The interpretation projects the hypothesis beyond T-shirts with political slogans on runways, or engaging with worker collectives in the developing world. If one were to speculate on what, or how, that would be, the concept becomes both attractive and alarming in its sidestepping of the expected. Yet it is possible to conceive of design where the overarching intention is to benefit others: an industrial designer working on wheelchairs, or an architect designing temporary buildings for refugees is inspirational, yet what role would fashion and clothing design play in a similar humanitarian dialogue? For many it is challenging to comprehend that fashion could be included in the socially engaged design response. Perhaps a scenario might be Fashion Without Boundaries arriving as part of the second wave of disaster support (as imagined in Figure 34.) working with NGOs and governments with companies utilising their skills in risk analysis and assessment, problem solving, time management, international deliveries and production and knowledge of a low technology, high premium industry with easily transferable skills. Perhaps the manifestation could be in designing post-emergency garments, or short-term consultation for initiating social enterprises that manufacture goods and clothing to make money for compromised economies, or to trade or barter.
Instances of fashion designers motivated to act, (that is, the act of design), as altruism, or philanthropy, or to be of service would seem to be uncommon. However, it should be noted that designing for charity (T-shirt images or specific items like the Red™ campaign to support HIV/AIDS charities in Africa), is not unusual, and donation of product (clothing) for fund-raising is common. Nonetheless, the concept of specifically designing from concept (rather than decorating a generic garment) with the genuine intent to help, assist, or as a duty to humanity is rare. It is possible to question whether the motivator might be possessed of a sense of responsibility, guilt, or ‘service’, or perhaps, empathy, and if the motivation alters because of the design discipline. There are practitioners in different design disciplines serving others, therefore, there is not an expectation of fashion design per se to be empathetic and of ‘service’: perhaps, designing clothes for tsunami victims, or children with HIV, or Bangladeshi flood victims, or in social enterprise. There are possible misconceptions at play that require investigation: if fashion could help, how could it do so? Is the perception of fashion linked to spirituality/religion/philosophy, whether the philosophy is environmentalism, or the religion is Islam, ultimately, an oxymoron?

The premise of the chapter posits that the areas of paradox call for closer investigation and mapping to identify and explain what ‘service’ and engagement relating to fashion and Buddhism could mean, and distinguish the potential overlaps, outcomes and benefits. The assumptions grounded in the perception that fashion linked to religion, or philosophy is an oxymoron demand closer examination. Concurrently, it could be assumed in a religious context that fashionable clothes refer to frivolous self-expression and disposable adornment on a physical plane. Furthermore, within the general fashion industry, there is not an understood intention to make a profound creative, social or cultural impact. Alternatively, assumptions are inherent regarding philosophy; for example, relating to Buddhism there is a supposition that the philosophy promotes only reflection, passivity and selfless action. Neither of these perspectives regarding fashion or philosophy is accurate, nor importantly, are they mutually exclusive. Concern from the fashion industry would be understandable because an assumed Buddhist intention (pre-supposing reflection, passivity and selfless action) could predicate a lack of revenue. Furthermore, for the designer, the prospect of surrendering the creative self to support an external set of beliefs, based on neither the rational nor the creative muse, could
SURRENDERING OR SUSPENDING THE CREATIVE SELF TO DOGMA, BRANDING OR EGO

The negative connotations of supporting external beliefs in the design process could be due to associations of spirituality and worshipping in religion, which imply an absence of ‘rationalism’ in favour of other principles such as faith. More worrying is the apparent surrendering of the creative self, or the primary role of profit-making: is design that rejects profit and self-expression, in order to support a doctrine/dogma mutually exclusive, or are they layered and connected? It is interesting to speculate on which is seen as the more problematic.

Within the industry there is an expectation of making a profit, and a designer receiving a salary reflecting their place within the company and industry. So how could SEB work? As Papanek (1984) wrote it is possible to tithe one’s training, time, and experience to NGOs, charities and local social initiatives and payment may not be required. Alternatively there are a variety of social initiatives established locally and internationally which a designer may work full time or be on a short term contract. In those circumstances there are economical implications; they may receive a stipend or small retainer. A designer with this particular ethical perspective may not wish to establish themselves within the fashion industry hierarchy. It may be the case that the role of design training and experience can be re-conceptualised, as designer as aid worker. Within the folio of employment options there is also social-entrepreneurism (or socio-prenuerism); where designers devise or work on a social enterprise project to make money to support a charity or cause and themselves. The designer/client relationship would by definition change, and likely be closer to SEB empathy based design, or co-design or participatory design. The Social Studio in Smith Street Melbourne is a social enterprise established principally to bring together Melbourne based refugees, and also teach skills: pattern cutting, construction and design. A graduate designer with about five year’s industry experience teaches them design and construction skills and is paid by a local education institution as a casual teacher. It is interesting to question how she would fit in the current media or industry’s view of what a designer should be.

Within Western design there is the highly developed narcissism in branding of labels or individual designers, and the consumer/user’s subsequent following of that brand. Is following a religious doctrine any more awkward in regard to self-determination, or conscious living than the unexamined support of current fashion industry values? The marketing arena in particular utilises the cult of the personality via image and text; to draw the media and the consumer/users’ attention to the product. It is not enough that the dress is new, well designed, feels pleasant, fits, is flattering and affordable, it must have a named persona attached. For example, in April 2008, a capsule collection of women’s wear for the Winter 2008 season was launched in Australia for Target, designed by the young American designer Zac Posen (as shown in Figure 35.), who is famous for his garments being worn by young American film actresses at premières and award ceremonies.
To proselytise for a religion could be perceived as worse, or as more daunting than the cult of the brand, like Adidas or Chanel as seen in Figure 36. Is the fear of succumbing to an unwanted religion (however, unlikely), or inadvertently supporting an alien doctrine more worrying than loss of evident ‘rational’ thought? The thread of the argument presupposes that a designer is not capable of reflective ‘rational’ thought, whilst likely having a personal faith, or religion, or spiritual, or philosophical belief. Are the two mutually exclusive? Could the philosophical belief be a point of design, or would it be embodied, rather than a copy by-line or a point of difference (a sales device, possibly)? The question remains that if a fashion designer were to act on a philosophy and consciously design as ‘service,’ what could be the outcome? It is this challenging premise that the chapter brings to the fore. The model of business as ‘service’ or design as service would challenge the industry and media; thus it is fascinating to speculate on the possible outcomes. Some insight can be gleaned from the example of the two fashion designers behind the former Australian label Caravana (Kirsten Ainsworth and Cathy Braid shown in Figure 37.). They worked with Muslim women in the North West of Pakistan employing nearly five hundred workers to make components of their women’s wear and accessories range. Caravana’s work had craft elements, but it was essentially fashion clothing and accessories, whilst some of their aims were to improve human rights and social justice. The Caravana designers were unusual; one was based in Pakistan and had an ongoing relationship with their workers, at other times they both worked and lived among them. The locations were not extraordinary, nor were the processes, but the social intent and relationship with the workers and independent designer target market were uncommon. There have been similar instances of designers having worked in a short-term capacity with craftspersons (usually for NGOs), frequently undertaken to secure goods for craft and gift, or homeware shops. Certain larger
international chain stores have sourced heavily from craft-makers in India and Pakistan; for example, the British High Street label *Monsoon*, who has sourced product from the region for many years.

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**FIGURE 36. CULT OF THE BRAND: Y3 YOHJI YAMAMOTO FOR ADIDAS AND CHANEL A/W 2009.**


HTTP://WWW.LUXUO.COM/TAG/COCO-CHANEL
Historically, the clothing industry has provided examples of new social models; for example, the atelier of Madame Madeline Vionnet (1876 – 1975) and her enlightened perspective on staff welfare and healthcare. In the case of the aptly named **Fletcher Jones and Staff**, the Australian men’s and women’s wear company, this progressive governance was also true. From the company’s inception, the founder Fletcher Jones, gave stock shares to the workers and encouraged them to purchase more independently. For many years prior to selling the company in 1993 (Figure 38.), clothing workers were on the board of directors and able to vote Fletcher Jones, (the chief executive officer and founder) off the board. An inspiration for the unusual approach was drawn from Jones’ interest in Toyohiko Kagawa (Figure 39.), the Japanese Christian pacifist, reformer and labour activist and his philosophies, which challenged traditional management structures and methods of working with staff. Jones’s interest was such that he invited Kagawa to visit his factory and tour Australia lecturing on his theories. Inculturating an alternative management philosophy into the running of a company can be perceived as less threatening than introducing apparently alternative ethics; for example, Jewish or Islamic ethics, (both Abrahamic faiths) which share similar threads of belief with Christianity. Fashion is however, a global industry; therefore how do Judaeo-Christian ethics sit within India or Laos? The term ‘philosophy’ is pivotal within the research, not only as an accurate description but because if the terms ‘faith’ or ‘religion’ as they are popularly defined were substituted, it could cause anxiety in the industry and also in the consumer/user. Such potential apprehension prompts extending the reflective analysis further.
FIGURE 38. FLETCHER JONES IN 1920 AND FLETCHER JONES AND STAFF FACTORY IN WARRNAMBOOL (ALSO KNOWN AS PLEASANT HILL GARDENS).
HTTP://WWW.THEFJFOUNDATION.COM.AU/DFJONES.HTML
HTTP://WWW.PICTUREVICTORIA.VIC.GOV.AU/SITE/CORANGAMITE/WMBL/7061.HTML

FIGURE 39. TOYOHIKO KAGAWA 1920.
HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:KAGAWA_TOYOHIKO_YOUNG.JPG
Within all major world faiths or religions there are rules, ethics, values, or behavioural expectations that reflect compassion. Within most countries, the values of the dominant religions are integrated into behaviours within society, government and commerce, yet the perspective does not acknowledge a larger area of application. It is possible to extrapolate that within large European, American, or Australasian companies and labels, that Judeo-Christian ethics are prevalent. However, continuing the argument, few designers in the developed world would actively notice that they were designing with Jewish and Christian ethics, yet inculcated within design choices and practice (as has been discussed in previous chapters) they make responses governed by personal ethics. The likelihood cannot be overlooked that interpretation of religious beliefs consciously or unconsciously could be made by the individual designer, or alternatively, that there could be a close following of the beliefs that are integrated into a company’s values. If these are deemed normal behaviour in a specific culture or overriding societal setting; for example, in the Mormon stronghold of Salt Lake City, Utah, the values would not attract attention. Designers are global in their design practice: working in Antwerp and selling in Europe and Asia, or working in Australia, producing in Asia and selling into Asia; so the transferability of beliefs have relevance.

In the current era of both cultural and religious separatism, the ethics of a company, and/or the designer have pertinence both negatively and positively in regard to the consumer/user. Recognition of religious beliefs being expressed in contemporary design could make designers uneasy because in the habitat of the ‘rational’ designer. The religious driver is difficult to examine; inferring and capitulating to irrationality, identifying bias, and presupposing an absenting of self-determination and consequently, ego.1 A tension between religion and philosophy and the objective outcomes occurs in other disciplines; for example, a comparison could be made with scientists who are Christian. In stating their religious allegiance, they may flag the question as to whether their work is less rigorous, or perhaps biased to support their spiritual beliefs, and consequentially, whether the research outcome is translatable in the empirical scientific research environment. There is a further example in the area of medical ethics and the related ‘life’ debate: the question becomes of particular significance when a scientist with a certain faith may express specific ethics in the ‘science’ of the research. Following along, it is possible to question whether a scientist is a Christian scientist, or a scientist first who is a Christian. Likewise, is a designer a Muslim designer, or a designer who is Muslim? Is it worth speculating at what point religious beliefs become unambiguous? Perhaps ambiguity is an essential element of religious belief, and these questions should be asked in a setting governed by both rationality and self-expression, like fashion.

Paradoxically, in contrast to the contemporary apprehension regarding enacted religion within the design discipline, the design aesthetics of objects (as shown in in Figure 40.) made by the former American religious sect the Shakers, are revered and admired. Perhaps their religious beliefs have been made ‘safe’ due to the passing of time, and because their sect has diminished to an historical footnote. It is unlikely that a young designer would, in the developed world, identify themselves primarily as a Christian or Muslim designer, or Sikh designer, regardless of the discipline due to the presupposed negative associations with proselytising, fanaticism and fundamentalism. There could be a fear that the outcome will be dictated by parameters, other than serving the industry stakeholders and consumers/user needs. To further challenge the argument, there are several questions that present themselves in considering whether practicing as a designer in response to politics is less concerning than when pursuing a religion. For example, there is research relating to Hitler’s chief architect, Albert Speer, his association with The Third Reich and the resulting architecture as expression and characterisation of Nazi politics. Following the argument raises the questionable role of certain Parisian haute couture houses that continued to trade under Nazi occupation during the Second World War (couture – Lucien Lelong under the Nazis in Figure 41.). A further interrogatory broaches whether design is an appropriate area for discourse regarding politics, but not religion. Consequently, it is possible to speculate that should an individual work within a society without question, or challenge by action (or inaction), then they are lending support. Design is utilised to support various political and economic stances; for example, within architecture: the Burj (Khalifa) Dubai Tower, or the Olympic Buildings in Beijing, or the architecture of London during ‘New Labours’ ‘Cool Britannia’. Thus a designer, be they an architect, or fashion designer, can endorse
Neo-Conservative global economics, but not address or acknowledge religion as a driver in their practice. It is a contention of the research that most designers are working unconsciously with or in response to a variety of philosophies and politics, and the ethical or unethical manner in which they conduct and appraise their outcome is motivated by conscious and unconscious drivers. As stated earlier, pursuing the expected design methodology endorses a variety of beliefs whether consciously selected or unconsciously subsumed. Consequently, to pursue a faith, or enact a philosophy does not require the naming or realising of their source. A designer can work in accordance to a faith system, in actions, outcomes and/or product, either consciously, or unconsciously. The discussion enables the question: if a designer working in a developed country were to consciously pursue a philosophy via design, basing their decisions on perhaps, Buddhist ethics, would it be apparent in the product? To comprehend the proposition being made (philosophy enacted as design as social engagement) it would be useful to pursue an example; thus, if philosophy were to be a driver (as has been proposed in previous chapters), Buddhism and Buddhist ethics would be useful. Within Western Buddhist philosophy, there has been a recent discourse and practice development: Socially Engaged Buddhism (SEB). In these countries some scholars perceive it is a rediscovery and practice of past sutras, but it is not mainstream Buddhist practice among all the lineages. However, SEB shares a similar profile to other beliefs; there is an expectation of compassion, for oneself and others. Particular to SEB is the understanding that it will be socially enacted; that is, the practitioner will engage with society. It is within the following section that final research question of the hypothesis begins to be addressed: What does Socially Engaged Buddhism specifically offer a fashion designer seeking to design with empathy?

FIGURE 40. A SHAKER ARMED ROCKER WITH ORIGINAL SEAT MT. LEBANON, N.Y. AND A SHAKER BOX-MAKER (PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, 1935).

HTTP://WWW.CHARLESMULLERANTIQUES.COM/PRODUCTS.ASP
HTTP://WWW.WEBSTERS-ONLINE-DICTIONARY.ORG/DEFINITIONS/SHAKERS?CX=PARTNER-PUB-09394507539529744%3AV0QD51-TDLG&COF=FORID%3A9&IE=UTF-8&G=SHAKERS&SA=SEARCH#922
Socially Engaged Buddhism: Enacted Philosophy

During the latter part of the Twentieth Century, the Western Buddhist laity were becoming well-informed, vocal and active; some were keen for knowledge and involvement: ready to ‘engage’, and manifest their beliefs. Moreover, they were not passive following of the Eastern model: supporting and maintaining the male monks, an abbot, or lama. Accordingly, the philosophical paths and Buddhist practice began to reflect more distinctively the Western countries in which they were being practiced. In the latter part of the Twentieth Century, writing referring to the SEB movement began to emerge, reflecting Buddhist beliefs. Within the SEB movement, alternative methods of practice have been sought and explored; engagement with members of society is perceived as an extension of other Buddhist behaviours: mindful, skilful living and meditative practice. The externalisation of individual philosophical belief as a social action is still an anathema to some Buddhists in the West and Asia; it is not the norm with several of the traditional teachings. Understandably there is an expectation by the Western Buddhist laity to have a voice, and accordingly, influence and a proactive role to play as is true of most philosophies in Western society. So it is not surprising that in a variety of Western interpretations of Buddhism and models of SEB, laity support and work alongside monks, going into prisons to promote meditation and provide Buddhist teachings. A local and international example is the Liberation Prison Project, founded by an Australian born nun, the Venerable Robina Courtin (shown in Figure 42.). Within the research, it is speculated that SEB (and the imbedded ethics) could be realised via design, and a designer or industry professional can enact their philosophy in their decisions. To comprehend how the response would be framed, the source of the motivation will be traced.
The Socially Engaged Buddhist Intention

Amongst writers on Buddhist ethics, there is discussion concerning whether morality is either the spontaneous transcendent outcome of Buddhist practice, or the result of repeated training in moral and virtuous acts. In light of the argument, it is posed that SEB is a response to inequity, a response to suffering or dukkha, therefore the motivation would mirror the principle driver for empathetic, sustainable and inclusive design.

The acknowledgement of inequity by SEB practitioners is demonstrated (as mentioned earlier) by their involvement in palliative care and working with prisoners, and in the peace organisations and environmental groups started or supported by Buddhists groups. Kenneth Kraft stated in an interview that SEB was ‘inner and outer work’ and that they were not perceived as separate: ‘we must change the world, we must change ourselves, and we must change our selves to change the world’ (2000). The concept may be realised as practical empathy and/or as applied practical ethics, as touched upon in the chapter introduction, and thus addresses the question, can ethics or empathy be included in engaged Buddhism?

For designers, there is an expectation, or perhaps an assumption, that they will practically enact their philosophical engagement. Forms of engagement develop from ‘witnessing’ (Thomas 2007), therefore action and/or intervention may not be part of the response: ‘… a great deal can be learnt of the user’s existence and of our own desires and drivers: [to rescue] can be held, not acted upon…’ (Thomas 2007). Within Buddhism, the debate is ongoing regarding the amount of intervention (if any) that is appropriate: as stated, ‘witnessing’ (an apparently passive response) is part of the Buddhist practice. To simplify the theory; it relates to ‘not looking away’ from the difficult, the unsolvable, the cruel and dreadful. Kraft further described the Buddhist response in the interview: ‘…don’t deny that reality, don’t run away from it – instead find ways to be with the suffering…’ (2000). The interpretation of ‘witnessing’ provides a direction for designers: to not look away, a direction that could be incorporated easily into holistic problem-solving, not looking for a quick fix solution, but considering the ‘long term’ sustainability for all parties. That is to say, the designer may consider (in consultation with other stakeholders) that the problem may not require ‘solving’ per se, but rather knowing, understanding and being mindful. Being mindful, being conscious of a problem, (situation or consequences) is a fundamental Buddhist practice (from The Eight Fold Path), and also suggests a greater responsibility (Thackara 2007). The result may be that the designer does not externally act, but will be, as Kraft said, ‘…doing the inner work…’. Understanding and knowing the experience of the other offers a radical alternative to most design methodology. Where it is a strategic philosophical concept for Buddhist ethics and engaged
practice, the response could be described as inactive problem analysis; posing an unexpected, perhaps contrary, consideration for designers: in that not responding in some tangible manner is highly unorthodox. For example, could a designer visit a craftsperson in the developing world and not impose change upon their product or methodology? One of the values of the concept provides the opportunity for a designer to divert the impetus from the known responses, and the short term interventionist tendency, whilst encouraging the designer to pause, reflect and observe.

Furthermore, the practice offers a psychological and temporal space to the designer for empathy, for reflection, and possible ethical creative response. Empathy informs a reflective response and perpetuates an alternative methodology: a less interventionist, reactive design practice in ‘witnessing’. The potential for inaction removes considerable pressure from the designer, therefore, any consequent response is likely to be more mindful and skilful (both essential characteristics of Buddhist practice). Following the line of argument leads to considering the what and/or how, of an engaged Buddhist fashion designer?

Principles for the Engaged Buddhist Fashion Designer

Previously, it has been argued that a SEB designer when serving may be ‘witnessing’, rather than reacting, due to the interventionist nature of design and the industry, yet for the future, the practice holds potential. To tackle the problematic outcomes of the industry from a different perspective is vital so it is timely to query what the SEB designer practice would be. The three major components of an SEB designer practice would be firstly, to act compassionately; secondly, to take responsibility for his/her intent, choices and actions, and thirdly, (and directly related) understanding the sanctity of life (fortunate and precious birth) and interbeing; and endeavouring to reduce suffering. These components originate in The Eight Fold Path, which is a set of principles to guide the practice of Buddhists: Right Understanding, Right Aspiration/Intention/Aim, Right Speech, Right Action/Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort/Perseverance, Right Mindfulness and Right Samadhi/Contemplation of life reinterpreted by Datschefski (as per Chapter Seven). Scrutinising the ethos, it is apparent that the principles contribute to individuals being aware and conscious of their intent and behaviour, thus taking responsibility for their choices. How they are interpreted is dependent on the individual’s Buddhist practice, and the way it is inculcated into design practice. For the purposes of the argument, it is understood that the designer is responding without separation of the individual and professional empathy that formulate the ethics. To appreciate how the SEB model of behaviour would affect the designer and her/his subsequent response, it is worthwhile to revisit the FD/PL: V2 (as explained in Chapter Five). The thirteen stages on the production loop relate to the choices (and the ensuing issues) a designer makes. On examination, it is possible to see in Figure 43.; the interconnection of the FD/PL: V2 issues, designer choices and outcome impact.
**THE FASHION DESIGN/PRODUCTION LOOP: VERSION TWO (STAGES & THE RESULTING ISSUES)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGES</th>
<th>ISSUES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>EVOLUTION OF CONCEPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FABRIC SELECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SIZE SELECTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FABRIC UTILIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GARMENT CONSTRUCTION METHODS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SELECTION OF MANUFACTURING EQUIPMENT AND RUNNING OF PRODUCTION UNIT (ENERGY, WASTE ETC.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RECRUITMENT, EMPLOYMENT, CONDITIONS AND PAY OF STAFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>TRANSPORT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>DISTRIBUTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>MERCHANDISING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>MARKETING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the table, the consequent ethical issues are included alongside the list of stages and these illustrate the areas where unskilful actions could cause suffering, and where respect for sentient beings could inform mindful choices and actions. The terms ‘mindful’ and ‘unskilful’ have particular relevance as they are terms used in Buddhism to describe desired and undesired behaviors. The issues identified earlier in Chapter Six in Figure 28: Ethical Issues from the Fashion Design/Production Loop Version Two are as follows: intellectual copyright/property, cultural copyright/property, sizeism (sample & production), ageism, sexism, racism, environmental impact, animal rights, child labour, sweatshops/labour conditions, outworkers, global equity and social justice. A designer making responsible choices guided by SEB would not necessarily make different choices than a non-Buddhist designer. However a Buddhist practitioner would endeavour to be mindful and skilful, which requires one to be conscious of the impact, and awareness of the ramifications when making choices. The perspective strongly mirrors the sustainable designers' practice, hence Datschefski's comparison in Chapter Seven. Furthermore, there would be an expectation for the Buddhist practitioner to make choices that are the least harmful, and more restorative for other sentient beings and the planet. Therefore, a choice that endangers, or takes life, and likewise, choices that cause suffering would be unconscionable.

Making choices informed by SEB could influence the aesthetics of the product, (fabrication, manufacture, interpretation of design) as could decisions guided by sustainability principles. An effective designer can engage with the principles, whether solving the design problem, increasing a profit margin, or using SEB principles whilst making a desirable garment constructed by fairly paid and freely associating labour. Furthermore, the garment would ideally be made in a nearby factory, utilising processes and machinery, with zero to low environmental impact, and restorative to the workers and the environment. Utilising an economic fabric lay, and constructed using a minimum of processes, recycled and recyclable buttons and zips.
A question arises: does a SEB designer serve only the fashion industry, or look to other proactive design problem-solving where clothing or fashion is the solution to a need and designing is a form of social enterprise? It is worthwhile to note that it is not being proposed that fashion be abandoned, as a social enterprise can make fashion orientated jewellery or home wares. There does not have to be a choice, rather they can both be options according to necessity. The outcome could be pursuing the right livelihood principle of The Eight Fold Path. It is the proposition of the research that the socially engaged Buddhist designer can work in a variety of areas. Engagement would necessitate a consciousness of the inherent issues, and close analysis of personal intent, and assessment of the potential outcomes. Was the question to be asked: is self-analysis and analysis of the inherent processes unique to Buddhism and Buddhist designers? The answer would be: no. Other philosophies and design practices share similarities, yet the emphasis on compassion, and respect for sentient beings in intent, action and outcome, are particular to the philosophy. Thus, a designer working within the fashion industry (or any other) can look broadly and deeply at the scope of his or her intentions, actions and outcomes. Returning to the FD/PL: V2 there are opportunities for engagement, not only in the realm of human rights, or environmental concerns. The extent, breadth and depth of utilisation of Buddhist ethics are dependent on the designer. It is envisaged that the practice of social engagement would be conscious reflection as an individual, and with the other(s) as group/partnership, to best determine the areas to be addressed, and then ascertain the ways that the project could be most compassionately and responsibly undertaken. Consequently, as reflexive practice, hard and fast rules would not be necessary, but negotiated guiding principles of conduct may be of use. For the sake of pursuing the argument a pilot set of guiding principles (Figure 44.) were assembled to provide a discussion point. The intent was to make them accessible, but still contain key tenets of the SEB and the empathetic driver. It is hoped that they would bring a designer to engagement with the planet (now and future) its diverse inhabitants (including the workers) and the consumer/users.

**DESIGN USING EMPATHY**

- TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH
- RECOGNISE THE OTHER, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE AS YOURSELF
- BE MINDFUL
- BE SKILFUL
- LESSEN SUFFERING AND DO NO HARM
- SIT WITH THE SITUATION/BE WITH THE PROBLEM THROUGH EMPATHY: LISTEN, OBSERVE, REFLECT: WITNESS
- MONITOR YOUR OWN REACTIONS
- RESPOND; AVOID REACTIONS
- IS THERE A PROBLEM TO SOLVE?
- IF THERE IS A SOLUTION, DOES IT HAVE TO BE YOURS?
- ENVISAGE ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS
- CONSIDER SENTIENT RIGHTS; HUMAN, ANIMAL, PLANET AND BEYOND INTO THE FUTURE
- RESPECT ALL PARTICIPANTS
- MAKE THE SOLUTION RESTORATIVE
- HOW LONG CAN YOU THROUGH DESIGN DELAY THE DISPOSAL OF THE PRODUCT?
- WHO IS THE LAST PERSON TO EXPERIENCE YOUR SOLUTION?
- WILL THEIR EXPERIENCE BE THE SAME AS YOURS, OR THE CONSUMERS/USERS?
- WHAT IF IT’S SOMEONE IN THE FUTURE LIVING WITH THEIR CHILDREN ON LANDFILL?
- TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOTH DECISIONS/ACTIONS AND INDECISIONS/N ACTIONS

**FIGURE 44. DESIGNING USING EMPATHY – A PILOT SET OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A SOCIALLY ENGAGED DESIGNER**
There is an interpretative aspect to the application of Buddhist teaching and likewise, it is anticipated to SEB, and Buddhist writings. Of pertinence to the research is the fact that Socially Engaged Buddhist studies appear to be in a creative proactive state of flux, as Kraft writes: ‘Fresh voices are entering the discussion, cherished superstitions are being called into question, and brand-new subfields are proliferating’ (1996 p. 491) He had earlier written (1986) a piece that was re-published:

Intellectually, Buddhism is offering the West nothing less than a new model of the universe. In the prevailing mechanistic view of the world as the sum of separate parts, Buddhism reveals a dynamically organic universe in which everything affects everything else… A Buddhist-influenced paradigm shift in the West would have further repercussions. (2004 p. 161)

It is the contention that designers, specifically fashion designers, could offer ‘fresh voices’, and the argument points to a potential that may be subtle but worth pursuing. The philosophy of SEB can offer a dynamic, pliant framework in which to place Western fashion industry ethics. It appears to have particular suitability for countries where a large percentage of the population practice or acknowledge Buddhism, or countries with a recognised Buddhist demographic. South East Asia and China are especially relevant because of the parallels, applicability and weight of the social and cultural references. In addition, it provides an opportunity to rediscover and restore the sustainable practices that may have been lost in these countries as a result of their involvement with the fashion systems of developed countries, or collaborate in new ways on different projects. It is important to note here that the interpretation, or the notion of SEB, may be alien to the off shore workforce, whether they are Buddhist or not. Therefore, as with any system of management, or philosophy used for decision-making, consultation, acknowledgment, collaboration inclusion and consensus is required. Or, once considered, perhaps another philosophy or belief can be interrogated for applicability and relevance to the local workforce and internal stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

At the commencement of the hypothesis, the notion of a philosophy related to religion, or spirituality (specifically Buddhism) being contemplated as a causal element within the sustainable fashion design process may have been considered an odd or potentially untenable option. What has been considered and proposed is that philosophy can direct the design intent: thus a belief or a faith could be applied in design practice. A philosophy has a set of principles, values or ethics, by which practitioners guide their work and life. The ethics that have been discussed are not only useful guidelines to follow in design methodology and industry practice, but are the fundamental reasoning behind the personal intent of decision-making. The potential impact of the designer’s ethics has been discussed and it has been speculated that the next step could be the emergence of the socially engaged (possibly Buddhist) fashion designer. To understand the significance of the hypothesis, the role of the designer has to be revisited, explored and contextualised. Furthermore, to illustrate how the socially engaged designer may be realised, the motivation and impact within the current industry has been reviewed. In the chapter Design as Philosophical Social Engagement, the underlying momentum of the hypothesis of the research has been extrapolated in a specific direction: Socially Engaged Buddhism.

The three sections of the chapter have addressed the progressing argument. To identify the apparent contradictory nature of the proposal, that philosophy can be a guide for a fashion designer to social engagement, rationality; the recognised driver for decision-making in design practice was firstly examined. Furthermore, pursuing the train of thought has provided the opportunity to deliberate on the current expectation of rational design methodology from designers in general. The argument highlighted how the perception of the aesthetics of fashion in popular culture are not readily equated with rationality, and
furthermore, acknowledged that it is an image that the industry, designers and the media propagate and perpetuate. As Christopher Breward observed:

… The designers’ working practices and professional identity commentators have found a convenient way of avoiding the much more complex and sometimes unsettling network of economic, aesthetic, and moral factors … (Breward 2003 p. 21)

The focus on aesthetics and designer personalities rather than the entire industry, obscures the global nature of corporate branding, and the precisely organised supply chains that enable rapid manufacture and delivery internationally. The supply chain can be rationalised: to deliver a product, and a profit, yet is the consequent long-term social and environmental impact rational? The proposed alternative motivation has a source more personal than sustainability; that is, philosophy or religion. To entertain the notion of philosophy, or religion as a driver within the design methodology prompted analysis of the potential responses.

The unconscious ethics within design that reflect the religion(s), the culture(s) of the company and the country are not part of the public discourse, and likewise, those of the designer. Thus, working in Australia, a designer could be professionally reflecting and enacting the country’s Judaeo-Christian and egalitarian ethics, whilst personally being Muslim, or Buddhist. There is a lack of recognition of the situation which, it is argued, stems in part from prejudices relating to the enactment of religion. The tension between being a designer with a religious belief, or a pursuer of a religion was identified and acknowledged as both fear of being perceived as lacking in empirical veracity, or of proselytising, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism. Nonetheless, it has been again identified that other influencing factors such as politics can go unnoticed in a designer’s practice. Both to dispel the concerns regarding a philosophy based ethics in the design environment, and to support the utilisation of SEB ethics as guidelines, a background to the philosophy has been included. To provide depth to the proposition, the intention behind the philosophy was addressed, and connectivity has been identified with the other areas; sustainability and inclusive design: a search for equity inspired by empathy and compassion. A cornerstone of SEB is the acknowledgment of the other; being with them and their problem, working together: engaging, enacting a social response. The link between the Eight Fold Path and FD/PL: V2 identifies where and how philosophy can guide reflection and action, and building on the connectivity; the closeness to sustainable design principles and practice is revealed. It is noticeable that the discussion of fashion and SEB in relation to developing SEB philosophy and design practice is judicious and timely for ‘… profound repercussions.’ (Kraft 2004 p. 161)

If philosophy or religion were enacted as design, could it mean the surrender of self, the notion of service and the meaning of social engagement in design? Yet there is little contemporary discourse on religion and philosophy in design practice, and manufacturing: Tony Fry and Michael Benedikt and their writings stand out, but they are not entirely conventional in their theories. The primary fears concerning religion are those of dogma, proselytising and fundamentalism, be they Christian, or Muslim, Jewish or Buddhist, and these were addressed. Ironically, the fashion industry is steeped in the dogma of branding, and the cult of the ego; but religion and philosophy are treated with suspicion. Examples of a religion or philosophy inspired response are difficult to locate: they may exist, but the sensitive nature of declaring a religious or philosophical motivation would possibly be perceived as problematic.

The chapter is essential for the research in that it elucidates the application of the hypothesis. If fashion, sustainability and Buddhist ethics are to come together, the context and ensuing issues have to be mapped and described. The fears of religion and philosophy are real and need to be named and understood as they represent a genuine obstacle to the use of religious or philosophical tenets as ethical guidelines. When a philosophy is made practically tangible, it can be less confronting. The discipline of design has its roots in rational decisions and methodologies; it is closely associated with the practicalities of the artisan: the builder, the carpenter and the tailor. Therefore, the possibility of social engagement as an expression of philosophical belief through methodology and practical decision-making does not appear quite as contrary. Within the global industry there are designers, labels and companies with agendas (public and private) for social justice, or minimising environmental impact, or fair trade. However, rarely is there a fashion (or clothing) designer, or company working with self identified principles, defined by a philosophy, or a religion. An exception is Aheda
Zenatti the Sydney-based designer of the Burqini® (shown in Figure 45.), a swimming outfit for Muslim women. Should these examples be emulated and the argument carried to the logical, ‘illogical’ conclusion, a designer would choose to utilise her/his skills in fashion design to serve and engage with the community. Such an engagement would enable the empathetic rationale to be pursued in an ethics-determined response, and thus a designer can choose to respond after reflection in a practical realisation of empathy and ethics. The spirit of exploration, of social engagement and how that could be interpreted has opened the possibility to look further for other applications. The dynamic parallels that Buddhism shares with sustainability have been explored further, and accordingly, the Buddhist ethics which augment sustainability theory, have been applied within the fashion design and manufacturing processes. The proposal is an extension of previous Buddhist applications, but it is neither fantastic nor untenable following on from the longstanding Eco-Buddhism movement. Therefore, if Buddhism is applied by a designer; a fashion designer, and given a societal component, the interconnection with sustainability is not a challenge. Moreover, it is posed that a design practice does not have to be driven by either rationality or philosophy; it can and may be both; a synthesis of principles. For example, a designer can work via social engagement and innovation and self-expression: they are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the professional and personal choices made in solving an agreed (with the consumer/user) problem could be guided by Buddhist ethics and principles. The result would be a socially engaged Buddhist fashion designer; or it could be a socially engaged Christian fashion designer, or a socially engaged Muslim fashion designer. In addition to rationality, philosophy and religion have been proffered as a problem-solving methodology - not as an alternative to rationality, but as a fusion of principles. Perhaps, it could answer the perceptions and realities of design as Anne-Marie Willis wrote, in an editorial describing user-centred design as: ‘… a useful counter to ego driven or aesthetically fetishised approaches to designing … much goes unquestioned … “needs” and wants are regarded as self-evident and inherent…’ (2004).
Finally, the questioning raised by the argument in the chapter has taken two avenues: firstly, where are the philosophically committed designers? Secondly, why designers, industry leaders, theorists, and academics have not asked of themselves, is there ‘service’ more than self expression, ego, and profit that merit ongoing creative and intellectual scrutiny and research? Where has been the expectation? The conundrum is not so much that there are not designers working in this way within the industry, but at a more fundamental meta-level, there does not seem to be a philosophical and intellectual space in the fashion discipline, or theory for ‘service’ and social engagement. Indeed, the notion of realised practice as applied philosophy in what appears to be a foreign domain (fashion) is provocative and thrilling. Hence, it is possible to envision an answer to the hypothesis research question: What does Socially Engaged Buddhism specifically offer a fashion designer seeking to design with empathy? Design, specifically fashion could be one of the ‘… brand-new subfields …’ that ‘… are proliferating …’ (Kraft 2000 p. 491) and offer new areas of thought and practice for both fashion theory, and Buddhist theory.
1. The perceived imposition of religion or philosophy could be read negatively as ego with the potential for a backlash as witnessed in the recent discussion regarding the motives and behaviour of Sir Bob Geldof.

2. Any philosophy could be trialled in this situation.

3. During the discussion, it should be noted that subcontracting happens everywhere: Mongolia, Mexico and Lesotho and not all workforces have knowledge of, interest in or sympathy with Buddhism. It would be in these instances to look at the belief systems locally for direction.
The Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry in the early Twenty-first Century has many roles and facets: a source of fast clothing, short-term self-expression, pleasurable divertissement, an ingredient in popular culture of developed countries, and paradoxically, an exacting, often inequitable source of employment in developing countries. Writing about fashion, Joanne Finkelstein observed:

… it is a hybrid phenomenon, located at the interstices between economics and art, psychology and commerce, creativity and banality, it has captured the attention of various commentators and theorists. They have characterised fashion as a social, economic and aesthetic force, and more often than not, all three at the same time. (1996 p.5-6)

Furthermore, the practices of both the supply chain and subsequent consumer/user have harmful long-term consequences for the planet, and its current and future occupants. There is an urgency to challenge the designer's practice, and the responsibility of the industry, due to the recognition of the escalation, and diversity of adverse impacts of the fashion industry. Tony Fry commented about the culture of consumption and design:

… The guiding forces of the status quo continue to sacrifice the future to sustain the excesses of the present. In the face of this situation, the possibility of another kind of future begs to be articulated, as does the way to bring it into being by design. (2009 p. 2)

Within these circumstances, a designers' practice is crucial to both the problem, and instrumental in the solution; thus, to address the dichotomy, a hypothesis speculating on sustainability as a potential methodology to inform design practice was embarked upon. Inherent in fashion practice, there is an underlying complex network of ethical choices to be made. Whilst investigating sustainability at the commencement of the research, an unexpected synergy became apparent; between the guidelines of sustainability and Buddhist tenets (Datschefski 2001); and this began to develop and inform the research and arguments. Thus, it is the unexamined area of engaged ethical fashion design practice (orthopraxy and theopraxy) that the hypothesis seeks to bring to the centre of the design for sustainability theoretical discourse. The research is theory within design practice and the industry, rather than superimposed from the outside: it is design discourse (not design practice) contributing to the emerging field of writing on fashion and sustainability. The work is located on the margins of various areas of research: Sustainable Design Discourse, Ethics, and Faith in Application, Social Justice, Buddhist Studies and Corporate Social Responsibility.

In relation to the research design and methodology it has been noted that a developed crucial thread of the argument for a new paradigm is the need for first hand experience of the other, yet the hypothesis is theoretical. This was due in part to the speculative exploratory nature of the hypothesis; the exact destination of the research was not clear. Initially the theory was exploratory, tentative and ‘testing-out’ (Phillips and Pugh 2005), yet closer to completion the logic and the synergy of the research elements of the theoretical discourse became stronger. It is acknowledged that they warrant post doctoral exploration possibly in application as either practice or case studies.

Connecting and Working in Concert

Specifically, within the thesis it has been argued that there is a connection between fashion design for sustainability practice and Buddhism, which is explored in the principles of a subgroup: Socially Engaged Buddhism that espouses philosophical enactment (theopraxy), as social engagement. Furthermore, even though both fashion and Buddhism acknowledge transience; fashion design for sustainability can focus on slowing down ‘fast fashion’, rather than exemplifying transience. By pursuing the hypothesis, it gave license to speculate on the potential of design, sustainability, and Buddhism working in concert. Examining the connection further: if traditional Buddhist tenets venerate sentient beings, it has been argued that it is also achieved by a holistic reading of sustainability. The dynamic of the shared principles in sustainability and
Socially Engaged Buddhism is exhilarating, and the prospect of utilising them in such an unlikely industry is paradoxical and provocative; reminiscent of the creative conceptual design process in its premise. Working from the recognition of the fundamental synergy, it became possible to construct a working hypothesis.

Lack of Fashion Design for Sustainability Texts

A dilemma presented at the commencement of the research in that sustainability theory and practice were, until relatively recently, located in other design disciplines: industrial/product design and architecture. When sustainability theory began to be considered in relation to fashion, the focus was on environmentalism, yet the global industry involves a huge workforce; thus, its affects (environmental, social etc.) are profound and far-reaching. Furthermore, the pressure surrounding environmental concerns has facilitated a myopic perspective of sustainability in regard to the fashion industry; the thinking narrowing to reference only the environment, thus fostering a propensity to examine without sufficient span, or imagination. The environment may be the start of the situated concern, but not the finish of the problems: there is a further underlying and complex network of ethical choices to be made within design practice. Likewise, when following the Buddhist tenets, to limit caring to humanity alone adamantly defies the initial compassionate intent. The logic being to care for others of whatever or whichever perceived quality of sentience. Moreover, a problem became apparent in reviewing sustainability texts looking for fashion references and applications conducted in conjunction with research to comprehend the motivation and drivers for a design for sustainability response. It became clear that the topic terminology needed to be explored and explained, and due to lack of clarity or rigour, the inherent confusion addressed and alternative definitions considered. The language confusion coincides with the narrow engagement of the industry, its response to sustainability and the negative impacts. Due to the inaccuracy of terms, a lexicon of definitions was outlined for the hypothesis. In addition, it provided an important opportunity to open and establish a fashion specific dialogue with eventual broader applications for other disciplines and areas of research and study.

Revisiting the Research Questions and Aim

In response to the literature review and reflection, a research aim and questions emerged: the aim for the hypothesis was to suggest a new reflective reading of sustainability (initially within a fashion context), and explore the correlation between the empathetic response innate to both design for sustainability and Socially Engaged Buddhism. To achieve the aim the following research questions were posed:

- How do the ethics embedded in the Fashion Design/Production Loop (Thomas and Van Koppen 2005) and sustainability design theory, and their current applications serve the fashion industry, humanity, animals and the planet?
- What are the sources of the drivers for ethical behaviour, and specifically, ethics in sustainability?
- What is empathy and its place within Buddhism?
- Do Buddhist ethics offer potential guiding principles for fashion design practice?
- What does Socially Engaged Buddhism specifically offer a fashion designer seeking to design with empathy?
Confusion and Lack of Depth in Language

The research questions were composed to enable, via the research, design and methodology, a comprehension of the breadth of the topic and its potential implications. It has been argued (as mentioned earlier), that there is little depth in the fashion design for sustainability literature available; therefore, it has been necessary to borrow, patch and collage from other disciplines to build the arguments. Selecting sustainability as a term to use in the research was problematic, as it is not easily understood, defined, or compartmentalised and yet is readily applied. Correspondingly, sustainability as a descriptor is flexible and very capacious in its meanings be it ‘to sustain’ or ‘to perpetuate’, which makes it both useful in the hypothesis, but also to design practice, theory and the industry. It is argued that fashion design for sustainability discourse and practice will become more robust and rigorous through a clearer understanding and critique of meaning, ideas and framing of the arguments and language. To contextualise the hypothesis, it was essential to explain how the fashion industry is structured and functions, at the beginning of the Twenty-first Century and within a global context. A reflective examination of the industry and its roles was undertaken, a brief overview provided and the levels of the fashion industry summarised. Moreover, the significant escalating role and impact of time in regard to the speed of fashion styles and trends, and consequent speed of manufacture was introduced to the discourse.

Lack of Life Cycle Analysis from a Designer’s Perspective

Once the industry was outlined, it became possible to clearly consider the life cycle of garment: to comprehend its impact on the environment and its inhabitants. It is notable that there has not previously been a thorough analysis of the life cycle of garments from a designer for sustainability perspective, making it the first time the fashion industry supply chain has been reviewed to trace a path of ethical responsibility from the designer’s perspective with an intention to pursue the link to global equity and social justice. The reflective analytical progression around the Fashion Design/Production Loop (FD/PL) (Thomas and Van Koppen 2005) revealed the significant ethical issues latent within the contemporary global fashion industry. By revisiting the FD/PL: V2, the issues have been explored in more depth and organised under new headings: the complexity of the issues and the stages were analysed and explored. In the past, it has been possible for the industry to avoid (or conceal from the consumer/user), the impact of those choices. The process assembled a list of disturbing issues that are rarely considered in association, or even less often, recognising the connection made to the designer. Previously, the length of the supply chain and the separation of the ethical issues within, have enabled the compartmentalising of responsibilities, thus perpetuating ignorance of causality for the designer and other stakeholders. To avoid further diverse and harmful outcomes revealed in the FD/PL: V2, there is an urgent need for an alternative interpretation of sustainability. To enable it to occur, designers and other stakeholders require guidelines or protocols with which the responsible practitioner can engage. Within the thesis, it has been argued that ethics are a crucial aspect of design reasoning, and constitute guidelines; therefore, by a designer recognising choices and their potential, he or she will engage, not sidestep, nor ignore ethics.

NEED FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR AND RESPONSIBILITY

Both a need for ethical behaviour and for responsibility was identified; thus engendering a necessity to extrapolate the drivers for responsibility to achieve better insight. For the hypothesis to be explored and challenged, a philosophy and the constituent ethics needed to be sourced and piloted. A particular movement within Buddhism (Socially Engaged Buddhism) was selected because of its practical application and shared perspectives with alternative paradigms of the fashion industry and designer practice. In addition, by opening a discourse regarding the gaps in ethical practice in the supply chain, a new space for philosophical reflection was revealed providing a rationale to reflect deeply on how a designer practices. Pursuing the hypothesis, there is an inherent requirement for practitioners following the Socially Engaged Buddhist principle to ‘not
look away’; to take responsibility as part of interbeing, and to be deeply aware that actions and inactions have results (causality). Contemplating the new principles places fashion practice and the fashion industry on the brink of a tantalising paradigm for the current fashion industry with its management and consumers/users concentrated in the developed world; and the larger number of participants (affected by the supply chain) situated in the developing world. Within the hypothesis proposition, all stakeholders are charged to look broadly before acting, or purchasing: defining and including all sentient beings in their vision, intent and the impact of their actions, or inactions. Indeed, it has been speculated that in an industry driven by desire, it is only when the developed world consumer/users become informed and conscious in consumption, and reflect on the circumstances of distant workers (and not so distant others) that the industry will change.

During the process of reading and reflecting on the topics, it began to emerge that empathy is integral to the holistic sustainability response. In researching empathy, it became clear that the driver in the recognition and response to the other was similar to the Empathy Loop (Thomas 2007), which corresponded in part, with the principles of Socially Engaged Buddhism. The practice of empathy provides the opportunity for authentic engagement with the consumer/user, facilitating a refreshing alternative to self-concerned design. An absence of self is required leaving space to ‘… observe, witness, reflect, and respond…’ (Thomas 2007) to the consumer/users circumstances, and experience. Specifically, the hypothesis questions both design practice (with its driver in the self/ego, and/or interventionist problem-solving), and philosophical practice, in addition to living as a source of integrity. With these new possibilities tabled, it is important to remember that for discourse and critique to occur, practitioners must be free to make choices: free to experience their responses and mediate their practice accordingly.

Design as Social Engagement

In challenging and exploring the hypothesis, the arguments posed within the research have been consolidated and examined: that is, design as philosophical social engagement. To advance the hypothesis, current and future models were examined, and proposed ethics materialised (Fry 2009 p. 50) or applied ethics, and empathy in the new reading of sustainability were posited. Furthermore a pilot set of guidelines were proposed.

Empathy as Integral to the Holistic Sustainability Response

The contentious issues identified by revisiting the analysis of the FD/PL: V2 in; property, exclusivity, labour, social justice, global equity, human and animal rights have a fearful breadth, which built and added gravitas to the original conceptualisation. By understanding and acknowledging the variety of constituent ethical concerns within the FD/PL: V2, it was argued that a holistic approach be promoted. Correspondingly, opportunities for ethical intervention and a negotiating space for ‘witnessing’, reflection and possible response could be embraced. Furthermore, by identifying the myriad issues that merit ethical response, it can overawe and paralyse concerned stakeholders. Yet, to avoid both apathy and denial, there is a need for recognition and understanding of the ethics in practice within the fashion industry. Alternative and complementary guidelines have been sought and a pilot sample formulated, but it is important that to note that these not be ethical absolutes.
Need for Different Hierarchies

To achieve these guidelines, a provocative speculation was required regarding how the ethics evolve, by whom they are owned, and what the intrinsic assumptions and expectations were. Indeed, to comprehend the source and the engine of the impetus, an exploration of sources of ethics was undertaken to seek fresh insights, or alternative viewpoints, and significantly, a new paradigm was evolved to guide the decision-making process. Consequently, a different balance or hierarchy of priorities for the industry were considered embracing: social inclusion, human, environmental and animal rights and profit-making. A precedent was established to discuss the designer response, role and participation within these ethical issues; social aspects being repositioned within an alternative hierarchy, and the concept of sentient rights included within the argument. The anticipated resulting ethical behaviour towards the environment and its current and future inhabitants underpins the new reading of fashion design for sustainability. To pursue the ethical discourse further, the role(s) of empathy, its meaning, and applicability were closely scrutinised for understanding and insight.

The Role of Empathy and Equality

The object of discourse was the relatively new emotion, empathy, and its connection with equality was explored and discussed in connection with the unique pertinence of fairness and ‘a fair go’ in Australia. It was proposed that empathy be acknowledged and cultivated in design practice because of the need for empathy for use in design as a guiding emotion, or as a tool. Within the design process, there is no substitute for knowledge gained from face-to-face observation, ‘witnessing’, conversation, sharing experience and contextualisation. Perspectives of consumer/users and their roles in the process, in addition to other arenas for utilising empathy were identified and discussed. Accordingly, following the challenge of the hypothesis, it was then speculated as to how far empathy could be employed. Projecting empathy as design for sustainability practice, to possibly its most exploratory and radical extrapolation was achieved by empathising with the planet, both as an entity, and as the sum of its parts. Following on in the surmise, a designer can project an empathetic arc towards a river, a tree or an insect species. However, unorthodox the methodology, empathy has a sound commercial underpinning; enabling a designer with an established empathy for the consumer/user, to anticipate, and/or predict their behaviour, needs and expectations; providing a further and profound dimension to the designers’ capability. Moreover, utilising empathy can address the designer’s culminating disquiet (cognitive dissonance) due to the lack of connection with personal ideals, ethics, or philosophies expected in the contemporary industry. Bubna-Litic addresses the problem and cites work by Alvesson and Wilmot (1996) when he writes of:

... the possibility of emancipation from instrumental rationality, the dominant ethos of corporate life that isolates individuals, creating tensions between how we live our lives in the private sphere, on one hand, and in the organisational sphere on the other. (2009 p. 3)

The approach would coincide with a search for a fuller understanding of one's fellow humans as a design professional, and also as an individual. Indeed, the methodology would contribute to the growing awareness and curiosity regarding the different ways that utilise conscious, generous, kinder, holistic design methods: practicing inclusive and sustainable design. Accordingly, a deeper comprehension and connection will be facilitated with the other, planet, animals and essentially, the consumer/user.
Untenable Option: Philosophy can Direct Design Intent

Beyond the proposed empathetic analysis, there is a practice that returns the argument to questioning the feasibility of philosophical practice. The notion of a philosophy related to religion, specifically Buddhism, being contemplated as a causal element within the fashion design for sustainability process, is considered an odd and potentially untenable option. However, the dynamic of the thesis has brought the argument to the locus; that philosophy can direct the design intent, thus a belief or a faith could be applied in design practice.

An opportunity would thereby be created to deliberate on the current expectation of rational design methodology from designers. The fashion industry, designers and media propagate and perpetuate the image of irrationality: a pandering to a redundant caricature. The perception of the aesthetics of fashion in popular culture is not readily equated with rationality, as opposed to the industrial reality of managing the consequent long term social and environmental impact, and aesthetical desires of the industry. Entertaining the notion of philosophy, or religion as a driver within the design methodology, prompted the analysis of the potential responses to philosophically-guided fashion design. The unconscious or unacknowledged ethics implanted within design that reflects the religion(s), the culture(s) of the company and the country are not discussed, and likewise, neither are those of the designer.

Fear of Religion

Antipathy toward religion and dogma, within design rationality is lauded, yet within the thesis it has been argued that this perspective stems in part from prejudices relating to the enactment of religion. It is imagined that there is a lack of empirical veracity, or there may be proselytising, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism, and there is an underlying fear of dogma. Paradoxically, design and the fashion industry are steeped in the rarely questioned dogma of branding, public relations and media-constructed personalities, whereas preferences such as politics go unnoticed in a designer’s practice. To address the apprehension, a background to the Buddhist philosophy was provided and the intention behind the philosophy addressed, and connectivity identified. The link between The Eight Fold Path and FD/PL: V2 identifies where, and how, philosophy can guide reflection and action, and building on the connectivity aspect, the closeness to sustainable design principles and practice was revealed.

Characteristics of a Philosophy-Inspired Response

A religion or philosophy inspired design response has been difficult to locate; the surrender of self, the notion of service, and the meaning of social engagement in design have thus been identified as key characteristics. To take the hypothesis further in the future, the context and ensuing issues need to be mapped and described: they represent a genuine obstacle to the use of religious or philosophical tenets as ethical guidelines. Nevertheless, it was proposed that a philosophy realised practically is less confronting: being closely associated with the known skills of the artisan: the builder, the carpenter and the tailor. Thus, a philosophical belief through methodology and practical decision-making appears less confronting or contrary. Already there are designers, labels and companies with agendas (public and private) for social justice, or minimising environmental impact, or fair trade. However, there are few working with self-identified principles, defined by a philosophy, or a religion. Terra Plan, the sustainable shoe company (Figure 46.) has been established for several years; was founded by a younger member of the historically Quaker English shoe company Clarks. The hypothesis is that a designer would choose to utilise her/his skills in fashion design to serve and engage with the community. She or he would work with an empathetic rationale enacted in an ethics-determined response; thus a designer could choose to respond after reflection; in a practical realisation of empathy and ethics.
Synthesis of Principles

The choices identified in the thesis are neither based on rationality nor philosophy but a synthesis of principles. As well as rationality, philosophy and religion are proffered within the thesis as a problem-solving methodology, which can be further researched and applied. There are philosophically committed designers; and service can be to more than self-expression, ego, and profit; and the potential merits ongoing creative and intellectual scrutiny and research. For discourse and critique to occur, it has been argued that practitioners must be free to make choices; free to experience their own responses and mediate their practice.

Pursuing Other Philosophies or Religions

The process of researching the hypothesis has revealed further areas for study and research. As stated in the introduction to the chapter, the research sits in the margins of other fields of study or disciplines, one being religious study and enacted religion. Proposing social engagement by fashion designers has opened the possibility to look further for other applications of alternative philosophies or religions. The dynamic parallels Buddhism shares with sustainability and the Buddhist ethics that augment sustainability theory have been identified: they now need to be materialised in fashion design for sustainability and manufacturing processes. Therefore, it becomes interesting to look at current and past versions of enacted philosophies or religions that utilised design; for example, (shown in Figure 47.) the work of the Amish, Shakers and Quakers.
Design as a New Buddhist Sub-Field

Another area for further research at a more fundamental meta-level has been revealed: there is a philosophical and intellectual space in the discipline, or theory, for service and social engagement. Design, specifically fashion design, could be one of the ‘… brand-new subfields…’ that ‘…are proliferating…’ (Kraft 2000 p. 491) and offer new areas of thought and practice for both fashion practice and theory, and Buddhist theory. Therefore design (encompassing fashion and other disciplines) offers an alternative sub-field of reflection, expression or enactment within Socially Engaged Buddhist theory.

Changing Context of Practice

One of the most unexpected outcomes of the research, but also one of the most logical has been a perceived change of content of design practice. The thesis concludes by discussing potential guiding principles that can be piloted for designers, industry managers, and NGOs to consider when engaging with the fashion industry for a sustainable outcome. Consequently, an argument has been made for designers to reflect deeply on their capabilities and guiding ethics, and look more broadly for ways to enact them. Design practice can no longer be unexamined; the causality goes further than the runway, the magazine and the store, and the shareholders’ dividend. Design is a way of contributing more authentically to the industry; serving the consumer/user, and the world.
Transferable Skills

Whilst examining the role of designers, a further area of potential research was revealed; that of the skills and capabilities developed by designers in their practice. The question arose as to where else could these skills be of use if engaged in service. The need for the skills of problem-solving, imagination, lateral thinking, maintaining supply chains, risk analysis, troubleshooting, clear and speedy communication in imagery and text in a variety of contexts, languages, and cultures and meeting deadlines, are not limited to an application in the fashion industry. They are both desirable and transferable in a variety of continuing or part-time scenarios; for example, in disaster relief (an example of a second year degree student’s – Mia Zielinsk – response in a short conceptual project in shown in Figure 48). There have been similar to models in other design disciplines. The scenario of a fashion designer seconded to Oxfam or UNICEF is entirely possible. Arriving with the second wave of aid and support, a designer could analyse an aspect of the emergency, or disaster situation, where the solution could be clothing, a fabric, or three dimensional cloth objects, or a source of low technological employment for disaster survivors making product or a service for sale, barter, or trade. Furthermore, the hypothesis argued for recognition of the opportunity for designers to question sustainability theory and practice in design; specifically, fashion design for sustainability. The research has been a conduit to examine ethics in application, also theopraxy (the practical expression of theology/philosophy) in fashion design in particular, and design in general. Thus, an area of research could be conscious ethics in design and manufacture. Consequently, another area of research shown regarding the hypothetical reflective negotiating space has been afforded for designers within practice for ‘witnessing’, reflection and where possible, response can be embraced and opportunities for ethical intervention considered. A further opportunity is therefore provided to engage and be open to examining their intentions, their ethics and the subsequent outcomes.
Impact and Contribution of the Research

The research has significance because of the questioning of the intent behind sustainability; by identifying ethics and empathy, it distinguishes the shared synergies between the principles of Buddhism and the empathetical intent intrinsic in sustainability. Inherent in the questioning of the impetus behind sustainability (situated and contextualised within the fashion industry), was the interrogation of the motivation for guidelines of conduct, from a fashion designer’s perspective. Within the hypothesis, it has been argued that the designer has three ethical positions: private/individual/personal, artisan/professional designer and corporate designer, and it questioned if and where the related ethics are referenced. Furthermore, the research commenced a discourse of fashion and ethics (situated in fashion design practice), waiting to be applied in practice, or by researching equitable case studies. Within the initiative, a new reflective reading of sustainability incorporating the ethics of Socially Engaged Buddhism is proposed for the fashion industry; from a practicing designer’s perspective.

These arguments and speculations have opened up new scenarios and topics; social engagement, innovation and enterprise are areas of growth for fashion designers intending to design as philosophical social engagement. Conscious design and responsibility do not have to be worthy, nor must they be drab. That is, conscious philosophically engaged design that will acknowledge the other; working with a variety of stakeholders for a mutually identified need, whilst not abnegating whimsy, playfulness or aesthetics, and desirability to the consumer/users, wherever they are located.

The research contributes to the field of fashion design for sustainability discourse, and to the emerging area of ‘…ethics materialised…’ (Fry 2009 p. 50), and the examination of theopraxy. It facilitates space for designers to philosophically question their approach to their role and practice, and to radically reconfigure and situate the context of their practice.
REFERENCES

Trade Shows, Exhibitions and Fashion Events


Reports, Conferences and Papers


Books, Articles, Publications, Glossaries


