Embracing mindfulness:
Enriching slow fashion for human and environmental wellbeing

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Design

Figure 1: Sandra Backlund's sculptural knitted garment by Elisabeth Toll, Stockholm New, n.d.

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other 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; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed. I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Hayley Thompson

06 October 2019
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<tbody>
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<td>WGSN</td>
<td>Worth Global Style Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIY</td>
<td>Do-It-Yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>STWI</td>
<td>Sweden Textile Water Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFTO</td>
<td>World Fair Trade Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOTS</td>
<td>Global Organic Textile Standard</td>
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<tr>
<td>USDA</td>
<td>United States Department of Agriculture</td>
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<td>FLO</td>
<td>Fairtrade Labelling Organizations</td>
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Abstract

This research explores the slow fashion movement and its relationship to an emerging social trend for mindfulness. Slow fashion seems to embrace a concept at the heart of mindfulness practice: awareness. Mindfulness is a state of awareness that involves accepting a clear focus on present realities. The phenomenon of mindfulness is developing as a potential force for cultural change. The current predominant fashion system supports growth-focused, fast fashion, which has been destructive to the environment and human wellbeing. Existing scholarly discourse has identified the urgency of a significant cultural shift to alternate approaches, resulting in the emergence of a sustainable and ethical fashion space encompassing slow fashion. Here, slow fashion is considered through a new lens of mindfulness as a conceptual framework for both practices within a fashion context. It examines the possible integration of mindfulness and slow fashion, and the implications within the fashion system. The key research question is: Can a more holistic embrace of mindfulness practice enrich the slow fashion movement within the current fashion system? The research findings reveal that although slow fashion appears to embrace mindfulness, it is not as a conscious or holistic engagement involving the theory and practice of mindfulness. The thesis argues doing so would enable an enriched slow fashion approach within the current fashion system to address social and environmental issues resulting from fast fashion production and consumption. The thesis introduces the concept of ‘collective mindfulness’ and proposes its capacity to emerge through slow fashion to enhance outcomes for the environment and human wellbeing amongst the wider community.

Keywords: Slow fashion, mindfulness, the fashion system, collective mindfulness, fast fashion.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This research responds to the emergence of a broad change in societal beliefs and behaviours evident in the mainstream adoption of mindfulness, a state of awareness of present realities, alongside sustainable movements, particularly sustainable fashion. Interestingly, this practice is underpinned by critiques of how to live well, what it is to be human and what makes a truly ‘rich’, thriving society. The strength of these emerging movements indicates a willingness for the interconnection of our lives to resonate deeply, for the broad impact of our actions to be acknowledged, and for a deep value of caring and quality of life to resonate strongly throughout society. This research examines the transformation of established growth and profit focused values that are dominant in the fashion system. This transformation is a reaction to fashion practices that harm the environment and human wellbeing (Hayley Thompson 2018, figure 2.). This aligns with the emergence of slow fashion to reveal a potential connection between slow fashion and mindfulness practices.
Awareness appears at the heart of mindfulness practice yet in conjunction with a present centric, accepting, non-striving and non-judgemental state of being. Similarly, the sustainable and ethical fashion movements embrace awareness of the impact of damaging activities in the fashion system, yet is driven by a predominant reactive, future-striving, activist spirit. The central objective of this research was to explore the slow fashion movement through a new lens of mindfulness as a conceptual framework for both practices within a fashion context. In order to examine the possible integration of mindfulness and slow fashion practices, it was important to identify possible common practices as well as distinct practices within both paradigms that might have future shared relevance to improved outcomes for fashion practices, particularly production and consumption. This thesis also seeks to investigate the relevance and possibility of ‘collective mindfulness’ in addressing the
detrimental impacts of fashion production and consumption with the potential for producing improved outcomes for the wider community. Within this thesis, collective mindfulness indicates the concept of a shared commitment to individually implement key tenets of mindfulness in slow fashion practice, to potentially develop a larger and more meaningful collective body of mindful individuals. The research addresses the question: Can a more holistic embrace of mindfulness practice enrich the slow fashion movement within the current fashion system?

This thesis argues slow fashion is the result of a critique of the current predominant fashion system. The slow fashion movement has recently developed a presence within the fashion system, yet shares various ‘slow’, mindful values and practices with a broader sector of ‘slow garment making’, identified in this thesis to encompass areas such as ‘slow clothing’, artisanal fashion and haute couture. Slow fashion represents a set of fundamental, alternative values and fashion practices that seeks to engage the areas of design, production and consumption for the movement’s optimal function. On the surface it would seem to align with the increasing trend for mindfulness, however, are there aspects of mindfulness that have been embedded within the contemporary fashion system without an explicit, conscious alignment with mindfulness theory and practices? This thesis argues a more conscious and holistic engagement with mindfulness will lead to a more extensive practice of slow fashion, and aid in the potential formation of collective mindfulness practices within the current fashion system, as a result of individual mindful practice.

The literature surrounding sustainability in fashion draws attention to the harsh reality of the fashion and textile industries’ negative social and environmental impact. Founder of slow fashion label People Tree, Minney states:

the way the Western world – and, increasingly, developing nations such as China and India – lives and consumes is destroying the planet. We are already consuming 1.5 times our planet’s resources,
hurting towards an unsustainable future which threatens our environment and our very existence (2016, p. 11).

Built on a linear model of extracting non-renewable resources to create garments, ultimately for limited use before they find their way into landfill or are otherwise incinerated, the fashion industry exhibits numerous causes for change (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017, p. 19). In the textile industry, which supports the fashion system, non-renewable resources of up to 98 million tonnes per year are used, synthetic materials are produced, fertilisers are applied to crops, chemicals are used in the dyeing and finishing of fabrics, 93 billion cubic metres of water is used each year and, in 2015, greenhouse gas emissions reached 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, all having a tremendous impact upon human and environmental wellbeing (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017, p. 20). To counter this effect, a broad social movement arose based on generating a redefined future for the fashion industry.

A review of the key literature confirms that sustainable, eco, ethical and slow fashion have emerged as alternate approaches to address the social and environmental impact of the current predominant fashion system. However, the distinctions between the various approaches have yet to be clearly defined or widely accepted. As scholars interested in fashion and design industries, including Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten (2014) and Pookulangara and Shephard (2013), identify, researchers continue work to elucidate the boundaries between these different areas. In practice within the fashion industry, Cataldi, Dickson and Grover (2013, p. 30-31) found that amongst ‘46 slow and sustainable fashion designers, brands, buyers and manufacturers from Canada, the United Stated, UK, Denmark, Sweden and other European countries’ surveyed, there was not a commonly shared definition of sustainability, and therefore, the authors suggest ‘the slow fashion movement is a collection of fragmented initiatives that are working independently’. However, the various strands in this space can interrelate, as a platform has been established for the emergence of labels that are more fluid and embrace practices from multiple approaches. For example, Honest by (2018)
operated on the principle of 100 per cent transparency in design and production processes, without explicitly identifying with any one approach. The most sustainable solution to fashion’s social and environmental issues may very well be an amalgamation of slow, ethical, eco and sustainable thinking and practices.

However, some writers have presented definitions and dates to frame the various areas of the sustainable and ethical fashion space. Eco and ethical fashion, which first emerged in the 1970s, arose again in a second wave during the 1990s and evolved again in the 2000s, are driven by ethical and ecological underpinnings (Black 2008, 2010; Henninger et al. 2015, p. 131). Anti-fur campaigns became prominent in the 1980s and early 1990s influencing a shift away from fur by many fashion labels and a heightened commitment to animal welfare (Henninger et al. 2015, p. 131). From the 1990s onwards there has been renewed focus on issues affecting garment workers, with media outlets reporting the devastation caused by factory incidents, such as the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh and a factory fire in Pakistan (Henninger et al. 2015, p. 131). Black (2008, p. 17) argues that recent eco fashions also incorporate ‘concept innovation and a high level of design aesthetic’. This indicates the uniting of sustainable and ethical practices with strong attention to design, resulting in the aesthetic of eco fashion impacting upon design decisions. Alternatively, in terms of sustainable fashion, Hethorn and Ulasewicz explain that during the:

development and use of a thing or a process, there is no harm done to people or the planet, and that thing or process, once put into action, can enhance the well-being of the people who interact with it and the environment it is developed and used within (2015, p. xxviii).

Although the differences between slow, ethical, eco and sustainable fashion are often indistinct, Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten (2014, p. 78) recognise that this observation of sustainable fashion lacking a well-defined meaning allows for ‘looking at sustainability in the fashion realm as featuring a wide range of possibilities’. In terms of slow fashion, Pookulangara and Shephard (2013,
contend, ‘as more is learned about slow fashion, it has become clear that it is not just another term for ethical fashion or the antithesis of fast fashion’. Although not all garments that are produced or consumed slowly may qualify as sustainable, or even qualify as slow fashion as this thesis will elucidate, the slow fashion movement does incorporate sustainable and ethical practices. However, it can be distinguished by its embrace of a slow approach to production and consumption infused with components of mindfulness (Jung & Jin 2014).

The phenomenon of mindfulness is emerging as a potential force for cultural change and aligns with the tenets of enriched human and environmental wellbeing perpetuated in the sustainable and ethical fashion space. In daily life, the prominence of the mindfulness movement can be seen in the products available, such as books on mindfulness practice and mindful living, through social media, with the Instagram hashtag for mindfulness boasting 11.8 million posts, and in mainstream art and craft-based activities, leveraging the broadening interest in mindfulness, including mindful colouring and painting. Furthermore, the growth of the wellness industry can be seen in the emergence of dedicated mindfulness apps, studios and retreats delivering guided yoga and meditation. Sub-trends, such as mindful eating, have also emerged to become the focus of numerous books, including some published by Thich Nhat Hanh, a globally-renowned mindfulness author and spiritual leader. Furthermore, terms such as mindfulness, mindful and conscious are emerging in the fashion industry. They often feature in discussions of alternative fashion approaches or are used as descriptors. For example, in the cases of fashion label Svilu (n.d., figure 3.) with its ‘mindfully made’ collection and Filippa K’s (n.d.b, figure 4.) ‘mindfully made’ shirts and its appeal to consumers to ‘shop less but with greater consciousness and care’. This suggests a connection between fashion practices described as ‘mindful’ or ‘conscious’ and slow fashion, as it fosters the questioning of standard practices and values.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Hayley Thompson | Embracing mindfulness: Enriching slow fashion for human and environmental wellbeing

We coined the term Mindfully Made to encompass what SVILU is all about. As designers we believe that with the privilege of creating comes a responsibility to do it in a kinder way.

Every decision at SVILU is guided by these 4 pillars.

Figure 3: Svilu’s mission on the fashion label’s website by Svilu, n.d.

Seven pieces transformed into 18 looks. A simple, versatile and long-lasting wardrobe that makes dressing easy. Because our philosophy is that simplicity is the newest form of luxury. Shapely but with greater consciousness and care.

Figure 4: Autumn 2017 campaign - #notthatcomplicated 7 pieces is all you need by Filippa K, Filippa K, n.d.b.
1.1 Situating the research

This theoretical inquiry in fashion studies is situated within the discipline of fashion and textiles; specifically, within the field of sustainable and ethical fashion research. It broadly aligns with the position developed by Fletcher and Tham in *Routledge Handbook of Sustainability and Fashion* that acknowledges the significance of other approaches and practices which, if we are open to them:

- can show us ways for fashion and sustainability guided by dependencies on people and time and a deep sense of care instead of commerce; and for these to liberate fashion into ‘reality’, that is, into a world of ecological limits, capabilities and deeper understanding of the human condition (2015, p. 13).

This position invites a wider context for the slow fashion movement as a part of the larger ‘slow culture’ movement. Fashion researchers and practitioners concerned with fashion and textile studies, social, cultural and consumer studies and associated fields, such as fashion design, retailing, curation and sociology, form a significant portion of the current slow fashion research community, including Fletcher (2007, 2010), Clark (2008), Jung and Jin (2014, 2016), Pal (2016), Pookulangara and Shephard (2013) and Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten (2014). This research has also drawn on an emerging community of practice forming around mindfulness practitioners and psychology researchers engaged in the mindfulness movement, including Hanh (1991) and Kabat-Zinn (2003, 2005).

1.2 Methodology

The thesis follows a traditional thesis outline and incorporates a multi-disciplinary methodological approach. The research topic was addressed by implementing complementary qualitative research methods, that best accommodate the richness of fashion related topics (Kawamura 2011, p. 39 & 110), alongside the use of art history methodologies, used to investigate objects, images and works beyond the discipline of art as described by Hatt and Klonk (2006). These combinations were used as a form of critical methodology that draws upon art history and design theory methods to explore
concepts across varying disciplines including sustainable and ethical fashion, mindful design, Buddhism and clinical psychology.

The research design consists of three predominant research methods: a literature review, a contextual review and a comparative analysis (Hayley Thompson 2018, figure 5.). A review of literature was undertaken in Chapter 2 pertaining to slow fashion, mindfulness, mindfulness in the slow ethos, the sustainable and ethical fashion context and the fashion system. A contextual review was developed in Chapter 3 via case study research and applying the method of critique whereby the company ethos and fashion practices undertaken by four prominent slow fashion labels in the niche slow fashion design community, Alabama Chanin (2017b, figure 6.), People Tree (2017a, figure 7.), Filippa K (n.d.a, figure 8.) and Zady (2017b, figure 9.), were compared and contrasted with ‘slow fashion criteria’ developed in the literature review. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, a comparative analysis was developed discussing key observations from the study, drawing together each area of research.
Figure 5: Visual representation of research design and methodology (© Hayley Thompson 2018).

Figure 6: Elsey top by Alabama Chanin, Alabama Chanin, 2017b.

<Image removed due to copyright restrictions>

Figure 7: Elle striped dress by People Tree, People Tree, 2017a.

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As part of the critique, slow fashion and mindfulness practices were reviewed alongside slow fashion and mindfulness theories to investigate the correlation between theory and practice. A fundamental approach used to interrogate this interdisciplinary space throughout the thesis involved sifting through the key concepts of slow fashion amongst discourse on the subject to develop a set of criteria, listed in figure 10. within Chapter 2, to summarise the theory of slow fashion. Furthermore, this approach was also useful in identifying the key characteristics of mindfulness, listed in figure 12. within Chapter 2, to form a summary of the theory on mindfulness practice to use throughout the following chapters. Through this process, a method has shaped in which to first identify mindfulness in slow fashion and second, interrogate the relationship between mindfulness, the slow fashion movement and the fashion system.

### 1.3 Scope and limitations

The scope of the study emphasises slow fashion within the broader sustainable and ethical fashion movement, therefore, the discourse aligns with the significance of slow fashion as an alternative to
fast fashion. It should be clear that, given the extent of literature and media surrounding sustainable and ethical fashion – alongside the necessary limitations of any Master’s research project – the review here has been focused on capturing a sense of current theory and practice rather than an exhaustive account. Also, with the mainstream acceptance of mindfulness comes the risk of diluted perceptions of mindfulness practice and exploitation of the terms ‘mindful’ and ‘mindfulness’ for marketing purposes. Therefore, this research specifically relies on the definitions and perspectives on mindfulness practice sourced from academic and spiritual discourse in the fields of clinical psychology, mindful design and Buddhism, in order to obtain a foundation of knowledge on the contemporary practice of mindfulness originally derived from Buddhism.

Although other areas of slow garment making are touched on in the following pages (to add clarification), the study emphasises the slow fashion design movement that functions within the global fashion system. However, this study does not aim to analyse the entire global system it operates within, it solely focuses on the niche area of slow fashion design. Therefore, the literature and case study research reflect the corresponding dialogue within these bounds and focus on a selection of key slow fashion design labels, within this niche space, that operate commercially. The constraints of the contextual review, as an important part of this research, were imposed through the decision to refine the number of slow fashion labels included in the study. The four labels intend to provide a sampling of prominent slow fashion labels within the niche slow fashion design space. Each was selected by meeting the criteria of self-identifying as slow fashion labels and having been endorsed by other key voices, ranging from industry institutions and retailers to bloggers and fashion academics, as being part of the slow fashion movement.

For example, Alabama Chanin’s active involvement within the slow fashion movement has been documented in sources such as Women’s Wear Daily by Tran (2008), in the journal article ‘SLOW + FASHION—an oxymoron—or a promise for the future ...?’ by Clark (2008), in A Practical Guide to
Sustainable Fashion by Gwilt (2014) and in the LA Times article ‘Slow fashion brands work to put the brakes on disposable fast fashion’ by Kinosian (2015). Second, Filippa K is supported as a slow fashion label by numerous online retailers including Take It Slow, Swensk, Nelly.com and Volt. Third, People Tree is considered a slow fashion label by sources such as Worth Global Style Network (WGSN) (2017) in its Earth Day 2017: Sustainability, Ethics and Fashion report and i-D with the article ‘Catching up with slow fashion: Safia Minney’s ethical fashion revolution’ by Gush (2016). Finally, Zady has featured in numerous media stories as a slow fashion representative from outlets such as InStyle in articles by Cheng (2015a, 2015b), Refinery29 in the article ‘Non-Fast-Fashion Brands That Are Just As Good As Zara’ by Coscarelli (2016) and Forbes in the article ‘Why Brands and Retailers Are Running With the ‘Slow Fashion’ Movement’ by Adamczyk (2014). It is important to note that during the course of the study Zady closed its retail business and, as a result, access to the company website referenced in this thesis.

As the case studies were chosen based on their prominence as slow fashion labels operating within the current fashion system, the sampling does not extend to include micro brands with limited exposure, which also form an essential part of the slow fashion movement. However, this does not express that the sample selected is without range, as the labels represent a spectrum of slow fashion businesses in the slow fashion design community. The scope of the case study research was limited to the online outputs of the companies because many of the designers and labels operating within the sustainable and ethical space value transparency, and the four labels selected were no exception. Therefore, company websites, and other online platforms, are valuable resources for the public as the documentation of values, practices and design and production methods are often extensive. Furthermore, the case study research was focused on how these companies were identifying themselves as slow fashion labels, therefore limiting the search to outward facing marketing material was appropriate to the scope of this study. The aim was to investigate an assortment of key slow fashion labels, which appear to lead the way in terms of the image of slow fashion in the industry,
and review company actions in correlation with slow fashion criteria developed from the literature review. The slow fashion criteria, however, are by no means rigid, rather they form a guide to the slow fashion approach open to varying applications.

It is critical to note that the scope of this theoretical exploration of slow, mindful fashion practice does not venture into a discussion of economic viability in undertaking this approach within the fashion system. Neither does it suggest these practices are feasible for all of those working within the fashion system across design and production. It is acknowledged that there are costs currently inhibiting the practice of slow, mindful fashion and the freedom to embrace ‘slowness’ and mindfulness in the design, production and consumption of fashion is considered a position of privilege. Taking into account all of these limitations, the intention was to make a contribution to the future development of slow fashion within the fashion system, through academic discussion of slow fashion from the angle of evaluating the positivity of embracing mindfulness. Other critical distinctions to clarify within the thesis include the way in which certain language is used throughout this document.

Some of the frequently used terms possess multiple meanings, opening the work up to misinterpretations. Therefore, the following is important to elucidate the scope of these essential terms within the thesis. First, wellbeing is referred to in the sense of both human and environmental wellbeing. The term is used in reference to health, comfort, vitality and capacity to thrive physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Second, the term ‘holistic’ is drawn upon to capture the all-inclusive nature of uniting various practices that are intimately connected in this space of slowness and mindfulness, each in contribution to a greater whole, such as in the harmony of slow production and slow consumption or the embrace of a more comprehensive practice of mindfulness. Next is authenticity. This term is most prominent in the slow fashion criteria first developed in Chapter 2, specifically the criterion, authenticity and craftsmanship through traditional techniques and hand skills (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung & Jin
This simply refers to the genuine nature of a garment crafted using traditional skills and methods, the honesty and transparency surrounding its creation and, at times, relative to a particular culture, locale or the use of natural materials. However, the term ‘authentic’ is also used more generally at times, beyond slow fashion, to denote something that is genuine or accurate.

Fourth, activist, used in reference to the predominant spirit of the broad sustainable and ethical fashion movement, indicates advocating for immediate action toward research, sharing information and implementing alternative fashion practices in the shift toward greater sustainability, thus contributing to broad social change throughout the fashion industry at large. To further clarify activism within the sustainable and ethical fashion movements, Fletcher and Grose explain that fashion activists may work both within, and external to, traditional institutions in the fashion system, and follow three common pathways for actively involved designers within the sustainability process:

- their practice often follows a route alert to both economic and enviro-social goals, sometimes working to reconcile them, at other times trying to transform one with knowledge of the other, and at still others, holding the tension between these goals in order to foster change (2012, p. 184).

Finally, the term ‘practice’ shifts in its use throughout the thesis. Predominantly the term is used in relation to mindfulness practice, slow fashion practice, slow garment making practice, slow practice or sustainable and ethical practices, whereby reference is made to the methods or concepts applied in action. It is also used in reference to a community of practice in which a collection of people pursue similar practices and concepts. Finally, the term is used in association with theory, referencing the relationship between theory, as conceptual and explored through written or verbal communication, and practice, as demonstrated through actions, producing material objects or affecting mental or physical developments. Through the consideration of mindfulness, the thesis suggests a modification to how practice is understood. Practice can be tangible or intangible, involve
a physical craft or the development of an internal activity, and be implemented individually in a personal space or collectively in public. In the case of this research, practice involves all manner of activities from designing and making to reflecting and even wearing. For the purposes of this study theory and practice are interconnected. Just as the differing standpoints, from which these practices are undertaken, are interconnected, for example the practice of slow consumption by consumers is just as crucial to the success of the slow fashion movement as the practice of slow design and production led by designers.

1.4 Structure of thesis

The structure leads on from this introduction chapter into four body chapters. Chapter 2 commences with an introduction and chapter methodology section before reviewing literature pertaining to relevant areas of the thesis; slow fashion, mindfulness, mindfulness in the slow ethos, sustainable and ethical fashion and the fashion system. Chapter 3 opens with an introduction and chapter methodology section prior to a contextual review, commencing with an introduction to the slow fashion labels used to inform the case study research, before a description of the ethos of each slow fashion label and an exploration of the practices the labels undertake. A section on slow consumption as a practice follows. Chapter 4 commences with an introduction and chapter methodology before presenting findings of the study in the form of a comparative analysis and discussion of the results. This chapter consists of three main sections: Awareness in the sustainable and ethical fashion space; Embracing mindfulness in slow fashion; Awakening collective mindfulness. Chapter 5 begins with an introduction and a brief chapter methodology before addressing two key sections: Exploring the function of slow fashion in the fashion system; Garment making was traditionally slow. The thesis closes with Chapter 6, a conclusion chapter presenting key observations, recommendations for adopting mindfulness as an integral part of improved slow fashion practices within the fashion system and future slow fashion research directions.
CHAPTER 2: SLOW FASHION AND MINDFULNESS

A literature review

Slow fashion emerged as a new approach in fashion, offering an alternative to fast fashion, due to an increase in exposure and acceptance of social and environmental sustainability (Pookulangara & Shephard 2013). This chapter is an investigation into the literature on the slow fashion movement positioned within a wider sustainable and ethical context in fashion. Mindfulness plays a role in this space through the central component of awareness. The broad sustainable and ethical movement in the fashion industry embraces awareness of the reality of fashion and clothing production, provision and consumption, with a strong focus on the harmful impact of the industry upon the environment and human wellbeing. This space in fashion largely reacts to the destructive consequences of damaging fashion practices with alternative approaches fuelled by an activist spirit for change. The intention of this chapter was to primarily focus on slow fashion literature to understand the movement as an approach to producing, consuming and living well, before exploring literature on the relevant broader contexts to build a foundation for the thesis.

The chapter forms a review of literature pertaining to slow fashion, mindfulness, mindfulness within the slow ethos, sustainable and ethical fashion and, briefly, the wider fashion system. The chapter was developed by firstly sifting through the key concepts of slow fashion, assembling perspectives on the movement in scholarly and non-scholarly fashion discourse from books and academic journals and descriptions of slow fashion from the exhibition Slow Fashion Studio: Alternative Approaches to Fashion (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). The exhibition showcased garments, fabrics, objects, video footage and text related to the slow fashion work of local designers, including RMIT students, practitioners and research candidates. However, the research for this thesis was not part of the exhibition. This section provides an overview of slow fashion in order to define the movement and contextualise its ethos, address its association with the
sustainable and ethical context in fashion and, finally, identify a set of slow fashion criteria relevant to the practice of slow fashion. Secondly, scholarly and spiritual discourse, drawn from books and academic journals, was collated to construct an overview of mindfulness from the areas of psychology and spirituality. This section predominantly isolates key concepts pertaining to what the practice of mindfulness entails. The overview also outlines a brief evolution of mindfulness, including its historical roots in Buddhist traditions and its emergence and application in contemporary Western societies, the practice of mindfulness and definitions of mindfulness.

Thirdly, mindfulness literature was examined alongside discourse on slow culture, particularly drawing from ‘slow design’ literature, to identify traits of mindfulness within the slow ethos. Next, perspectives drawn from the area of sustainable and ethical fashion in scholarly discourse, sourced from academic journals and books, and industry commentary, from online talks and the 2015 film documentary *The True Cost* (2015), directed by Andrew Morgan, were collated. The discourse advocates for the importance of a significant cultural shift in fashion toward alternate approaches to address causes of social and environmental impact from the current predominant fashion system. This provides relevant contextual insight into the sustainable and ethical space of fashion as the starting point and the underlying significance of the deeper exploration of slow fashion and mindfulness undertaken in the research for this thesis. Finally, the fashion system was briefly addressed to establish the understanding of fashion in this thesis as an institutionalised system, referring to the varying fashion market levels in the industry. The chapter concludes by summarising observations about slow fashion in relation to the other contexts reviewed.

### 2.1 Slow fashion

Slow fashion is a small, recently developed sustainable movement growing in interest amongst practitioners and academics, including Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten (2014), Cataldi, Dickson and Grover (2013), Henninger et al. (2015), Jung and Jin (2014, 2016) and Pookulangara and
Shephard (2013). Despite this interest, the beginning of the slow fashion movement remains loosely defined. Jung and Jin (2014, 2016) indicate the slow movement in the fashion industry commenced with the emergence of the term ‘slow fashion’ introduced by Fletcher in 2007. Alternatively, Henninger et al. (2015, p. 131) describe the emergence of slow fashion in the early 2000s. This is further complicated by acknowledging that traditionally garment making was slow, labour intensive and craft-based, incorporating meticulous handwork and attention to detail, and despite advancement in machinery and technology within fashion manufacturing, the fashion system has maintained a presence of slow garment making activities, an approach undertaken in haute couture to this day. For the purposes of this research, a start date of approximately the year 2000 simply pinpoints the time of exposure of contemporary slow fashion practices in association with the broader slow movement. By 2008, Clark (2008) states in the article, ‘SLOW + FASHION—an oxymoron—or a promise for the future ...?’, that according to blogs and articles online, the fashion system had started to welcome the term ‘slow fashion’.

The practice of slow fashion by designers appears to have driven the movement during its initial formation. Fletcher (2010) highlights that, despite its growing popularity, slow fashion’s true values are often misconstrued and the approach is reduced to a transient trend, but nonetheless, from a design point of view, an increasing number of designers are embracing the slow fashion approach regardless of its challenges (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014). Clark’s (2008) text particularly, and Fletcher’s (2010) article ‘Slow Fashion: An Invitation for Systems Change’, both indicate that designers were key drivers during the emergence of slow fashion, garnering momentum through the growing awareness of slow fashion online. Jung and Jin (2014, p. 512) concur with designers leading the slow fashion movement and explain it as an approach ‘against cheap, homogenous and quantity-oriented fashion’ in the current global fashion system, and one which UK designers in particular have started to undertake. Similarly, in an article published by Women’s Wear Daily, Tran (2008, p. 18) writes, ‘mired by a softening economy, dwindling supply of natural resources and fatigue from
constantly chasing trends, a growing number of designers, retailers and consumers are turning their attention to an emerging trend called slow fashion’. Jung and Jin (2014, p. 512) also claim that designers ‘raise questions about the social as well as environmental impacts of the volume-budget model and promote slow culture and values in fashion’.

Slow fashion labels can be fuelled by the social and environmental values held by designers and founders. Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten (2014, p. 73) indicate that, ‘driven by personal beliefs and values, these designers seem to wish to reconcile personal fulfilment with professional achievement’. This is particularly relevant as the slow fashion movement includes ‘small, independent fashion brands, often operated by one or two entrepreneurs, who are designing and producing clothing and jewellery locally in order to control all aspects of the commodity chain’ (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014, p. 74-75). Additionally, in their critical text *Slow Fashion*, selected for the Wilhelm Braun-Feldweg Prize, Wanders (2009) identifies the role of the internet in further facilitating the slow fashion movement, particularly in terms of breaking free from large institutionalised structures in the fashion industry, by way of open source websites, and providing a platform for selling, buying and connecting, especially for small establishments. This is also supported by Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten (2014). Furthermore, they argue that small slow fashion labels ‘through their innovative design, branding and retail practices, have carved out a unique niche in the hyper competitive fashion marketplace’, yet still face the challenge in competition with larger companies (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014, p. 73 & 75). Sustainability in general is being embraced in various ways by small and large fashion companies, despite the cost and time commitment involved (Brydges, Lavanga and von Gunten 2014, p. 74). Furthermore, Cataldi, Dickson and Grover (2013, p. 23) state ‘slow fashion includes many diverse business models that maintain profits, while conserving and enhancing our ecological and social systems’.
Slow fashion has emerged as an alternate way of perceiving and approaching fashion, related to a larger culture of slowness, to oppose the approaches undertaken by fast fashion companies in the current predominant fashion system (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010). ‘Slow fashion is about choice, information, cultural diversity and identity. Yet, critically, it is also about balance’, Fletcher (2007, para. 8) states. The movement incorporates elements of the triple bottom line, the basis of theory surrounding sustainability, by engaging social, environmental and economic goals (Henninger et al. 2015). Writers acknowledge slow fashion is derived from a broader slow culture movement first present in the context of ‘slow food’, introduced by Carlo Petrini in Italy in 1986 (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013). Jung and Jin (2014, p. 511-512) explain, ‘as the slow food movement emerged against the popularity of fast food, slow fashion also appeared as the antithesis to the current fast fashion system’. They go on to explain the slow food movement is ‘a way of living and eating, which pursues pleasure of food with commitment to the community and the environment’ (Jung & Jin 2014, p. 512). Fletcher (2007, para. 6) agrees and explains that slow food ‘defends biodiversity in our food supply by opposing the standardisation of taste, defends the need for consumer information and protects cultural identities tied to food’, and ‘has spawned a wealth of other slow movements’. These include ‘slow living’, ‘slow cities’ and slow design. Although slow culture encourages slowing down and taking time to breathe in order to extricate oneself from the ‘speed culture’ of today and truly start living, the movement is not exclusively speed oriented but about ‘undertaking changes in the way we do things at an everyday level’ (Osbaldiston 2013, p. 2).

Slow culture offers a framework to shift established values and objectives within the fashion system. Fletcher (2010, p. 264) explains ‘slow culture helps initiate a long-overdue dialogue about questions about the rules and goals of the fashion sector that challenge values and economic priorities head on’. The author has also suggested that ‘in melding the ideas of the slow movement with the global clothing industry, we build a new vision for fashion in the era of sustainability: where pleasure and
fashion is linked with awareness and responsibility’ (Fletcher 2007, para. 7). Slow culture is an invitation to question conventions of the current fashion system, and offers a platform for thinking differently in an effort to re-visualise what an authentically ‘rich’ society should encompass (Fletcher 2010). Slow fashion particularly signifies a departure from established growth-focused values and the fast fashion mindset, harnessing an alternate vision that initiates a redefinition of how fashion is produced (Aakko 2013; Fletcher 2010). Pookulangara and Shephard (2013, p. 201) also agree, in regard to slow fashion, that ‘this concept is derived from a strong foundation in the slow food movement and has the potential to provide more direction for future business practices than more general concepts and terms such as eco-fashion or sustainability’. However, it has also been argued that ‘current definitions of slow fashion have yet to be widely accepted, and continue to change’ (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014, p. 75).

Despite a sense of indistinctness in defining slow fashion from other alternate approaches, such as sustainable, eco and ethical fashion, some researchers have proposed definitions (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014). Jung and Jin (2016, p. 410) have referred to slow fashion as a ‘production method which emphasises quality’ and ‘an approach toward sustainability’. In agreeance with Fletcher’s views on slow fashion, Jung and Jin (2014, p. 512-513) also write slow fashion is ‘about designing, producing, consuming and living better by considering environmental and social sustainability and by producing beautiful and conscientious garments at a lower speed’, and furthermore, ‘by slowing down the fashion cycle, moving from quantity- to quality-based’. Fletcher (2010, p. 262) presents the slow fashion movement as ‘a different worldview that names a coherent set of fashion activity that promotes variety and multiplicity of fashion production and consumption and that celebrates the pleasure and cultural significance of fashion within biophysical limits’. Clark (2008, p. 428) states ‘the term is used to identify sustainable fashion solutions, based on the repositioning of strategies of design, production, consumption, use, and reuse’.

In consideration of the various definitions discussed here, this thesis proposes slow fashion presents a unique approach entailing a comprehensive engagement with slow practices across multiple phases of the garment life cycle. As Fletcher (2010) indicates, the slow fashion movement is as much about consumption as it is about production. This is a view supported by Jung and Jin (2014, 2016). There is an environmental and social significance underlining how garments are consumed, no matter how ‘slowly’ they are produced (Jung & Jin 2016). A slow fashion garment would fail in its potential if the consumer’s intention were to discard it after only a few wears (Jung & Jin 2014).

Overconsumption of apparel is identified as a significant issue causing unsustainability, therefore, the slow fashion movement encompasses a change in consumption behaviour sustained by a different mindset to that of fast fashion consumption (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016). In referring to consumption, it is also important to discuss the dichotomy between slow fashion, with slow consumption values, and fast fashion, with its consequences of overconsumption.

Slow fashion is often perceived as a direct opponent of fast fashion in relation to speed, as the depth of the movement can be diluted in fashion media and perpetuated to denote only a slower speed of production, or reduced to a passing trend (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014). Despite this, the contrasting connection between the two remains relevant, in relation to consumption and production. For example, the exhibition Slow Fashion Studio: Alternative Approaches to Fashion presented by Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University treated the accompanying travelling exhibition Fast Fashion: The Dark Side of Fashion as a provocation to question ‘our relationship with materials and to clothing’ (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Pal (2016, p. 129) contends, from the present conditions in the fashion industry, there are ‘two distinct fashion business strategies, models, and philosophies’ evident, one that supports the present trend (fast fashion) and one that counters it (slow fashion). Slow fashion businesses operate in opposition to key characteristics of fast fashion, driven by high-speed business models, to reduce the significant impact of fashion waste produced through this fast-moving system, as a result of overconsumption.
of rapid changing trends in the form of minimum-quality garments and accessories (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Fletcher 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013). However, time is not the only aspect manipulated to maximise profits, ‘labour, capital and natural resources’ are also leveraged, which can lead to the exploitation of workers and natural resources (Fletcher 2007, para. 3). Academic fashion discourse generally considers slow fashion in contrast to fast fashion, although often establishing that slow fashion functions as more than fast fashion’s direct counterpart (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014).

Slow fashion presents a deeper ethos beyond the embrace of a slower speed of production and consumption. Fletcher (2010, p. 262) states, ‘slow fashion represents a blatant discontinuity with the practices of today’s sector; a break from the values and goals of fast (growth-based) fashion’. Fletcher (2007, para. 3) also claims ‘fast fashion isn’t really about speed, but greed: selling more, making more money’. In Sustainable Fashion: New Approaches, Aakko (2013, p. 58) argues that slow fashion opposes the entire essence of fast fashion as ‘it moves at a slower pace, disregards trends, is concerned with a classic or “signature” look, and stresses the importance of artisanal production and emotions attached to the clothes we own’. Clark (2008, p. 428) presents a comparable view that slow fashion eliminates many negative aspects of the current system, particularly ‘its extreme wastefulness and lack of concern for environmental issues’. Furthermore, Henninger et al. (2015, p. 130) indicate that labels within the slow fashion movement commonly produce only two collections each year. In relation to slow fashion in practice, a study by Pal (2016, p.155) confirmed slow fashion companies and slow labels focused on redesign practices perform better than fast fashion in terms of ‘displacement potential’, ‘meaning the potential of a used item to replace the purchase of a new one’, and ‘extended organizational responsibility’. However, Fletcher (2010, p. 262) also asserts that slow fashion has ‘grown into something more than just fast fashion minus the bad bits; for that would connect it to tinkering with today’s practices’, it retains its own set of values, views and approaches which orient the movement with environmental and social sustainability.
In academic fashion discourse, slow fashion is commonly viewed as a sustainable approach. Jung and Jin (2014, p. 512) claim ‘inherently, slow fashion is eco-friendly since items are produced slowly in small batches, which reduces the consumption of resources and the amounts of waste’. Fletcher (2010) also suggests slow fashion is positioned within a greater narrative of sustainable change in the fashion industry. In a similar sense, Underwood (cited in RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) suggests slow fashion presents an approach that facilitates a ‘sustainable and ethical fashion system ... that is globally networked but centred on localised knowledge, skills and relationships’.

Although the production of garments and the materials used are often a key concern in the sustainable and ethical fashion space, the ‘material focus in production is just a part of sustainable environmental practices’, as issues arise with the overuse of natural resources and also the production of environmentally harmful waste through the overconsumption and quick disposal of garments into landfill (Jung & Jin 2014, p. 511). From a consumer stand point, the slow fashion concept of valuing quality over quantity assists in creating this shift in consumer mindsets (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016), as does the option of alternative ways to consume and experience fashion seen in slow fashion approaches (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). In this sense, slow fashion strives to fulfil the objective of being both sustainable and fashionable (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2010; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016).

However, numerous writers indicate that the slow fashion movement extends beyond environmental and social sustainability concerns (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016). This is in line with claims that a commitment to nurturing relationships between designers, producers and consumers is at the heart of the slow fashion movement (Fletcher 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016). In slowing down, designers are given the opportunity to nurture their partnerships with producers to build healthy and beneficial working relationships (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016). Providing opportunities for the consumer to be involved in the process of creating the garment is also a characteristic of the
slow fashion movement, which fosters a sense of awareness and responsibility in the consumer (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016). Similarly, Fletcher argues, slow culture in fashion presents a changed set of power relations between fashion creators and consumers compared with growth fashion, based on the forging of relationships and trust that is possible at smaller scales. It professes a heightened state of awareness of the design process and its impacts on resource flows, workers, communities, and ecosystems (2010, p. 264).

Comparable to Fletcher’s perspective, in reference to the slow fashion approaches mentioned in the article, Clark (2008, p. 428) suggests they ‘highlight collaborative/cooperative work’ and ‘simultaneously challenge existing hierarchies of designer, producer, and consumer’ in the fashion system.

The slow fashion movement appears to allow all relevant participants to take more responsibility for how fashion is designed, produced and consumed. Pal (2016, p. 130) argues the redistributed power indicates a democratisation of fashion ‘not by offering more people access to clothes by lowering prices but by offering people more control over institutions and technologies’ that produce them. They refer to the opportunities afforded by product personalisation and customisation and emerging do-it-yourself (DIY) oriented activities, such as mending and altering (Pal 2016). Wanders (2009, p. 90) agrees by asserting slow fashion, more so than fast fashion, incorporates ‘democratic, emancipatory principles’ of benefit to consumers, particularly when uniting the efforts of both designers and consumers in the creation of garments. They argue that despite offering cheap versions of designer brand trends for the mass population, fast fashion presents a false representation of democratisation and freedom of choice as the fashion industry ‘reduces trends for construed target groups to generalized formulas for efficient, mass-quantity production’ (Wanders 2009, p. 90). Slow fashion offers an alternative to consumers willing to forgo low prices in favour of quality, longevity, product uniqueness and consideration for the wellbeing of the designers and producers, among other factors (Wanders 2009).
The literature review has identified a set of characteristics that are agreed and discussed by multiple authors on the topic of the slow fashion movement. A comprehensive list of these and the contributing authors have been developed and included in figure 10. (Hayley Thompson 2019) below as slow fashion criteria.

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<tr>
<th>SLOW FASHION CRITERIA</th>
<th>DERIVED FROM SLOW FASHION LITERATURE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GARMENT LIFECYCLE PHASES</strong></td>
<td><strong>DESIGN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BEING RESOURCEFUL BY UTILISATION WHAT IS AVAILABLE</strong> (Brydges, Lavanga &amp; von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
<td><strong>HIGHER PRICE POINT, MEANING THE PRODUCT BECOMES AN INVESTMENT</strong> (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Jung &amp; Jin 2016; Pal 2016)</td>
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<td>Criteria</td>
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<td>Authenticity and craftsmanship</td>
<td>Through traditional techniques and hand skills</td>
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<td>(Brydges, Lavanga &amp; von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung &amp; Jin 2014; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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<td>Combining traditional and new techniques</td>
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<td>(Minney 2016: RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009)</td>
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<td>Localism, particularly in relation to local culture and local industry</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung &amp; Jin 2014; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009)</td>
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<td>Transparency</td>
<td>(Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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<td>Spending the time via slow speed of process, production or consumption</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009)</td>
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<td>Quality, particularly prioritising quality over quantity</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013)</td>
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<td>Longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment</td>
<td>(Clark 2008; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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Figure 10: Slow fashion criteria - derived from slow fashion literature (© Hayley Thompson 2019).

From a design point of view, alongside the characteristics that are common to the slow fashion movement, slow culture in the broader design context has generated the creation of a set of six principles by researchers Strauss and Fuad-Luke (2008, p. 1) as a flexible, evaluative tool for slow
design, a movement they deem to be ‘a unique and vital form of creative activism that is delivering new values for design and contributing to the shift toward sustainability’. A review of these principles, shown in figure 11. (Hayley Thompson 2019), suggests that although slow culture takes formation in varying ways, depending on the particular industry adopting the overarching ethos, certain slow design principles map to the criteria of slow fashion. For example, the slow design principle ‘expand’ relates to longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) in considering the prolonged use, multiple lives or the possible down-cycling and upcycling possibilities of the garment, particularly at the moment of disposal. Furthermore, ‘expand’ links to a commitment to consuming better for people and the planet (Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2014; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) through the component of engaging in different experiences of fashion (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), by expanding the ways in which consumers experience a garment by introducing garment leasing and sharing networks for garments worn and cared for by multiple users.
Another example can be found with the slow design principle of ‘reflect’, as it traces across to components such as embracing attentiveness and mindfulness (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013) and spending the time via slow speed of process, production or consumption (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009), as time for contemplation, and therefore further awareness, is embraced. Furthermore, ‘reveal’ feeds into the points embracing attentiveness and mindfulness (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013) and gaining knowledge of materials and greatly considering the materials used (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Henninger et al. 2015; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), as each component engenders deep engagement with activities in the present and the details of design, production and consumption processes available yet not thoroughly explored or even acknowledged. These slow design principles offer a generalised guide to enhance design outcomes across multiple disciplines, yet the characteristics of slow fashion
extracted from slow fashion discourse frame a more discipline-specific set of criteria for slow fashion design, production and consumption.

The slow fashion space is open to varying approaches; however, it is still within a phase of experimentation with slow fashion design, production and consumption practices. Clark (2008, p. 428) argues that the slow fashion movement allows for interdisciplinary approaches and new practices to surface, thereby challenging established ideals of the fashion system, such as the fixation on newness and image and presents ‘fashion as a choice rather than as a mandate’. Slow fashion labels can be small in scale, employing strategies and differing perspectives on slow fashion practice that are yet to be proven successful (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2010; Pal 2016; Wanders 2009). Wanders (2009, p. 123-124) suggests some of these design and production practices include designing for longevity in the fit and use of garments by consumers, being resourceful by using existing fabrics, producing locally and being aware of the local market, and introducing ‘structures and concepts for a take-back system for the recycling or re-design of old clothing’. Similarly, these practices are supported by other authors, as can be seen amongst the slow fashion criteria (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 10.). This includes Pal (2016, p. 144), who identifies that slow fashion labels ‘engage with a wider range of activities, including collection, refurbishing through repairing, laundering, and so on, and reselling’.

Despite the growing interest in slow fashion practice, as Jung and Jin (2014, 2016) emphasise, there is still not a clear understanding of slow fashion consumers, and academic coverage of slow fashion theory is lacking in comparison to the scale of slow fashion in practice, which perhaps contributes to the ambiguity in clearly distinguishing slow fashion from other alternate fashion approaches. Authors in the area of slow fashion identify that research could be better connected to the practice of slow fashion, particularly slow consumption. They identify that research focusing on the issue of overconsumption of clothing is minimal and ‘existing practical articles mainly focus on the business
aspect of slow fashion as an introduction to a new movement in the apparel industry’ (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016, p. 418). A possible limitation in bridging research and practice within the industry was recognised by Wanders (2009, p. 122), identifying that ‘there is a need for cooperation from the industry and large fashion companies to develop sustainable options but there also appears to be the need for the research and outcomes to be accessible’, particularly to smaller labels.

Alternatively, in 2008, Clark (2008) claimed ‘the challenge now is how to extend the slow concept on a larger scale’. Cataldi, Dickson and Grover’s (2013, p. 39) study, presented in the article ‘Slow fashion: Tailoring a strategic approach for sustainability’, determined a need for global organisation of the slow fashion movement and its initiatives. The recommendations from the study detail how the slow fashion movement may be strengthened to promote its growth through the co-creation of values by those within the movement to build unity and a clear notion of success, the development of a network for the slow fashion movement to reinforce relationships and interconnectedness, and finally, the creation of a garment label for slow fashion items monitored and allocated by an external organisation (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013). It is not a presumption in this thesis, however, that this will unquestionably be viable on a unified global scale, but the recommendations are valid to the focus of the slow fashion design community explored in this study.

For the purposes of this thesis, in consideration of existing literature, slow fashion is best defined as the outcome of the continuing critique of the current fashion system as an industry that is imbued with profit-focused values and a penchant for continual growth oscillating within a cycle of perpetual change. However, it is acknowledged that the choice to remove oneself from the current predominant fashion system is not available to every person involved in this system, as there are socio-economic limitations. Slow fashion critiques the overuse and destruction caused to natural resources, diminished quality craftsmanship in areas of the industry, augmentation of overproduction and overconsumption, the culture of disposability maintained by companies and industry institutions and abstruse supply chains involving production practices that cause harm to
humans and the planet. In doing so, slow fashion revisits traditional skills and techniques and the fundamental elements of the craft of garment making in combination with the design and production knowledge and advanced methods of contemporary fashion practice, to present an approach to address social and environmental issues imposed by the fashion system.

2.2 Mindfulness

Historically, mindfulness stems from Asian Buddhist traditions yet has now been widely accepted, and continues to expand, in contemporary Western culture, particularly in the fields of contemporary psychology and medicine (Braza 1997; Brown, Creswell, & Ryan 2007, 2015; Germer 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2003). The practice of mindfulness is a key component of Buddhism, which has embraced the practice of mindfulness meditation for over 2,500 years (Fulton & Siegel 2005; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003). Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 145), the founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, states ‘historically mindfulness has been called “the heart” of Buddhist meditation’ and forms the Buddha’s core teaching. In ‘Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future’, Kabat-Zinn (2003) suggests that the cultural shift in contemporary interest toward mindfulness may only be in its early stages. Ericson, Kjønstad and Barstad (2014, p. 74) suggest mindfulness is growing in popularity in industries beyond medical and health fields with the emergence of programs in relation to ‘childbirth and parenting, education, business, athletics and professional sports, the legal profession, criminal justice and politics’. This expansion into other industries is promising for the embrace of mindfulness in the field of fashion, as it shows the transferrable nature of practice.

In the past 30 years, mindfulness meditation has been mainstreamed and embraced throughout the world in various ways, with numerous documented benefits (Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005). Mindfulness is argued to be beneficial in changing behaviour, reducing suffering and facilitating sustainable actions and overall mindful living (Bishop et al. 2004; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Hanh 1991;
The practice also provides insights into our true values, how we relate to others and the interconnectedness of the world, promoting empathy and subjective wellbeing (Akama 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014). Germer (2005) notes that although mindfulness occurs naturally it can be cultivated like a skill that thrives on repetition in each new moment, which is a view similarly shared by Kabat-Zinn (2003). Furthermore, Kabat-Zinn (2003) claims the practice of mindfulness is also somewhat paradoxical. ‘It is both the work of a lifetime and, paradoxically the work of no time at all – because its field is always this present moment in its fullness. This paradox can be understood and embodied only through sustained personal practice over days, weeks, months and years’ (Kabat-Zinn 2003, p. 149).

It is clear from the literature a spectrum of mindfulness engagement exists. Mindfulness can be embraced as both a designated period of meditation, such as in the case of immersive meditation retreats, and a personal daily practice engaged with in each moment (Braza 1997; Forest 1991; Germer 2005; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003). However, Kabat-Zinn argues practicing mindfulness is a willingness:

- to reside as best one can from moment to moment in awareness with an open heart, a spacious, non-judging, non-reactive mind, and without trying to get anywhere, achieve anything, reject anything, or fall into either stream of conceptual thought or what the Dalai Lama calls “afflictive” or “unwholesome” emotions (2003, p. 150).

Ericson, Kjønstad and Barstad (2014, p. 74) also support this perspective, acknowledging two interrelated streams of mindfulness engagement; a ‘mental training technique,’ carried out through meditation, and ‘a way of being in our everyday lives,’ which Kabat-Zinn (2005, p. 148) also describes as ‘a way of seeing’. Similarly, Hanh (1991) captures the notion of living in mindfulness in each moment every day in the book, The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation. They explain that by making every moment an opportunity to be mindful we are making all moments our own in which we are truly awake, even those moments that you might perceive as being spent on someone
else for their benefit (Hanh 1991). Through mindfulness, they suggest you can experience a sense of ‘unlimited time’ for yourself (Hanh 1991, p. 11). Therefore, mindfulness practice can also alter personal perspectives on time.

The nature of mindfulness allows it to fit seamlessly into life, and to be implemented throughout day-to-day activities. Hanh (1991) speaks of any activity as meditation in the practice of everyday mindfulness. They state that every action:

- must be carried out in mindfulness. Each act is a rite, a ceremony. Raising your cup of tea to your mouth is a rite. Does the word “rite” seem too solemn? I use that word in order to jolt you into realization of the life-and-death matter of awareness (Hanh 1991, p. 24).

The accessibility of mindfulness is apparent in Hanh’s perspective on the practice, which also points to Kabat-Zinn’s view of the universality of mindfulness practice. They indicate:

- mindfulness...being about attention, is also of necessity universal. There is nothing particularly Buddhist about it. We are all mindful to one degree or another, moment by moment. It is an inherent human capacity (Kabat-Zinn 2003, p. 145-146).

Furthermore, in Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness, they refer to activating and nurturing resources we each possess within ourselves, such as the ability to pay attention, in order to enhance our wellbeing (Kabat-Zinn 2005). Kabat-Zinn (2005, p. 11) claims, ‘mindfulness is the final common pathway of what makes us human, our capacity for awareness and for self-knowing’.

In the discourse, the difficulty in defining mindfulness is commonly acknowledged and descriptions of mindfulness vary (Akama 2015; Bishop et al. 2004; Brown, Creswell, & Ryan 2007, 2015; Carmody 2015). Brown, Ryan and Creswell (2007, p. 212) state ‘it is important to note that different schools of thought emphasize certain characteristics of mindfulness more than others’. Furthermore, Carmody (2015, p. 65) argues ‘such elusive language, as well as cryptic descriptive terms...present problems for the operational definitions required for research’ and hinders the process of explaining
mindfulness and its viable benefits to patients, and also clinicians. Additionally, the term ‘mindfulness’ is at times interchanged with the term ‘meditation’ (Forest 1991), as can be seen in Hanh’s (1991) *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation*, which further adds to the confusion. Germer (2005, p. 6) also acknowledges the varied use of the term stating, ‘the word *mindfulness* can be used to describe a theoretical construct (mindfulness), a practice of cultivating mindfulness (such as meditation), or a psychological process (being mindful)’. Nonetheless, many writers have endeavoured to capture the essence and practice of mindfulness in workable statements.

The definitions of mindfulness presented by various writers share a number of common characteristics yet vary in the emphasis of different aspects. Generally, mindfulness is referred to as a state of awareness that involves focusing on what is occurring both internally and externally within present realities and accepting both positive and negative insights (Akama 2015; Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007, 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Germer 2005; Niedderer 2014). Writers also claim mindfulness denotes a clarity and receptivity of awareness, approaching each experience as new, unclouded by preconceived ideas and mindless habits (Akama 2015; Bishop et al. 2004; Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007, 2015; Niedderer 2014). Germer (2005, p. 6) uses the concise phrase of ‘moment-by-moment awareness’ and states ‘mindfulness is the opposite of being on autopilot; the opposite of daydreaming, it is paying attention to what is salient in the present moment’. Braza defines mindfulness similarly to Germer, as:

> a technique that teaches intent alertness. It means becoming fully aware of each moment and of your activity in that moment. It is living each moment, in contrast to “mindlessness,” which means that you allow your mind to get “hooked” or attached to thoughts and desires that arise (1997, p. 21).

Comparably, Germer, Siegel and Fulton present a definition of mindfulness derived from Buddhist psychology in relation to the ‘seven factors of awakening’, yet it too maintains parallel components:
this is the practice of being fully aware in the present moment, without self-judgment or other forms of linguistic and conceptual overlay, of the arising and passing away of phenomena in the field of direct experience (2005, p. 295).

Likewise, Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 145) presents ‘an operational working definition’, referring to mindfulness as ‘the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment’. Bishop et al. present a broad definition, drawing from a number of sources, stating:

mindfulness has been described as a kind of nonelaborative, nonjudgemental, present-centred awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is (2004, p. 232).

Finally, Hanh (1991, p. 11-12) proposes a simple definition of mindfulness as ‘keeping one’s consciousness alive to the present reality’.

The review of literature has identified many key characteristics of mindfulness practice that are agreed and discussed by numerous authors in this field of research. A list of these and the corresponding authors have been developed and compiled below in figure 12. (Hayley Thompson 2019).
KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF MINDFULNESS
Derived from mindfulness literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindfulness characteristics</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Predominantly related to awareness</th>
<th>Predominantly related to a way of being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Being mindful of the body and aware of any sensations that arise</td>
<td>(Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
<td>• Being mindful of feelings (Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
<td>Non-striving, particularly finding time to simply ‘be’ without striving to ‘do’ anything (Braza 1997; Carmody 2015; Kabat-Zinn 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being mindful of the mind</td>
<td>(Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005; Hanh 1991)</td>
<td>• Being mindful of mental objects (Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
<td>Witnessing or observing with a sense of detachment (Braza 1997; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Remembering - in order to return awareness to the present experience</td>
<td>(Germer 2005)</td>
<td>• Conscious of your presence (Hanh 1991)</td>
<td>Protecting and taking care of yourself, without preoccupation with the actions of others (Hanh 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-harming (Kabat-Zinn 2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 2: Slow fashion and mindfulness – A literature review
Hayley Thompson | Embracing mindfulness: Enriching slow fashion for human and environmental wellbeing
### 2.3 Mindfulness in the slow ethos

The literature explored indicates mindfulness and slow culture share a unique relationship in which mindfulness forms a component of slow culture and slowness features as part of mindfulness practice. Amongst mindfulness discourse, particularly in *Moment by Moment: The Art and Practice of Mindfulness* (Braza 1997) and *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation* (Hanh 1991), it is clear the practice incorporates slowness in the form of being unhurried and disconnecting from the idea of rushing through life mindlessly. However, what is more compelling is how mindfulness manifests in slow culture, and more specifically slow design. The relationship between acceptance, the present and mindfulness with intent is relevant to both the culture of slowness and mindfulness.

There is a level of acceptance of the present state of society and modern life across both areas, and acceptance of the fact that we do not live and create in isolation of global culture. The principles that underpin these movements function within and around the existing culture in an act of embracing the present and refraining from retreating to the past or living for a hypothetical future.

The state of contemporary life is not inherently bad, but consists of activities that produce both

---

**Figure 12: Key characteristics of mindfulness - derived from mindfulness literature (© Hayley Thompson 2019).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being mindful of intentions</td>
<td>(Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising everything is interconnected</td>
<td>(Germer 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being mindful of and open to different perspectives</td>
<td>(Braza 1997; Germer 2005; Niedderer 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a ‘spacious’ mind</td>
<td>(Kabat-Zinn 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing new categories to form</td>
<td>(Germer 2005; Niedderer 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on the purpose of the moment, in the moment, concentrating purely on the task at hand</td>
<td>(Braza 1997; Germer 2005; Hanh 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding the mind</td>
<td>(Hanh 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being non-reactive</td>
<td>(Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of, or letting go of, constructed or distorted 'reality'</td>
<td>(Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditating on the cause of suffering</td>
<td>(Hanh 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritising your values</td>
<td>(Germer 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
positive and negative effects, therefore, embracing either of these modes of being in the world entails accepting this as part of living slowly, mindfully and intentionally.

The practice of mindfulness also entails detaching from the incessant desire for more (Braza 1997), driven by the perpetual state of discontent rife within the goal-driven, highly consumerist Western society, which is amplified by the acceleration of life and the ‘culture of ‘immediacy’’ we may find ourselves immersed in (Osboldiston 2013, p. 2). Desire has been addressed considerably in mindfulness literature, with a number of authors referring to Buddhist theories on the emotion. Desire is understood as a constructed emotion that can distort reality and cause a person to suffer (Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005). Buddhism denotes that desire forms part of the ‘Three Root Causes’, which are ‘three unwholesome underlying tendencies of human behaviour’ (Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005, p. 290), and the ‘Four Noble Truths’, as ‘the conflict between how things are and how we desire them to be causes this suffering’ (Germer 2005, p. 12).

Eliminating desire and replacing it with acceptance and non-reactivity voids the weight of self-imposed suffering and can also enhance our wellbeing and experience of achieving in life (Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005, p. 292). Braza (1997, p. 50) explains, ‘learning to truly witness and not become attached to wants, desires, views, and opinions allows us to be free to make choices and create new and exciting experiences’. Comparably, Kabat-Zinn (2003) discusses desire in relation to our yearning for ideal outcomes. They explain that being consumed by an ideal future outcome can cause anxiety in the present, and therefore, retracts from the time and attention spent on productively working toward achieving that desired outcome (Kabat-Zinn 2003). Commencing with a quote by academic T. D. Borkovec, Kabat-Zinn elucidates:

\[
\text{to let go of the desired outcome in order to acquire it. What a paradoxical and strange way to live ...}
\]

Perhaps it is only strange in a society that persists in devaluing the present moment in favor of perpetual distraction, self-absorption, and addiction to a feeling of “progress” (2003, p. 147-148).
This view of desire advocates prioritising a sense of calm satisfaction through acceptance of our current circumstances whilst we endeavour to live and grow more meaningfully.

Interestingly, this correlates with aspects of Ehrenfeld’s perspective on ‘sustainability-as-flourishing’:

Sustainability is the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on the planet forever ... A shift toward sustainability-as-flourishing requires that the underlying modernist beliefs about the nature of our species become transformed to a new set, based on care as the fundamental way of being human (2015, p. 59-61).

The focus simply becomes about living through the fundamental value of caring, as opposed to being fixated on the overarching goal or desire of ‘sustainability-as-flourishing’ (Ehrenfeld 2015, p. 59).

Ehrenfeld explains:

A conscious sense of responsibility to act in a caring way has the power to embed whatever practices arise as new cultural norms, which, combining with reflection, can also embed this new belief (2015, p. 61).

Therefore, in accordance with Ehrenfeld’s (2015, p. 59) theory, mindfulness has the potential to facilitate ‘sustainability-as-flourishing’, and our ability to live meaningful, pleasurable lives through slowness.

Slow living is to live mindfully rather than mindlessly (Parkins & Craig 2006). Parkins and Craig define slow living as:

a process whereby everyday life ... is approached with care and attention ... an attempt to live in the present in a meaningful, sustainable, thoughtful and pleasurable way ... slowness becomes a preferred mode for the heightened awareness or relaxation it can impart (2006, p. ix).

Therefore, slow living entails enjoying the process or experience of a pursuit, or simply being mindful of the purpose of any task undertaken in day to day life (Parkins & Craig 2006). To live slowly is to use our time mindfully (Parkins & Craig 2006). In this case, slow living, like mindfulness, is not something you ever truly arrive at or accomplish but an ethos that continues to frame a way of being
in the world (Parkins & Craig 2006). Finally, Parkins and Craig (2006, p. 3-4) argue that ‘such qualities of mindfulness and attention also … have an ethical dimension through the implication of an acknowledgement of otherness’. This denotes awareness of people or things external to ourselves.

The mindful practice of being aware within the culture of slow, and slow design culture specifically, extends to the materiality of resources in the process of making. For example, this is captured by Pendleton-Jullian (2016) in the slow design essay ‘The road that is not a road: And the open city, Ritoque, Chile’. The author points to the slow, mindful practice of recognising the realistic materiality of the resources used within the project and the context that resonates within them, such as the creation process and the craftspeople responsible for their creation (Pendleton-Jullian 2016). Pendleton-Jullian (2016, p. 59-60) communicates that because the Open City, an architectural project in Chile, was built with found objects and materials on an ad hoc basis, constructed in a semi artisanal manner, the materiality of the forms endures throughout the creation process. Furthermore, they wrote:

for these reasons – because these materials are inexpensive, common, familiar and because these construction systems are related to the physical process of building at the scale of the artisan – the materiality remains attached to the process of building as it reveals the hand of the builder (Pendleton-Jullian 2016, p. 59-60).

It is relevant to note here that this also establishes a connection between craft and slow culture. As Sennett (2009) discusses, being aware of the materiality of a crafted object can reveal tangible and intangible links to the locations from which the materials were sourced, the place in which it was created and the hands of the craftsperson who made it.

Pertinent to this dialogue on awareness, particularly engaging in present realities, Parkins and Craig (2006) make an important distinction between slow living and simple living – or as the authors also call it, ‘Voluntary Simplicity’. Unlike simple living, which is a retreat to the past in many ways, slow
living is not escapism but ‘a conscious negotiation of life in the present’ (Parkins and Craig 2006, p. 3). However, living life slowly may involve embracing practices reminiscent of traditional activities or ways of life (Parkins and Craig 2006). The authors propose, ‘the reclamation of tradition may also form part of a sustained engagement with contemporary problems of everyday life and constitute revitalized networks of community and exchange in the present’ (Parkins and Craig 2006, p. 8). Slow culture does not inherently negate the technological advancements we have achieved or the knowledge we have acquired as a society over time, but more accurately supplies a framework for us to consider all that is available to us, both traditional and contemporary, in order to better collate resources, skills and methods to live more intentionally and sustainably as a collective body.

With practicing this form of awareness of the present – which transcends the immediate physical space and time – comes being conscious of both the internal and external dimensions we inhabit. Despite the endeavour to engage in present realities and refrain from retreating into isolation or living in the past, slow living does involve a certain degree of mindful withdrawal to attend to the internal environment in an effort to engage with the present in its entirety and find stillness within to better attend to the external domain (Parkins & Craig 2006, p. 4-5). This application of mindfulness in slow living entails attending to the body, senses, thoughts and emotions to truly engage with our presence within, and in relation to, our surroundings (Parkins & Craig 2006, p. 5). In reference to Alberto Melucci, Parkins and Craig (2016) acknowledge the paradoxical nature of being mindful of the present in living slowly. Our experience of life is perpetually in the present moment yet practicing mindfulness also necessitates a deeper contemplation that occurs instantaneously alongside our experiences, which is developed and adjusted over the course of our lives (Parkins & Craig 2016). Furthermore, as was identified in section 2.2, by Kabat-Zinn (2005, p. 11), this is very much fundamental in the practice of mindfulness, as ‘coming to our senses is the work of no time at all, only of being present and awake here and now. It is also, paradoxically, a lifetime’s engagement.’ Strauss (2016, p. 17) also attests, we can access the richness of our internal dimension through inner
dialogue, ‘a process of encountering oneself within oneself’, which is ‘a place where poetry is born and where imagination, intuition, deep knowing (and also not-knowing) reside’. Actively accessing this space allows us to attune the internal to the external reality, and vice versa (Strauss 2016), to truly live slowly with greater consciousness.

2.4 Sustainable and ethical fashion

Existing fashion and sustainability literature recognises that embedded systems of consumerism and the widespread aim of perpetual growth have been largely identified as the prevailing forces of the fashion system, diminishing the value of alternative systems or perspectives (Black 2008; Fletcher 2015; Gwilt 2015; Palomo-Lovinski & Hahn 2014; Thackara 2015). The capitalist concept of yielding profit from the consumption of new products is inherent in the fashion system and aided the emergence of growth-focused, fast fashion in the late 1990s (Maynard 2013). In the 2008 publication Eco-Chic: The Fashion Paradox, Black (2008, p. 11) explains, ‘global communications and marketing, together with increased competition and the growth of offshore manufacturing, have fuelled demand and higher consumer expectations. This has resulted in faster and faster fashion cycles’. Maynard (2013, p. 542) states that constantly satisfying consumer desire through the production and consumption of fashion drives success and indicates a key measure of progress for capitalist investment. They also highlight, ‘profit margins for conglomerates and their shareholders remain their most significant priority’ (Maynard 2013, p.542). However, Fletcher’s (2014, p. XVI) perspective interjects that ‘the forces of advanced capitalism and globalization’, that influence our lives, fail to communicate ‘the health of global systems, the resilience of society, or the aliveness and satisfaction of everyday life as expressed in our achievements and the cohesion of our communities’. The emergence of rapid fashion production based on low-cost manufacturing and perpetually changing trends makes it imperative to address the social and environmental impact of this system (Maynard 2013, p. 542).
The academic discourse and industry commentary drawn from the area of sustainable and ethical fashion for this thesis generally addresses the destructive social and environmental impact of the global fashion system. Gupta, from the National Institute of Fashion Technology in New Delhi, broadly states:

humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our wellbeing (2009, p. 425-426).

Palomo-Lovinski and Hahn (2014) claim the enormity of mass production and the globalisation of fashion and clothing manufacture ultimately effects global health, while harm to the environment can potentially originate from any phase in the garment lifecycle. In agreement, Eva Kruse (cited in TEDx Talks 2013), CEO and President of Copenhagen Fashion Week and Danish Fashion Institute, states, ‘the fashion industry is also one of the most polluting industries’, referencing the overuse of water, overconsumption of clothing, the mass use of chemicals, the negative impacts of cotton use and the exploitation of human labour. Comparably, the 2015 documentary film *The True Cost* (2015), directed by Andrew Morgan, also details the powerful social and environmental implications of the global fashion system. The result of the production and consumption of fashion and clothing has seen diminished human wellbeing on a vast scale, particularly amongst workers involved in the production of clothing and accessories (*The True Cost* 2015).

A common argument amongst the literature and industry commentary is that there is an explicit need for a universal shift in awareness of impact and, in turn, a shift in personal behaviour on a broad scale, which would entail widespread determination to change (Fletcher & Tham 2015; Palomo-Lovinski & Hahn 2014). Critical concern for the environment and human wellbeing pertains to acknowledging the destruction and human suffering caused by unsustainable fashion practices and textile production (*The True Cost* 2015). In *The True Cost* (2015), garment factory owner Arif Jebti explicitly points out, ‘it’s not right, it’s the 21st century, it’s a global world we are living in and
we ignore other people’s lives. How come?’ A leader in fashion and sustainability research, Black highlights widespread complicity with unsustainable actions, stating:

whether involved in the creation, production, communication or representation of fashion, or simply as its consumers, everyone is implicated in the destructive aspects of this endemically unsustainable system, where obsolescence is inbuilt (2012, p. 8).

Authors agree the onus is to be placed widely across those in positions to make considered choices and shift their actions – including designers and consumers – to drive effectual change towards an improved future for fashion through sustainable and ethical practices (Fletcher 2015; Gwilt 2015; Palomo-Lovinski & Hahn 2014). However, in the conference paper ‘Sustainability – green and clean fashion’, Sahni (2009, p. 471) recognises that ‘building a sustainability-directed mindset’ will be a challenge in developing sustainability in fashion, noting that an extensive embodiment of such a mindset would be slow-moving and would require a significant shift in the fashion value-chain. They acknowledge that the enormity of transforming perceptions about the significance of sustainable fashion beyond a passing trend is considerable (Sahni 2009, p. 471).

It appears the underlying values and cultural beliefs surrounding sustainable and ethical fashion are considered necessary throughout the wider fashion sector. Ehrenfeld (2015, p. 59), an industrial ecologist, argues that targeting the underlying source of fashion’s unsustainability in the form of cultural drivers should be a priority. Transforming these drivers would aid in potentially bringing about ‘sustainability-as-flourishing’, a concept introduced in the previous section (Ehrenfeld 2015, p. 59). Ehrenfeld states:

if, as I argue, that unsustainability is an unintended consequence of our current cultural beliefs and practices, only a new set of beliefs, leading to a new set of cultural habits, can eliminate the negative consequences. Without such a change, we are limited to playing catch-up and clean-up (2015, p. 60).

Furthermore, they argue that a key concern in relation to the fashion industry is ‘the belief we hold about what it is to be human’ (Ehrenfeld 2015, p. 62). They identify selfishness, neediness, narcissism and mechanistic attributes in what we view as human personas, which is incompatible
with their notion of flourishing because there needs to be a sense of contentment in having satisfied what we care about, as opposed to a constant search for more (Ehrenfeld 2015, p. 62). Other academics demonstrate similar views, advocating for a system of fashion embedded with awareness, care for the wellbeing of others and deep concern for the health of our planet (Entwistle 2015; Fletcher 2015; Fletcher & Tham 2015; St. Pierre 2015; Thackara 2015; Thomas 2015). Thackara (2015), St. Pierre (2015) and Entwistle (2015) particularly address the significance of how we perceive the interconnection between nature and culture, and the importance of a strengthened connection with the environment and widespread ecological understanding.

The literature conveys the argument that to better understand how the production, provision and use of clothing and fashion interacts with the environment, we need to overhaul the way we perceive the relationship between nature and culture (Entwistle 2015). St. Pierre states:

most of us in Western society continue to work through the day unaware of natural processes that nourish life and natural processes that transmit our industrial-age mistakes around the planet (2015, p. 33).

The author brings awareness to the lack of ‘ecological literacy’ and, in turn, critical ‘ecoliterate thinking’, calling for research into methods to unify contemporary society and nature (St. Pierre 2015, p. 38). St. Pierre explains:

with this limited knowledge, we are participating in industrial systems that have tremendous impact on the natural world that we rely on for survival. Our lack of ecological understanding has contributed to the compromise or demise of many natural systems (2015, p. 33).

In reference to St. Pierre’s perspective, Fletcher and Tham (2015, p. 14) emphasise that a deep-rooted connection with the earth can ‘influence the current social imaginary of the modern West and include the ecological imagination, a precursor to deep and significant change, and only with this renewed sensibility can we make fashion futures of sustainability’.
Evidence of this necessary change is occurring and can be found in the emerging social movements and projects driven by alternate approaches (Thackara 2015). In ‘A Whole New Cloth: Politics and the fashion system’, Thackara (2015, p. 44) refers to eco-philosopher Joanna Macy, who describes the notion of ‘The Great Turning’ – a profound shift in our perception of who we are, and a reawakening to the fact that we are not separate from the Earth as a living system’. Thackara (2015) suggests alternate approaches stem from a growing awareness of this co-dependency between humans and natural systems. Sustainable fashion, eco fashion, ethical fashion and slow fashion have emerged to form a sustainable and ethical fashion space. Although they differ, each movement converges on the shared value of a thriving planet, global community and future for coming generations.

2.5 The fashion system

The fashion industry is a large and complex system, most of which exceeds the scope of this study. In this thesis, the fashion system is understood as a global, institutionalised system with hierarchical market levels distinguishing the perceived value of the labels, and the products they produce, within each level. Below, figure 13. (Alice Payne 2013) details the global fashion market levels: haute couture, ready-to-wear and mass-market, with subcategories of premium, mid-market, fast fashion and discount market. Slow fashion, and other fashion areas referred to in the thesis, such as sustainable fashion and artisanal fashion, are viewed as part of this structure, yet are not isolated to any one level.
The review of literature identifies that slow fashion retains its own set of values, views and approaches, which this thesis aims to delve deeper into. It appears that holistically bringing together slow production and slow consumption is critical to the movement. The slow fashion approach often incorporates localised production, with an increased sense of interconnection, an enhanced value of quality, various traditional skills and techniques, and heightened socio-environmental values that underpin ethical and sustainable practices (Aakko 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2010). The movement connects with an array of fashion practices; therefore, this thesis takes the opportunity to look beyond commonly documented sustainable and ethical fashion practices to those that draw upon values embedded in slow culture. As the literature conveys, mindfulness is intimately connected with the slow ethos and indicates a basis for the embrace of mindfulness within slow fashion.

The slow fashion movement is positioned within a wider sustainable and ethical fashion context, in which awareness resonates as a key driving force. Adopting an activist spirit for change, this broad space embraces awareness of the reality of fashion and clothing production, provision and consumption, and is largely driven by reactions to the destructive impact of damaging fast fashion practices in the current global fashion system. As a result of the literature review, the factors driving the sustainable and ethical fashion space present interesting contradictions to mindfulness practice, namely the components of non-striving, a focus on the present and relinquishing expectations of a desired outcome, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4. However, mindfulness also engages...
similar values to that of slow fashion. The slow fashion movement conveys an ethos that extends further than environmental and social sustainability to values of human connection, authenticity and appreciation; values that support an approach to producing, consuming and living well.
CHAPTER 3: SLOW FASHION AS A PRACTICE

A contextual review

In this chapter, the key principles of slow fashion are discussed in detail in relation to slow fashion as a practice. The chapter forms a contextual review of slow fashion practices undertaken by four prominent slow fashion labels in the niche slow fashion design community: Alabama Chanin, People Tree, Filippa K and Zady. The intention here is to understand what the practice of slow fashion entails within slow fashion labels, resulting in a focus on the design and production point of view, and how it connects with, or deviates from, academic coverage on the subject. Following this section, the practice of slow fashion consumption is explored amongst the literature collected to understand its practice as a critical component of the movement. As the contextual review shows, the ethos of each label resonates with the key tenets of the slow fashion movement, as do the practices in relation to the slow fashion criteria, which indicates a correlation between academic theory and practice within the industry.

Many of the characteristics of slow fashion evident in the cases are shared by multiple labels, which provides an indication of the most prominent aspects of the slow fashion movement embraced in practice. Despite the slow fashion movement extending beyond sustainability, the criterion a commitment to environmental and social sustainability (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) emerged as a prominent principle across each of the labels amongst both the ethos and practices. Furthermore, many of the slow fashion practices identified are undertaken in the production phase of the garment life cycle, which is true to the literature in highlighting slow production as a key aspect of the movement, but a selection of practices also relates to the design phase. As Farley Gordon and Hill recognise of designers in the sustainable and ethical fashion space, they:
are keenly aware ... that the ability to produce fashion that is ethically, emotionally and aesthetically pleasing is essential to the future of their businesses – as well as the sustainable fashion industry as a whole (2015, p. 50).

The contextual review is developed via a method of critique whereby slow fashion practice and the ethos of slow fashion labels are compared and contrasted with the key concepts of slow fashion identified in the discourse. The method for preparing the contextual review of slow fashion practice involved constructing a table on slow fashion labels by collating data collected from academic fashion discourse, industry publications and outputs of the labels, such as company websites. The investigation commenced with collecting designers and labels operating within the sustainable and ethical fashion space with slow approaches. This process involved gathering cases addressed in academic fashion discourse and labels covered in fashion media and industry blogs, before gathering further insight from company websites. The list was then refined by noting whether the companies were self-identified slow fashion labels or had been recognised by industry institutions, retailers, bloggers or fashion academics as being part of the slow fashion movement. This process led to the selection of four prominent names (Alabama Chanin, Filippa K, People Tree and Zady) operating within this space that both identify as slow fashion labels and are also endorsed by others.

Subsequent to this, case study research was undertaken, documenting general information about the label, its history, its ethos and goals, its channels of communication and points of contact with consumers, other activities undertaken beyond garment making and, finally, the practices of the label gathered from online company outputs. All information on Alabama Chanin (2017a), Filippa K (n.d.c), People Tree (2017b) and Zady (2017c) in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 was gathered from the corresponding company websites, which includes marketing material, annual reports within the public domain and blogs, unless otherwise stated. The ethos presented by each of the four labels is analysed according to how they engage with the values and key components of the slow fashion
movement. The practices, on the other hand, are critiqued in relation to the list of slow fashion criteria developed through the literature review (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 10.). In this chapter, the section 3.3 is structured based on the identification of engagement with common criteria connecting the labels to each other and to the slow fashion movement, despite varying practices and brand aesthetics amongst them. This is not to explicitly say that the slow fashion characteristics only attributed to one or two of the labels are absent from the other labels examined, but more so, that this study focuses on the slow fashion criteria at the forefront of the labels’ practices.

Subsequent to the study of design and production aspects, slow consumption was explored by referring to the literature on slow fashion and the criteria developed to identify the points that apply to slow fashion consumption as a practice and the consumer’s mind set.

Before commencing, it is important to understand the position of the case study labels in the commercial context within the fashion industry. The table (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 14.) below aims to situate the labels via company size, type of production, position in the industry market, garment aesthetic and the proposed consumer market.
3.1 Introducing slow fashion labels

*Alabama Chanin*, founded by Natalie Chanin, is a versatile lifestyle company that engages in both making and educating in its pursuit to unite design, fashion and craftsmanship. Initially starting as a DIY initiative, the American company has been operating since 2000. *Alabama Chanin* produces a selection of products and stocks pieces crafted by local artisans, which showcases the varied interests of the company across fashion, craft, design, manufacturing and food (*Alabama Chanin* 2017d, figure 15.). The label produces and sells womenswear, bridal wear, eveningwear and
homewares ranges, along with fabrics, wholesale fabrics and collections, sewing tools and notions, books, sewing patterns, DIY kits, stencils and craft supplies. *Alabama Chanin* stocks external artisan-made goods including accessories, jewellery, homewares, dinnerware, kitchenware and organic, locally roasted coffee named, ‘The Factory Blend Coffee’. The company runs multiple ventures, reaching its customers online and in person. It has an overall team of 30 people across its production, design, workshop, education and media departments, its flagship store and café, housed in the company’s headquarters, called ‘The Factory’ in Florence, Alabama, and its machine-made manufacturing division, named ‘Building 14’.

*Figure 15: Top and skirt by Alabama Chanin, Alabama Chanin, 2017d.*

*Filippa K*, a prominent fashion label in Scandinavia, operates on a much larger scale in a more mainstream capacity. Positioned in Stockholm, Sweden, the longstanding label was established by Filippa Knutsson in 1993 and boasts a team of 350 employees. In accordance with standard production procedures in the commercial fashion system, the label produces four seasonal collections per year consisting of womenswear, menswear, including *Front Runners* which are garments underpinned by sustainable practices, and *Soft Sport*, an active wear collection (*Filippa K* n.d.d, figure 16.). Alongside these ranges, *Filippa K’s* product output also includes bags, wallets,
accessories and shoes stocked online through the company website, via its own e-commerce available in 30 markets, in 50 Filippa K stores and 600 external retailers worldwide. The label’s website also features ‘Filippa K Circle’, a digital platform that facilitates discussion and shares knowledge from experts in relation to innovative sustainability concepts, envisioning a sustainable fashion future to inspire change. ‘Filippa K Circle’ is split into four prominent phases of the fashion cycle: Raw Materials, Production, Consumption and Looping. Each phase is explored through ideas in accordance with the limitations of our planet. The company invites perspectives from across the supply chain and showcases a selection of novel actions currently being undertaken by others. In addition to producing garments, Filippa K also undertakes research into materials, including wool and recycled wool, and sustainable solutions, for example in relation to water management, in conjunction with Axfoundation (n.d.), Trucost (2018) and Sweden Textile Water Initiative (STWI) (2019).

Figure 16: Winter 2016 campaign by Filippa K, Filippa K, n.d.d.

People Tree, a UK-based label, is a pioneer in sustainable and Fairtrade fashion. The company was founded by Safia Minney in 1991 and began as Global Village, first based in Japan, before launching in the UK in 2001. With a concise team of 20 employees, the company consists of multiple
departments including ‘design, sourcing, logistics, wholesale, merchandising, customer service, accounting, public relations and marketing’ (People Tree 2017b, Get Involved). People Tree’s product output includes ranges of womenswear, eveningwear, nightwear, yoga wear, knitwear, jewellery, organic essentials, small accessories, books and menswear, available through its online store and other global stockists and multi-brand online retailers, such as ASOS (2019). People Tree also collaborates on collections with well-known, external fashion designers, including Zandra Rhodes (2017) and Peter Jensen (n.d.). As a leading Fairtrade fashion label, for over 25 years People Tree has engaged in promoting and further developing fair trade amongst its producers and the industry at large (People Tree 2016, figure 17.). It claims:

People Tree organises workshops on Fair Trade and encourages partner groups to promote Fair Trade too. For this reason, People Tree initiated World Fair Trade Day in 2001 to promote our global movement of Fair Trade (People Tree 2017b, What is Fair Trade?).

![Image removed due to copyright restrictions]

Figure 17: Producer organisation Swallows by People Tree, The Thread, 2016.

Drawing upon extensive experience in partnership with its producers, the company is also involved in refining the standards for Fairtrade cotton and Fairtrade garment manufacturing, as well as participating in the writing of World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) standards. In fact, People Tree
The business also works in partnership with the People Tree Foundation, not unlike conventional, non-slow fashion labels fulfilling corporate social responsibility commitments. People Tree Foundation functions as an independent charity to:

- bring benefits to an even greater number of farmers and artisans through scaling up training, technical support and environmental initiatives and through raising awareness and campaigning for fair and sustainable fashion (People Tree 2017b, Get Involved).

For example, one project includes providing support to one of People Tree’s producers, Bombolulu (n.d.) in Mombasa, Kenya, after flooding damaged their workshop, equipment and the homes of their employees. Finally, People Tree (2017b, True Cost Film) was also involved in the 2015 documentary The True Cost, which ‘exposes the true human and ecological cost of fashion – factors like human suffering and environmental damage that are not reflected in a garment’s price tag’.

People Tree’s (2017b, True Cost Film) ‘business model & producers were featured as best, responsible practice’ and the label’s CEO, Minney, participated ‘in a candid interview on the real impact of fast fashion and how slow fashion is not only fair, it changes lives’.

Finally, the last slow fashion label selected for this review is Zady, a company based in New York (Matthew Johnson 2017, figure 18.). The label was established in 2013 by Maxine Bédat and Soraya Darabi and is promoted as ‘a lifestyle destination for conscious consumers’ (Zady 2017c). Zady is both a fashion label, with womenswear and menswear presented within the Zady Collection,
featuring select pieces inspired by actress Emma Watson, and an online retailer stocking various brands, including Mischa Lampert (n.d.), A Peace Treaty (n.d.), Phyllis + Rosie (2019), Odette (2018) and Anonym Craftsman Design (n.d.), among many others. Additional product ranges from external brands include home décor, accessories, bags, jewellery, beauty products, baby garments, toys, office products and stationary. Zady began as a pursuit to understand quality:

what we uncovered was the why behind our low-quality goods. A system training us to buy more and more products of increasingly lower quality by an industry that hides the outrageously high environmental and social cost of its production (Zady 2017c, Our Mission).

Zady pinpoint carbon dioxide contribution, consumption and labour, on the company website, as problematic areas relating to garment production and the fashion industry. Alongside the creation of the Zady Collection, the company engages in research into the definition of sustainability, materials and the ecological impacts of fashion in relation to forests, water, soil and climate change, among others. This research was originally presented as ‘The New Standard’ on the company’s e-commerce site through an interactive diagram directing the user to corresponding essays.¹

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¹ As the business has since closed down, the website along with the essays are no longer accessible. After extensive searching copies of the essays were not able to be obtained, therefore, any possible secondary citations were not able to be identified and included in this text.
3.2 Ethos of slow fashion labels

Each of the four labels communicate a unique ethos that conveys a commitment to key tenets of the slow fashion movement identified through the literature review. The most prominent principle that emerges across the four labels is a connection to environmental and social sustainability. *Alabama Chanin* claims to value the importance of ethical production and creating experiences and products that enhance people’s lives, contribute to the community and enrich our planet. All avenues of the label are driven by a goal to create ‘beautiful products in sustainable ways’ (Alabama Chanin 2017a, Careers). In reforming its philosophy, *Filippa K* (n.d., About Us) spent numerous years developing a conscious outlook ‘that recognises innovative sustainability as its guide to growth’. The company values the concept of a closed loop system in the fashion cycle as the ‘ultimate goal’, which from *Filippa K*’s perspective involves ‘avoiding everything from humans and animals not being respected in the process of making fashion to tons of clothing ending up in landfills’ (Filippa K n.d., Filippa K Circle – About). The company aims to produce sustainably throughout its entire collection of products, not only its *Front Runners* collection, by the year 2030.

On the other hand, *People Tree*’s ethos embraces environmental and social sustainability by putting people and the planet at the forefront of everything the company undertakes and encounters, including from the beginning of the design process. The label’s mission claims to ‘protect the environment’, ‘be 100% Fair Trade throughout our supply chain’ and ‘support producers in the developing world’ (People Tree 2017b, Mission). The company emphasise that it undertakes a different approach when it comes to fashion and considers fashion to be a ‘tool for sustainable development’; a means to protect both people and the planet (People Tree 2017b, About Us). Furthermore, it endeavours to create both sustainably and fashionably, adhering to another characteristic of slow fashion. *People Tree* (2017b, About Us) state, ‘in the past, ethical, Fair Trade, organic and sustainable were not words people thought of as fashionable. *People Tree* has transformed ethical fashion into something contemporary, accessible, and desirable’. Finally, *Zady*
(2017c, The New Standard) claim to integrate attention to sustainability throughout its company, stating, ‘the responsibility we have as a corporation of the future is to build a sustainable means of dressing the global population. And to explore more about defining sustainability’. The label embraces a curious attitude and an eagerness to question the actions of the fashion industry.

Not only is there a clear association between slow fashion and environmental and social sustainability across each of the cases, there are also connections with eco, ethical and Fairtrade areas of garment production, particularly in the case of People Tree. This suggests the merging of values and practices across these areas by slow fashion companies, and potentially a lack of clarity in defining the areas in slow fashion practice. Furthermore, despite identifying as slow fashion labels and being described as slow fashion in academic and industry discourse, interestingly there is very minimal use of the terms ‘slow’, ‘slow fashion’, ‘slow culture’ or the ‘slow movement’ on the company websites. Zady and Alabama Chanin use the term ‘slow’ more often, while People Tree and Filippa K favour terminology common to sustainable, ethical, fair trade or eco fashion areas.

The slow fashion labels selected also communicate strong values of equity, responsibility and questioning established hierarchies that separate producers, designers and consumers. People Tree is a key example, as the label embraces a strong philosophy of fair trade and support for producers in developing countries through its production of eco and ethical fashion garments. The label communicates its aim of strengthening relationships with its partner producers throughout the supply chain to build a different form of fashion company. Alabama Chanin (2017a, Mission) also promotes a commitment to equity, valuing ‘good, clean, and fair work and life’, and is inspired by companies who produce ethically and responsibly with honesty and openness. The company challenges the divide between designers, producers and consumers through a commitment to preserving education, via ‘The School of Making’, and through its aim to enrich the lives of all those who come into contact with its sustainably made products. In the case of Zady, the company
communicates its responsibility as a fashion company to ensure a sustainable future for the industry. The company also claims to put the user at the forefront of the design process to reengage with the consumer. *Zady* (2017c, *The New Standard*) explain, ‘instead of fabricating a “trend”, we design our clothing with living in mind’. However, at the heart of *Zady*’s ethos is its stance against fast fashion.

Defying the established fast fashion system, through slow fashion practice, is a position strongly communicated in the brand philosophies of both *Zady* and *People Tree*. *Zady* communicate this stance explicitly through a manifesto, and in doing so, supports slow fashion as an alternative approach to fashion practice (*Zady* 2017a, figure 19.). Similarly, on the ‘About Us’ page of its website, *People Tree* (2017b, About Us) celebrates its non-conformity, claiming that fast fashion ‘is fuelled by insatiable demand for cheap clothing and accessories’ and drastically impacts both people and the planet, ‘from sweatshops and child labour to pollution and global warming’. *People Tree*’s (2017b, About Us) slow fashion perspective is about taking a stand against ‘exploitation, family separation, slum cities and pollution’, which it identifies as fuelling the success of fast fashion. Part of the company’s slow fashion ethos is designing better with more attention and mindfulness by acknowledging that every design decision made effects its producers. For example, in Bangladesh, artisans who are skilled in traditional hand weaving are losing work due to low-cost, fast fashion that prioritises quick production. Time consuming handwork cannot compete and, therefore, *People Tree* commit to creating work opportunities for such artisans in developing areas. It can also be argued that *Filippa K* (n.d., About Us) commits to designing better with greater attention by claiming to carefully curate a considered collection that forms ‘a modern interpretation of the life and challenges of women and men today’. However, the ethos of *People Tree* further connects with other key slow fashion principles, such as embracing traditional techniques, craftsmanship and authenticity through its elevation of handwork and commitment to using the work of traditional artisans.
Similar to People Tree, Alabama Chanin also embody an ethos that embraces traditional skills, celebrates craftsmanship and values authenticity. The label claims the company was founded on values surrounding ‘craftsmanship and beauty, but also function and utility’, which are also principles of slow fashion (Alabama Chanin 2017a, Favourites). Quality also features as part of Alabama Chanin’s (2017a, Favourites) ethos as a guiding principle, which the company commits to in order to provide ‘luxury and comfort at every level’. Additionally, Zady’s (2017c, The New Standard) brand philosophy engages quality, as the label states, ‘knowing all that goes into a piece of clothing has turned us into slow consumers of fashion. We buy quality. We invest in process’. This philosophy also connects with the slow fashion principle of gaining knowledge of materials. In fact, Zady stand by the idea:

that the fashion of the future will bring with it a return to quality, to origin, and to process. And much of that involves re-establishing a connection to the materials our clothing is made of and to the shared origin that links our food and our fashion (2017c, The New Standard).

Similarly, Alabama Chanin value preserving the past in the process of working toward the future.

With experience in what it takes to produce both by hand and by machine, the label is committed to educating its local community in modern manufacturing in an effort to counteract outsourcing.

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As outlined in figure 20. (Hayley Thompson 2018) below, overall, Zady embody an ethos committed to creating a new standard to address environmental and social sustainability. Zady embrace an activist spirit with its manifesto against fast fashion and a page on its website encouraging consumers to take action and sign up to a climate change declaration. In comparison, People Tree embrace a philosophy in line with principles of Fairtrade and endeavour to enhance the lives of those in developing countries using fashion as a tool to provide work opportunities (Hayley Thompson 2018, figure 20.). In contrast, Filippa K engage a spirit of consciousness, as the label presents itself, viewing sustainability and a closed loop system as the way forward (Hayley Thompson 2018, figure 20.). Alternatively, Alabama Chanin celebrate making, sharing knowledge and a sense of community in its pursuit to produce responsible, ethical and enriching products (Hayley Thompson 2018, figure 20.). In a sense, the company embraces a spirit of living better through its conscious products, experiences and food. The people behind Alabama Chanin and People Tree are similar in the fact that they strive to enrich the lives of others through their fashion pursuits. Zady and Filippa K, on the other hand, endeavour to implement a sustainable balance. It is also important to acknowledge the future-focused outlooks of both Zady and Alabama Chanin in line with the future-striving mentality of the sustainable and ethical fashion movements.
Despite each of the labels presenting an ethos that supports its position within the slow fashion movement, *Zady* and *Alabama Chanin* connect more openly with slow fashion through communication and brand image. Instead, *People Tree* and *Filippa K* each convey an image more closely related to other alternate approaches to fashion, such as ethical and Fairtrade fashion in the case of *People Tree* and sustainable fashion in terms of *Filippa K*. This generates questions of the strength and familiarity of slow fashion in the current global fashion system. It could be argued that this is evidence of capitalisation on the stronger image portrayed by ethical and sustainable fashion areas in order to function more prominently in the fashion system, while labels, such as *Zady* and *Alabama Chanin*, embrace a more comprehensive slow fashion image operating on the peripheries of the system. Alternatively, it supports the ambiguity of boundaries between approaches in the
sustainable and ethical fashion space, and the tendency of labels to adopt broader values and practices beyond those explicitly characteristic of slow fashion and combine the varying approaches in unique ways.

3.3 Practices of slow fashion labels

The previous section revealed various correlations between Alabama Chanin, Filippa K, People Tree and Zady in regard to the ethos of each label. Similarly, in this section, a number of slow fashion practices exhibited by the labels converge with the same selection of slow fashion criteria identified in the literature review. This section focuses on the slow fashion criteria most evidently shared by the majority of the labels, in other words criteria common to all four or at least three of the labels examined, as visualised in figure 21. (Hayley Thompson 2018). In line with the previous section, each label engages in actions that support a commitment to social and environmental sustainability (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017).

Furthermore, each of the labels share practices built on a commitment to designing better for people and the planet (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), a commitment to producing better for people and the planet (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), a commitment to nurturing relationships (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), transparency (Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016;
Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). The slow fashion criteria met by at least three of the labels includes combining traditional and new techniques, skills or styles (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles; Wanders 2009) and quality, particularly prioritising quality over quantity (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013).

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 21: Visual representation of the slow fashion criteria embraced by most of the case study labels examined (© Hayley Thompson 2018).*

### 3.3.1 A commitment to social and environmental sustainability

Practices pertaining to social and environmental sustainability are carried out in varying ways – comparable to sustainable fashion – by the slow fashion labels explored. For *Alabama Chanin*, these
practices predominantly emerge within the production phase of the garment life cycle. The label works with a variety of sustainable, organic, reclaimed and repurposed materials, including 100 per cent organic cotton fabric sourced through a sustainable supply chain. On the company’s ‘Hierarchy of Systems’ list, adhering to certified organic standards as accurately as possible sits at number three. Furthermore, the label continually works towards a purely US-based supply chain for its organic cotton, which complies with the slow fashion principle of producing locally. *Alabama Chanin* (2017a, Supply Chain) state, ‘organic cotton is the heart of *Alabama Chanin*. It binds all aspects of the company: sustainability, fashion, DIY, and craft’. The use of organic or natural materials is an action implemented by each of the labels and is commonly communicated as being more sustainable.

*People Tree* also prioritise the use of organic cotton, endorsing it as a socially and environmentally sustainable choice, as:

> organic cotton is grown without the use of insecticides, pesticides and nitrogen fertilisers ... Through organic farming, soils remain healthy and sequester more carbon helping to mitigate against climate change. Water consumption is reduced and there is a reduction of CO2 emissions per tonne of cotton fibre (2017b, Features).

*People Tree* also utilise Tencel, a biodegradable wood pulp fibre that functions in a closed loop system, and wool, as a biodegradable and renewable fibre. The company partners with producers who also favour natural fibres, such as Rajlakshmi Cotton Mills (2013), a company similarly committed to social and environmental sustainability. Rajlakshmi use GOTS certified organic cotton, Tencel, modal and linen, and rely on more than 2,500 artisans in Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, who utilise cotton, sheep’s wool and banana fibre. *People Tree’s* artisans also make use of recycled saris.

As for *Filippa K* (n.d.c, A Sustainable Choice), the label features ‘A Sustainable Choice’ collection on its website, which is communicated as a ‘smarter choice’ as the ‘styles are designed to create
minimal negative impact on people and our environment’ based on the use of sustainable materials. For example, the ‘High-Low Tencel Shirt White’ is ‘mindfully made from sustainable Lyocell’, a regenerated fibre derived from wood that often replaces cotton in the label’s collections (Filippa K n.d.c, A Sustainable Choice). The company is actively working towards replacing conventional cotton with other more sustainable fibres. Filippa K (n.d.c, Filippa K Circle - Making recycled textiles the new luxury) also uses organic cotton and wool, a fibre which has divided opinions on its sustainability, but incorporated in the collections for its ‘durable, self-cleaning, biodegradable and recyclable’ qualities. However, the label’s engagement in socially and environmentally sustainable practice is predominantly focused on its Front Runners collection at this stage.

Filippa K’s Front Runners collection leads the company’s sustainability initiative with garments produced as sustainably as currently possible. Assessments are carried out for each phase of the garment lifecycle in order to create with minimal impact. In terms of materials, the label makes use of recycled wool, from an Italian manufacturer that collects leftover wool fabric from Filippa K and other companies, recycled polyester, recycled thread, recycled polyester zippers, recycled brand labels, recycled paper swing tags with recycled polyester string, biodegradable packaging made from corn starch and buttons made from corozo nuts produced via a natural process with natural dyes used as much as possible. Filippa K gain knowledge through research into each material the company considers for its garment production and allows this to lead the making process. Similar to Filippa K, Zady also invest in material research as part of its commitment to social and environmental sustainability. Zady incorporate a variety of natural, renewable fibre fabrics based on the sustainable qualities. The label uses organic cotton, which is certified by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), linen, due to its low carbon footprint, GOTS certified and certified non-mulesed wool, Alpaca fibre, corozo nut buttons and silk obtained through an organic, cruelty-free process, avoiding the use of pesticides. Furthermore, Zady support the use of fabric with 100 per cent fibre content and limit the use of virgin materials by incorporating recycled synthetic fibres.
The Zady team also pay attention to chemical use, dying processes and energy usage by partnering with producers throughout the world who possess social and environmental values akin to their own. For example, for the khaki trench coat in the Zady collection (Zady 2016, figure 22), ‘yarns are dyed using AZO-free dyes in these certified facilities that utilize water treatment plants in addition to solar and hydro energy systems’ (Zady 2017c, Khaki trench coat). Also, the alpaca sweaters remain undyed, embracing the natural colour palette. Other producers use safe, non-toxic dyes as part of GOTS certified processes or implement specialised spinning and knitting techniques, creating water repellent garments to bypass chemical use. Furthermore, some producers use reactive dyes that remain in the fibres of the fabric to avoid water pollution, which is a significant issue, as Zady claim on the company website approximately 20 per cent of all industrial water pollution is produced from the textile dyeing sector. Both Zady and People Tree demonstrate a common practice of partnering with many certified companies and facilities within their production supply chains, which ensures adherence to set social and environmental standards, particularly during the dyeing process. In addition to being certified by WTFO, GOTS, the Fairtrade Foundation, Fairtrade Labelling Organizations (FLO) International and the Soil Association, People Tree collaborate with mostly certified producers who comply with Fairtrade standards, and often work with certified materials themselves, and supports producers in developing countries. Zady state that the company works with numerous producers with varying certifications from GOTS, Oeko-Tex, Health and Textile Association, International Organization for Standardization 9001 and Blue Sign.
Comparably, the other slow fashion labels also opt for alternate low impact or natural dyeing and processing options. A number of Alabama Chanin garments are processed and dyed with natural tea dyes or low impact dyes. For example, one of Alabama Chanin’s South Carolina producers Green Textile – recently rebranded to Signet Mills™ (2019) – use ‘low impact, cold process, environmentally friendly dyes’ and ‘the knitting process uses only natural oils and finishing agents – nothing synthetic’ (Alabama Chanin 2017a, Supply Chain). Additionally, People Tree (2017b, Kumudini Welfare Trust) also convey evidence of minimal impact dyeing particularly by partnering with Kumudini Welfare Trust (2019), which ‘uses safe dyes made from natural products such as flowers, leaves, barks, and roots of plants and trees, as well as environmentally-friendly azo-free chemical dyes’. Furthermore, People Tree (2017b, How our products are made) also choose the carbon neutral option of using hand skills, as ‘production of fabric using a hand loom rather than a machine saves one tonne of Co2 per loom, per year’. The company also prioritises shipping its products rather than transporting by air to reduce its contribution to global warming.
Alternatively, Filippa K’s (n.d.c, Sustainability Report 2015 - Recyclable Styles) use of recycled fabrics in its Front Runners collection allows it to bypass re-dyeing and refinishing in the production process, which leads to using ‘96% less CO², 89% less water and 76% less energy than in a regular dyeing process’. Filippa K also consider chemical and resource use in the production of its Front Runners collection. For example, the label bypasses anti-pilling treatments in favour of encouraging consumers to use a sweater stone. Furthermore, in line with its ultimate goal of a closed loop fashion cycle, Filippa K also engage in a post-retail initiative of collecting worn Filippa K garments in stores to resell or donate, and alternate retail options, including reselling the collected second-hand garments in dedicated stores and providing a leasing service for its products.

3.3.2 A commitment to designing better for people and the planet

Each of the four labels demonstrate a commitment to designing better for people and the planet (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), particularly through design methods that favour functionality and versatility. Zady (2017c, The New Standard) embrace a ‘user-centred design’ approach, claiming to engage in ‘considered design’, and state ‘that’s our philosophy. We start with the user.’ This user-centred design incorporates functionality and versatility, ‘enabling the creation of more user-friendly materials’ (Zady 2017c, The New Standard). Of its detail focused approach, Zady (2017c, The New Standard) claim, ‘each detail is designed to bring joy’ in an effort to reduce excessive production of mindlessly designed garments that ultimately end up in landfill. Functionality plays a role in the Zady design process, as demonstrated in the purposeful design of the khaki trench coat. Alongside the garment image online, Zady ask:

what could be more functional for the fall season than warmth and insulation from the cold?

Which is exactly why we chose natural wool fibers as the foundation of our latest outer layer (2017c, Khaki trench coat).
The label also demonstrates versatility in its garments by indicating a variety of styling options and highlighting the varying occasions appropriate for wearing each garment.

Comparable to *Zady*, *Alabama Chanin* also embrace a purposeful design approach, considering the functionality of its garments in relation to the current wardrobes of its consumers. The label is ‘built around the concepts and values illustrated by traditions of craftsmanship and beauty, but also function and utility’ (*Alabama Chanin* 2017a, Favourites). *Alabama Chanin* also engage in a practice of custom-making garments and special occasion attire using its fabric library and archives to create products to be valued and kept for long-term use (*Alabama Chanin* 2017c, figure 23.). *People Tree* and *Filippa K*, similarly to *Zady* and *Alabama Chanin*, produce classic, versatile styles, improving the garment’s use-phase longevity. However, in contrast to *Zady*’s user-centred design approach, *People Tree* undertake a method of designing with the producers and their livelihoods in mind, in order to provide work to artisans in developing countries. Working back from the skills available to them, ‘People Tree designers work closely with artisan groups to develop contemporary designs and current shapes’ (*People Tree* 2017b, Hand Printed). In doing so, *People Tree* is designing to maintain traditional craft techniques.

*Figure 23: Fabric library and archives by Alabama Chanin, Alabama Chanin, 2017c.*
3.3.3 A commitment to producing better for people and the planet

Each of the four slow fashion labels demonstrate a commitment to producing better for people and the planet (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) by implementing different actions. Zady (2017c, The New Standard) claim, ‘we’re showing the industry that great design does not have to come at the cost of mistreated workers’ by engaging in ‘thoughtful production’. The company collaborates with its producer partners to create processes that thoughtfully consider the impact of production from fibre to the finished garment, whilst providing comfort and softness in the garment for wearers. Zady (2017c, Heather grey turtleneck sweater) state the importance of choosing ‘spinners and dyers that understand their role within the supply chain and have made a commitment to sustainable production while limiting their negative impact on the environment in which they operate’.

Alternatively, Alabama Chanin integrates a small batch production method, also a component of the slow fashion criteria, into its overall production process for all of its machine-made items, including accessories and homewares. Furthermore, machine manufactured garments are made-to-order by a small collection of in-house makers, with each garment constructed in its entirety by one person. Alabama Chanin (2017a, Tours) explain, the ‘made-to-order system allows us to practice lean method manufacturing, helping reduce and even eliminate waste in our production process’. As part of the services provided by ‘Building 14’, Alabama Chanin (2017a, Building 14 Manufacturing Services) also engage in the production of garments for external companies ‘who wish to produce responsibly, using organic cotton and reclaimed materials’. The company states, ‘the facility has the capability to source materials and physically produce goods for other companies that otherwise would not have the ability to produce using organic materials’ (Alabama Chanin 2017a, Building 14 Manufacturing Service). Through this service, the company engages ‘with a range of other designers who believe in community, sustainable supply chains, and quality production’ (Alabama Chanin
People Tree’s approach to producing better for people and the planet is highly embedded within its overarching Fairtrade approach and its pioneering sustainable methods outlined earlier in this chapter. However, the company also embraces a unique method which relates to the slow fashion criterion of being resourceful by utilising what is available (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) in the form artisan skills or recycled materials, such as saris. The designers work back from the skills available, through their producers, and design an appropriate contemporary garment for the production skills at hand. People Tree (2017b, Hand Embroidered) explain, ‘the designers enjoy challenging the artisans to try different ways of doing embroidery using new materials’. In terms of Filippa K, beyond the actions outlined in the company’s commitment to environmental and social sustainability, a unique focus in its pursuit to produce better (more sustainably) includes working to reduce water usage in the production of its garments by collaborating with STWI. Furthermore, in the production of its Front Runners collection, Filippa K strives to implement a zero-cutting waste method.

3.3.4 A commitment to nurturing relationships

A commitment to nurturing relationships (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) between designers, producers and consumers is a key concept in the slow fashion movement. Each of the labels comply with this criterion in varying ways. Alabama Chanin showcase a clear commitment to fostering a sense of community through strong relationships with its producers, consumers and like-minded fashion companies. The company claims:
our experiences showed us that face-to-face and hand-to-hand contact helped our customers better understand the what, why, and how of our making processes and the importance of an organic supply chain (Alabama Chanin 2017a, About).

Key methods of consumer engagement can be seen in Alabama Chanin’s ‘The School of Making’, which ‘teaches the fundamentals of the Slow Fashion movement to thousands of people each year’ through a number of activities (Alabama Chanin 2017a, The School of Making). These include: educational programs and initiatives, the custom-made garment process, various lectures held at the company’s base, sewing circles at ‘The Workshop Headquarters’ and tours at ‘The Factory’. Alabama Chanin (2017a, Tours) state it is ‘always striving to be an extensive resource for home sewers’ and understand that perceptions of the perfect garment design are highly personal. The company explains:

we feel that being involved in the design process can be as fulfilling as the creation of your garment, and we hope these guides and design tools will enrich the making experience (Alabama Chanin 2017a, Custom DIY).

Furthermore, the label hopes by initiating creativity through its open source method amongst its consumers and workshop participants, this creativity will also extend to the communities of those people.

Alternatively, Zady emphasise strong relationships with producers, who they view as partners. Zady (2017c, The New Standard) explain, ‘we’re working directly with our farmers, washers, spinners, knitters, and sewers to understand how we got here and to create a product that tackles each issue of our supply chain’. A key factor in implementing this approach is partnering with producers who share similar values, for example, Zady partnering with Taya Fashion in New York, a company that prioritises quality and customer relationships. People Tree’s commitment to nurturing relationships stems from its involvement in fair trade fashion. As a Fairtrade organisation, People Tree (2017b, Fair Trade Fashion) embrace ‘long-term relationships based on solidarity, trust and mutual respect’.

People Tree utilise its website to celebrate its producers and share with its consumers production
details, craft techniques and images of the artisans at work. Furthermore, People Tree undertakes projects to enhance the lives of its producers, such as providing a day care centre for Swallows (2013) to assist women with young children whilst working. Finally, a key method in Filippa K’s pursuit to build a sense of community, is the creation of the company’s online platform ‘Filippa K Circle’. The website engages experts and the public in discussions around a sustainable, closed loop fashion cycle. ‘Filippa K Circle’ is a:

digital hub where experts in the interface between innovation and sustainability share their visions of a better fashion future. Their voices inspire us to transform the fashion industry. It is a community where thoughts that can change the world are collected; a space for discussion, exploration and innovation (Filippa K n.d.c, Filippa K Circle - About).

3.3.5 Transparency

Practicing (or being able to demonstrate) transparency (Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) is a key practice amongst slow fashion labels and also within the broader sustainable and ethical fashion space. Zady (2017c, The New Standard) comply with this slow fashion criterion through sharing knowledge on sustainability, materials and supply chain details, claiming ‘we’re embedding transparency into everything we do’. As referred to earlier in this chapter, ‘The New Standard’ section of the company website shares information through essays on the impact of the fashion industry, materials and lifecycles, and provides advice on how to consume better, consciously dispose of garments and care for garments in a more environmentally friendly manner. The label states, ‘Zady is here to fill in the blanks and offer a deep look into our process’ (Zady 2017c, Cable Knit Sweater). True to this statement, for each garment Zady share details regarding each stage of the supply chain, identifying the materials used, highlighting where each garment is washed, spun, dyed, woven, cut and sewn, and celebrating the producers involved. For example, for the Zady khaki trench coat the wool fibres were sourced in
Argentina, spun and dyed by Tollegno 1900 (2017) in Biella, Italy and cut and sewn by Taya Fashion in New York City.

Similar to Zady, the Filippa K website also includes who made each of the garments by identifying suppliers and factories involved in the making of the pieces. On the other hand, Filippa K (n.d.c, Reports) choose to produce, and make accessible to the public, sustainability reports and ‘Fair Wear Foundation Brand Performance Checks’. The company states:

> reporting is an important tool for measuring our progress towards our commitment goals as well as giving our external stakeholders an insight into our journey, with the aim from us to account for our processes in a transparent and honest way (Filippa K n.d.c, Reports).

Furthermore, as discussed previously, the label also utilises its online platform ‘Filippa K Circle’ to disseminate information. Embracing transparency also extends to Filippa K’s (n.d.c, Filippa K Circle) involvement with STWI, which has evolved into ‘a platform for mutual exchange of knowledge resulting in projects with practical outcomes’ in relation to the sustainable management of water.

Maintaining this commonality of transparency in relation to material use, Alabama Chanin and People Tree also choose to share information online through the company websites regarding fibres, production processes and locations, suppliers, producers, artisans, farmers and making techniques and methods, among others. Furthermore, People Tree also feature an example of its global garment cycle for a t-shirt in its collection, highlighting each part of the production supply chain (People Tree 2017c, figure 24.). Comparatively, People Tree’s diagram presents similar thinking to figure 25. (Joan Farrer and K Fraser 2011), demonstrating the global nature of garment production supply chains. The garment lifecycle assessment diagram (Alice Payne 2011, figure 26.) by Payne, a sustainable fashion researcher, also indicates similar lifecycle phases. However, in Payne’s diagram, design is positioned after textile production as opposed to People Tree’s version, which commences with the t-shirt design as the initial phase. In addition to this, Alabama Chanin state:
to further our transparency, we open our studio doors daily for guided Factory tours. They include a behind-the-scenes look at our studio and production areas and Bldg. 14 machine sewing production facility, as well a history of the company (2017a, Tours).

Finally, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, *Alabama Chanin* (2017a, Workshops) also undertake teaching and sharing knowledge through ‘The School of Making’, a ‘platform for an open exchange of ideas, maker skills, supply chain transparency and education’, offering various workshops, talks, online videos, DIY kits and books.

*Figure 24: People Tree production supply chain by People Tree, People Tree, 2017c.*
Figure 25: Fashion and textile typical supply chain by Joan Farrer and K. Fraser, Earthscan, 2011.

Figure 26: Garment lifecycle assessment by Alice Payne, Queensland University of Technology, 2011.
3.3.6 Longevity

The slow fashion criterion *longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment* (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), first listed in figure 10. (Hayley Thompson 2019), is common to each of the labels. A value for longevity in the garments produced emerges in two ways amongst the labels: longevity of the style of the garment and longevity of the physical garment itself. For *Zady* both forms of garment longevity are addressed in the design and production processes. *Zady* advocate for the method of user-centred design in its online essay ‘Designing for Sustainability’, which can be employed to increase garment longevity. Under ‘Considered Design’ on the label’s website, *Zady* (2017c, The New Standard) state that ‘the end result is a product designed and constructed to delight not just for one season, but for years to come’, as they work to reduce the ‘over-production of thoughtless design’.

An example of this can be found in the *Zady* Turtleneck Sweater (Zady n.d.b, figure 27.) for fall/winter, when they claim there is a ‘need for classic and timeless pieces’ (Zady 2017c, Heather grey turtleneck sweater). The sweater is also made of wool, ‘one of the most durable natural fibers’, which indicates that fabric choice is a critical factor for *Zady* (2017c, Heather grey turtleneck sweater) in enhancing garment longevity. The construction of the garment is also claimed as being vital to its longevity; as the label crafts ‘each piece so every stitch is measured and secure – this is no fall-apart-in-three-washes arrangement’ (Zady 2017c, The New Standard). For example, the Gabardine Trench (Zady n.d.a, figure 28.), which *Zady* (2017c, Gabardine trench coat) believe, like all trench coats, ‘should last for decades’, is crafted by makers at C&J Sportswear (n.d.) who ‘use their incredible talent and attention to detail to finely cut and sew each piece’. Similar to *Zady*, *Filippa K* also address garment longevity by attending to style and physical durability.
Filippa K (n.d.c, Collect) strives to craft collections that are ‘long lasting in regard to both design and quality; clothes that are used and reused for many years’. The label claims its garments ‘are built to
be worn, adjusted, mended, loved and recycled’ (Filippa K n.d.c, Care). Aiding this goal, Filippa K consider fabric options in terms of durability, for example the recycled polyester lining used for the Front Runners collection was chosen for its strength, considering the lining often wears out first. Furthermore, in an effort to retain the appearance of all features of the garment over time, Filippa K (n.d.c, Front Runners) considers colour options; ‘a white neck label can appear a bit grey after a while of usage—therefore we changed the label to grey for the Front Runners [collection]’.

Furthermore, a 10-year care system is in place for the Front Runners collection which acts as a warranty of sorts guaranteeing that Filippa K will assist in caring for the garment with any necessary treatments or repairs during this time. Additionally, Filippa K also provide care instructions geared towards garment longevity, such as in the case of the woollen Front Runners garments. Filippa K state:

one of the most important messages is not to wash your clothes too often. Wool is a “self-cleaning” anti-septic material that does not need to be washed very often. Most of the time airing is enough (n.d.c, Front Runners).

Comparably, People Tree also present longevity-oriented care instructions that consider both the garment and the environment.

People Tree divide its care instructions to cater to its various hand-crafted products, including jewellery. For example, for hand-knitted garments People Tree (2017b, Care Instructions) recommend wearers hand wash items to preserve the appearance and shape, and ‘use a non-biological delicate detergent like Ecover Delicate to avoid colour loss and the use of harsh chemicals’. People Tree (2017b, Hand Printed) also employ a method of combining ‘modern geometric patterns with traditional designs to create garments that are timeless and stylish’, improving the longevity of the designs by creating classic pieces. Similarly, Alabama Chanin present a Core Essentials collection featuring basic, classic and versatile pieces, such as simple style singlets, dresses and skirts that still retain the Alabama Chanin aesthetic with large, exposed stitching,
unhemmed edges and faded neutral colours. These pieces are, as the label states on its website, ‘designed to fold seamlessly into your current wardrobe’ and ‘take your wardrobe through each season’ (Alabama Chanin 2017a, Core Essentials).

3.3.7 Combining traditional and new techniques, skills or styles

The slow fashion practice of combining traditional and new techniques, skills or styles (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009) is demonstrated as a strong commitment by Alabama Chanin and People Tree. The slow fashion aesthetic is centred on timelessness and draws attention to craftsmanship. For Alabama Chanin this means embracing hand sewing, dyeing, embellishing, embroidery and machine-based techniques throughout its collection, some of which have been used by the label for decades, and trialling new techniques with dyeing and beading. A variety of products combine both hand- and machine-based techniques. For example, with Alabama Chanin’s Lee Embroidery technique products:

the woven chambray is combined with intricate hand- and machine-dyed Alabama Chanin organic cotton jersey shapes which are whipstitch appliquéd to an organic jersey base. This advanced design highlights hand painting, natural tea dye, and is completely hand embellished with a variety of embroidery stitches (2017a, Artisan Embroidery).

Founder of Alabama Chanin (2017a, Artisan Embroidery), Natalie Chanin, spent years collaborating with artisans, including hand sewers and seamstresses, who they claim ‘use traditional hand-sewing methods that have been refined and modernized as part of our contemporary designs’. On the other hand, People Tree combines a strong commitment to traditional craft skills within the practice of contemporary garment design.

People Tree products showcase slow, artisan hand skills that are practiced in developing countries, including embroidery by Artisan Hut (2019), knitting by Kumbeshwar Technical School (2018), weaving by Swallows and Dev Tech, block printing by Kumudini, jewellery making by TARA Projects
The expert hand skills of People Tree’s artisan producers ensure high quality and precision comparable to machine embroidery. In India and Bangladesh, skills such as hand weaving, hand embroidery and hand crafting jewellery are passed on through generations, and therefore, People Tree plays a role in facilitating the continuation of such traditions by maintaining Fairtrade standards and supplying paid work opportunities. Additionally, ‘the handcraft skill of block printing started in the 14th century in Bangladesh as a way of decorating clothing’, and ‘People Tree uses block printing to maintain this ancient skill and bring you unique craft prints in a contemporary way’ (People Tree 2017b, Hand Printed). The designers work to ‘combine modern geometric patterns with traditional designs’ (People Tree 2017b, Hand Printed).

Alternatively, Filippa K is far less communicative about its practice of infusing what is new or contemporary with what is traditional practice. On its company website, Filippa K (n.d.c, About Us) mention, ‘with a holistic approach to business Filippa K is grounded in the energy of combining classic craftsmanship with modern knowledge’. For example, with garment design ‘it can often be seen in the juxtaposition of tailoring and modern sportswear, each piece draped by designers in collaboration with seamstresses and pattern cutters’ (Filippa K n.d.c, About Us).

### 3.3.8 Quality

Fashion practices that reflect a commitment to quality, particularly prioritising quality over quantity (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013), are common to three of the labels; Zady, Alabama Chanin and People Tree. Zady communicate a strong connection with quality having commenced its slow fashion journey with a pursuit to understand quality in fashion, advocating for a shift in mindsets from desiring quantity to prioritising quality as part of a new standard. The label creates slow fashion products by considering the quality of its materials, for example, the linen jersey shirt in the Zady Collection is made with linen fabric sourced from the Normandy region across France and Belgium, which Zady claim is an area considered to produce some of the highest quality linen with an ideal growing climate for flax.
Furthermore, Zady often partner with producers who value high-quality production, such as Taya Fashion, operated by industry veterans William Wai and Wendy Fung, and Italian spinning and dyeing company Manifattura Sesia (2019). Commenting on Taya Fashion, Zady (2017c, Silk Dress) state, ‘where most industry players are sacrificing craftsmanship in their race to the bottom, William places quality, customer relationships and punctuality above anything else’. Furthermore, it explains, ‘the driving force behind Sesia’s commitment to quality is the “Made in Italy” standard that has become synonymous with quality and beauty’ (Zady 2017c, Knit Coat). Manifattura Sesia also maintain rigorous quality control standards throughout its production process.

Alabama Chanin is similar to Zady in that it too communicates a deep connection to quality in its products. In fact, quality is positioned as number one in Alabama Chanin’s ‘Hierarchy of Systems’, endeavouring to provide quality to the very best of its ability. The label ensures the quality of its garments by studying each of the materials they source, a practice they have carried out for over 10 years, and once complete, design samples are considered and adjusted to meet the label’s high-quality standards. Furthermore, Alabama Chanin partners with producers who prioritise quality production, an approach also undertaken by People Tree. The label often notes the high-quality materials and garments crafted by its producers, including Fusion Clothing (2018) with its use of organic cotton, Rajlakshmi Cotton Mills for its tailoring and Swallows, Artisan Hut and Dev Tech for the creation of hand-woven fabrics.

3.4 Slow consumption as a practice

According to retailers, slow fashion is rising in line with a greater consumer consciousness about garment purchases (Pookulangara & Shephard 2013, p. 204). ‘In slow fashion emphasis is placed as much on reducing the speed of production as on slower consumption’ (Wanders 2009, p. 89). There are challenges that confront the practice of slow consumption by consumers. Whilst undertaking the research for this thesis, it has become apparent that sustainability and ethics within the fashion
industry are convoluted and, oftentimes, can seem contradictory. For example, despite being a natural fibre, conventional cotton has significant disadvantages in relation to sustainability; it is an extremely thirsty plant and involves high pesticide usage (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015). The most sustainable choice of product is not often obvious; therefore, it requires a continuous comparative process, whereby company values, personal values, materials, production processes, distribution modes, garment care methods and future disposal options, among others, are considered.

Slow consumption entails a commitment to social and environmental sustainability (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), which could take the form of purchasing a garment created by a label that upholds sustainability values, or simply asking considered questions to make an informed decision before purchasing, using, caring for or disposing of garments. An example of this may be, which mode of purchasing would align better with an individual’s social and environmental sustainability values? Perhaps choosing to purchase an item in store saves on plastic packaging required for posting a garment. Alternatively, of two garments, one might require less regular washing due to the fabric used than the other, and this may outweigh the other garment in terms of its overall environmental impact across the entire life of the garment. Or perhaps it becomes a question of how localised a company’s production process is. However, consumers lack the knowledge of slow fashion needed to be fully informed when making purchase decisions. Furthermore, it has also been identified that a perception exists that slow fashion costs more than other fashion products and is considered to be not trendy (Pookulangara & Shephard 2013, p. 204).

Needless to say, although fashion labels, such as the cases discussed here, retailers and other companies may aid this process through transparency in relation to their practices (Pookulangara & Shephard 2013, p. 203-204), or reducing the amount of research required by providing the relevant
information, purchasing decisions still come down to personal consumer values and knowledge. There is still space for personalisation within slow consumption of fashion products, and each person’s engagement with slow consumption, slow fashion or slow living in general differs based on nuances that align with personal sustainable and ethical values and perspectives on the concept of slow. Minney states:

consumers need to find inspiration and pleasure in the texture of natural fabrics, the story behind the product and real, honest, ‘face to face’ communication with the people selling them their clothes (2016, p. 11).

They predict the greater acceptance of slow fashion to the point that ‘ethical consumerism and slow fashion will become the new norm’, as ‘consumer apathy is lifting’ (Minney 2016, p. 13).

Alternatively, Pookulangara and Shephard argue:

in the end the success of slow fashion at the consumer level will be largely determined by how a company markets the idea and how they connect to what they buy by hearing a story about the designers, materials, and collections (2013, p. 205).

There is a current consumer trend indicating more interest in sustainability, ethical working conditions and a greater willingness to implement changes amongst fashion consumers, which has increased over recent decades (Clark 2008, p. 444; Henninger et al. 2015, p. 131 & 133). The slow fashion movement recognises and caters to a new type of consumer with redefined fashion needs (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013). Cataldi, Dickson and Grover (2013, p. 24) explain, ‘New Consumers make more conscious choices that support a sustainable future by slowing down to discover how and where garments are made, and learn about minimising their consumer impacts’. Furthermore, ‘whenever possible, responsible actions are taken to be creative and skilful, by consuming less, restyling garments, swapping clothing or supporting sustainably sourced and locally made fashion’ (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013, p. 24). In the journal article, ‘From quantity to quality: understanding slow fashion consumers for sustainability and consumer education’, Jung and Jin (2016, p. 411) present a collection of slow fashion consumer values from their study: high-quality,
versatility, crafting a wardrobe of garments ‘based on the concept of clothing created out of care and consideration’, higher usefulness of garment, well-fitting garments, long garment life due to enduring style and acceptance of high price points. Jung and Jin’s (2016) findings also indicate that slow fashion and sustainability align with the Swartz values of self-transcendence, conservation, self-enhancement and openness, values of which connect with consumers who would or could be slow fashion consumers. Furthermore, they determined that the ‘highly-involved in slow fashion group’ in their study oriented toward all five of their slow fashion attributes; Equity, Authenticity, Functionality, Localism and Exclusivity (Jung & Jin 2016, p. 415).

A selection of Jung and Jin’s (2016) slow fashion consumer values can be found amongst the slow fashion criteria (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 10.) first developed in the literature review. Therefore, in order to contribute a clearer understanding of slow consumption, a set of relevant slow consumption principles were drawn out of the slow fashion criteria and presented in the table below (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 29.). These points apply to slow consumption as a practice and the slow fashion consumer’s mindset. The obvious criterion is a commitment to consuming better for people and the planet (Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2014; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and is unpacked with four explanatory points beneath this heading. However, each of the other relevant criteria listed in the table could also fall under this overarching heading, but for the purpose of maintaining uniformity across this thesis, the criteria remain in the original format as they appear in Chapter 2.
To further elucidate the practice of slow consumption by consumers, the following will unpack the criteria under the heading of *a commitment to consuming better for people and the planet* (Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2014; Pookulangara and Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017).

Examples drawn from the literature will be presented along with newly proposed examples.

*Engaging in different experiences of fashion* (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) denotes embracing fashion beyond the prescribed experience of acquiring...
something new, being ‘on trend’ or buying into the constructed meaning, or fantasy, attached to the product by fashion marketers. These alternate experiences may include a heightened sensory connection to the materials used to craft a garment, memories or feelings invoked by a garment, perhaps based on its production process or previous owner, and particular movements encouraged by the wearing of certain garments (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Fashion can also be experienced as a way to attach new intangible components to a garment in the form of new memories or future experiences. These alternate ways of experiencing fashion may also be undertaken by embracing the next criterion, sharing garments and incorporating second-hand or used garments (Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009). This may be in the form of sharing amongst friends, family or strangers through a permanent (in terms of donating or gifting items to others) or non-permanent (in terms of loaning garments or undertaking a multi-ownership approach (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)) method. This may also be undertaken in the form of purchasing garments through the vintage clothing market (Wanders 2009), or acquiring second-hand garments sold by retailers, such as Filippa K, which collects and resells worn Filippa K garments (Filippa K n.d.c).

Another practice that demonstrates consuming better, includes valuing products, appreciating the experience with them or their greater purpose (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). The exhibition ‘Slow Fashion Studio: Alternative Approaches to Fashion’ details ‘ways to value your clothes’ arguing that ‘the true value of a garment is much more than a low purchase price’ (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). These methods, which merge into the territory of other slow fashion criteria, include enjoyment via the ‘representation of yourself, how it makes you feel’, ethics via ‘finding out who made the clothes and what they’re made of’, shopping locally which ‘supports the local economy and minimises transport pollution’, thoughtfulness via recycling and reuse by considering ‘how to extend clothing usefulness, when you no longer want or need a garment’ and determining the ‘price per wear’, which is ‘the
initial purchase price divided by the number of times the garment is worn’ (RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Undertaking the practice of valuing your garments may also involve appreciating your garments for their functional purpose, how well they fit to your body, the craftsmanship involved in the creation of the garments or the resources used to make the garment. The final criterion is higher price point, meaning the product becomes an investment (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2016; Pal 2016). It explicitly denotes the practice of contemplating higher priced purchases in relation to their value as investment pieces you will value over a long period of time rather than applying a fast fashion mind set, which would rule out the item for its high expense for short-term use.

Overall, the practice of slow fashion, as demonstrated by four prominent slow fashion labels in the niche slow fashion design community, Alabama Chanin, People Tree, Filippa K and Zady, engages with the key tenets of the slow fashion movement through their company ethos (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 30.) and principles from the slow fashion criteria, drawn from the previous literature review chapter (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 10.), through their company practices. A comprehensive list of the slow fashion criteria most evident amongst the labels’ practices is detailed in the table below (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 31.). The majority of slow fashion characteristics that appeared amongst the cases were shared by multiple labels. An outcome of exploring slow fashion as a practice is the connection between slow fashion theory and practice. Across the ethos and practices of the four labels, a commitment to environmental and social sustainability (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) appeared to be strongly embraced. Another observation is that the brand images presented by People Tree and Filippa K each communicate an image more closely related to other sustainable and ethical fashion movements. This demonstrates the ambiguity of boundaries between approaches in the sustainable and ethical fashion space, and the tendency of labels to embrace
broader values and practices, combining the varying approaches in unique ways. Furthermore, the slow fashion practices identified were predominantly carried out in the production phase of the garment life cycle and were aided by critical partnerships with producers who share similar values. However, the discourse on slow fashion indicates slow fashion predominantly pertains to both production and consumption.

### Figure 30: Key tenets of the slow fashion movement present amongst the ethos of slow fashion case study labels (© Hayley Thompson 2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Tenets of the Slow Fashion Movement Present Amongst the Ethos of Slow Fashion Case Study Labels</th>
<th>Key Tenets of the Slow Fashion Movement + References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questioning established hierarchies that separate designers, producers and consumers (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2010; Pal 2016)</td>
<td>Responsibility (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functionality and versatility of the product (Cataldi; Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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</table>
### SLOW FASHION CRITERIA MOST EVIDENT AMONGST THE PRACTICES OF SLOW FASHION CASE STUDY LABELS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrated by all 4 labels:</th>
<th>Demonstrated by at least 3 of the labels:</th>
<th>Demonstrated by at least 2 of the labels:</th>
<th>Demonstrated by 1 of the labels:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slow fashion criteria</strong></td>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td><strong>A commitment to consuming better for people and the planet</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exclusivity, relating to product uniqueness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A commitment to social and environmental sustainability</td>
<td>(Brydges, Lavanga &amp; von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung &amp; Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
<td>(Fletcher 2007; Jung &amp; Jin 2014; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
<td>(Jung &amp; Jin 2014; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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<td>Quality, particularly prioritising quality over quantity</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A commitment to producing better for people and the planet</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
<td>(Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Slow, small batch production</td>
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<td>• Valuing products, appreciating the experience with them or their greater purpose</td>
<td>(Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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<td>(Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013)</td>
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<td>• Being resourceful by utilising what is available</td>
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<td>Localism, particularly in relation to local culture and local industry</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung &amp; Jin 2014; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Brydges, Lavanga &amp; von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A commitment to designing better for people and the planet</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung &amp; Jin 2014; Pookulangara &amp; Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)</td>
<td>Spending the time via slow speed of process, production or consumption</td>
<td>(Cataldi, Dickson &amp; Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung &amp; Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009)</td>
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**Chapter 3: Slow fashion as a practice – A contextual review**

Hayley Thompson | Embracing mindfulness: Enriching slow fashion for human and environmental wellbeing
From the consumer standpoint, there is a growing interest in sustainability with greater consumer consciousness. Characteristics for the practice of slow consumption have been identified amongst the slow fashion criteria extracted from the literature, which include practices relating to consuming better such as *engaging in different experiences of fashion* (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), *sharing garments and incorporating second-hand or used garments* (Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009), *valuing products, appreciating the experience with them or their greater purpose* (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and purchasing slow fashion products with a *higher price point, meaning the product becomes an investment* (Clark 2008;
Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2016; Pal 2016). True slow fashion is not feasible without both slow production and slow consumption. This statement distributes responsibility collectively to everyone involved across each phase of a garment’s life cycle. Regardless of any recommendations made or post-retail practices implemented by a slow fashion label in an effort to inspire slow consumption, much of the responsibility lies with consumers to maintain the practice of slow consumption. This practice is ongoing and not isolated to the purchasing act alone; it extends to the consideration given to purchasing options prior to buying, the care and appreciation of the purchased item and, later, the responsible disposal or passing on of the garment after it is no longer of use to the original consumer.
CHAPTER 4: SLOW FASHION AS A MINDFUL PRACTICE

A comparative analysis

The core objective of this discussion chapter is to understand slow fashion, and how it may be enhanced to improve outcomes for the environment and human wellbeing, through the lens of mindfulness and the notion of ‘collective mindfulness’. The chapter aims to understand how slow fashion, and the broader sustainable and ethical fashion space, is intertwined with mindfulness and how this relationship may be further leveraged more consciously and holistically. It explores the concept of collective mindfulness and its potential to emerge within the slow fashion movement by referring to literature regarding the broader slow ethos.

The chapter was developed via a comparative analysis method predominantly comparing slow fashion and mindfulness by utilising the key characteristics identified for both areas within the previous chapters. This discussion of slow fashion was aided by material pertaining to other relevant contexts, requiring research drawn from slow culture discourse and slow design literature, predominantly presented by the multidisciplinary collective Slow Research Lab. First, section 4.1 involved utilising the slow fashion criteria and mindfulness concepts identified in the literature review to discuss the prevalence of the mindful component awareness of present realities and experiences, seeing them clearly and authentically as they are and with full detail – to do with attention, focus and consciousness (Akama 2015; Braza 1997; Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007, 2015; Carmody 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Gethin 2015; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005; Niedderer 2014), within the sustainable and ethical fashion space. This portion of the chapter involved identifying the ways in which awareness filters throughout slow fashion.
Second, section 4.2 required separating the key characteristics of mindfulness into three categories (components present within slow fashion, components that contradict slow fashion and components that could be further or newly embraced in slow fashion) in order to develop a discussion around the level of integration between the two areas beyond the characteristic of awareness. This approach also involved drawing from content discussed in the literature and contextual reviews. Third, section 4.3 involved developing a discussion on collective mindfulness and the potential for its emergence in slow fashion. Preparing this section also involved conducting research into slow culture and slow design, collating notes derived from the reading of relevant academic discourse in these areas and investigating the points regarding evidence of mindfulness within the slow ethos to inform the discussion on collective mindfulness.

4.1 Awareness in the sustainable and ethical fashion space

The main revelation that can be drawn from viewing slow fashion, and the broader sustainable and ethical fashion space, through the lens of mindfulness is the conspicuous embrace of the mindful characteristic of awareness of present realities and experiences, seeing them clearly and authentically as they are and with full detail – to do with attention, focus and consciousness (Akama 2015; Braza 1997; Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007, 2015; Carmody 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Gethin 2015; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005; Niedderer 2014). Within the global fashion system, people who work in, support (through production services) and consume sustainable and ethical fashion embrace awareness predominantly in relation to the impact of damaging fashion practices upon the environment and human wellbeing. Awareness of present realities and experiences also extends to being aware of the alternative practices and resources that reduce or eliminate the negative impact upon humans and the environment, which is clearly demonstrated in slow fashion through the criteria of committing to designing, producing and consuming better for people and the planet. This engages a commitment from designers, producers, makers and consumers. Awareness is also relevant to other components
of slow fashion, particularly when considering all that this characteristic incorporates when referring back to the table (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 12.) on key characteristics of mindfulness derived from mindfulness literature in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The table below shows only the awareness related characteristics of mindfulness that feature in the original table (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 32.).

### Table: Awareness related characteristics of mindfulness - derived from mindfulness literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mindfulness characteristics + References</th>
<th>Predominantly relating to awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Being aware of the breath and its importance in being mindful (Braza 1997; Forest 1991; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005; Hahn 1991)</td>
<td>- Non-attachment by stripping things down to its actual form, absent of any attached meanings (Brown, Creswell, &amp; Ryan 2007; Germer 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Being mindful of the mind (Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005; Hahn 1991)</td>
<td>- Being mindful of mental objects (Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Being mindful of intentions (Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel &amp; Fulton 2005)</td>
<td>- Remembering - in order to return awareness to the present experience (Germer 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meditating on the cause of suffering (Hahn 1991)</td>
<td>- Conscious of your presence (Hahn 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recognising everything is interconnected (Germer 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2005)</td>
<td>- Guiding the mind (Hahn 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Focusing on the purpose of the moment, in the moment, and concentrating purely on the task at hand (Braza 1997; Germer 2005; Hahn 1991)</td>
<td>- Focusing on the purpose of the moment, in the moment, and concentrating purely on the task at hand (Braza 1997; Germer 2005; Hahn 1991)</td>
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*Figure 32: Awareness related characteristics of mindfulness - derived from mindfulness literature (© Hayley Thompson 2019).*
Drawing from the Chapter 3 findings, some of the ways in which awareness filters throughout slow fashion, pertaining to designers, producers, makers and consumers, include:

- By embracing attentiveness and mindfulness, undertaken by designers, producers, makers and consumers.
- Being aware of actions and the needs of others when nurturing relationships between designers, farmers, producers, craftspeople and consumers, which engages the perspectives of all involved, yet predominantly stems from designers taking responsibility in instigating the creation of new products.
- From a designer point of view, being aware of, and regularly evaluating, what your responsibilities are toward the environment and the wellbeing of your suppliers, producers and consumers in producing slow fashion items.
- Being aware of the consequences of incorporating traditional and new techniques, skills or styles as designers, producers and garment makers.
- Being aware of what provides authenticity as designers and connecting with craftsmanship through knowledge of the traditional techniques and hand skills implemented in the creation of slow fashion products.
- From a designer’s point of view, gaining awareness of the local culture and industry involved in creating the slow fashion products, in order to consider the lives of those affected locally by what and how the items are produced. It could also relate to being aware of local production options in order to reduce the use of resources.
- Maintaining transparency as slow fashion labels in order to remain, or to become, aware of actions involved in each stage of the supply chain, whilst also providing the opportunity for awareness to consumers.
- Becoming aware of what constitutes quality as designers, both internally within the label and externally amongst producers and consumers.
- From a design standpoint, becoming aware of the realistic longevity of the slow fashion garments created.

4.2 Embracing mindfulness in slow fashion

A deeper comparative exploration of slow fashion criteria and the key characteristics of mindfulness has revealed a more intertwined relationship between the two areas, particularly considering slow fashion’s position within the sustainable and ethical fashion space. The research has revealed there are further characteristics of mindfulness embedded in the movement of slow fashion. However, there are also certain mindful characteristics that contradict aspects of slow fashion and the wider sustainable and ethical fashion realm. Finally, the research has identified components that are theoretically congruent with slow fashion criteria and possess potential to be embraced further within the practice of slow fashion. This section outlines the positive and problematic nuances involved in the conceptualisation of mindfulness within slow fashion practice.

4.2.1 Identifying mindfulness in slow fashion

The slow fashion criterion of embracing attentiveness and mindfulness (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013) features as part of the slow fashion criteria first identified in the literature review (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 10.). This section of the thesis expands on this broad criterion by specifically determining which characteristics of mindfulness, first developed in the literature review (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 12.), are present within the slow fashion movement. Mindfulness theory indicates we each have an inherent capacity to become more mindful (Kabat-Zinn 2003), which designers, producers, makers or consumers have the potential to apply by accessing the resources available to us internally and externally in the present moment. In a similar vein, slow fashion as a movement draws upon all resources available in the
present, without negating all that has been learnt in the past, employing resourcefulness in terms of materials, skills and previous knowledge available.

Generally, the slow fashion movement appears to align with the mindful philosophy of enhancing wellbeing, which is undertaken in mindfulness practice by easing suffering, including emotional turmoil, stress or anxiety. First, the slow fashion movement has the potential to enhance environmental wellbeing through collaboration between designers, textile producers, garment manufacturers and artisan makers, in terms of adjusting production methods and reducing waste. Second, it has the potential to enhance mental wellbeing in consumers by creating products addressing how the consumer feels about the way a garment was produced and how emotionally connected they feel to the garment itself. Furthermore, the movement has the potential to address physical wellbeing amongst consumers in relation to the absence of chemicals that can be absorbed into the body, how the garment feels texturally due to the materials chosen, and how the garment fits the true form of the body. Third, the slow fashion movement has the potential to enhance wellbeing in textile producers and garment manufacturers within the slow fashion movement community through strong partnerships with labels working to reduce or eliminate chemical use or address the fair treatment of textile and fashion industry workers.

The characteristic *unlearning and letting go* – *particularly mindlessness, habitual reactions and expectations* (Akama 2015; Bishop et al. 2004; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005; Niedderer 2014), and within this point, *aware of, or letting go of, constructed or distorted ‘reality’* (Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005), is relevant to the slow fashion practice of designers, producers, makers and consumers. Slow fashion, along with sustainable fashion, eco fashion and ethical fashion, have by necessity let go of a standard, fast-paced, growth-focused fashion business approach and, in some cases, unlearned how ready-to-wear fashion is conventionally designed, produced and consumed. For example, with respect to the case
studies, *Alabama Chanin* (2017a) lets go of mass production in favour of alternative methods such as small batch production for all machine-made items, which are made-to-order in-house by a small team of makers. The slow fashion movement lets go of the distorted ‘reality’ that actions undertaken in the fashion industry do not directly impact upon the wellbeing of communities of people involved in the production of fashion products. It also retracts from the constructed ‘reality’ crafted in the institutionalised system of fashion, which ultimately fuels overconsumption through the creation of a perpetual need to purchase more.

The characteristic *slowness* – *being unhurried* (Braza 1997; Hanh 1991) is an obvious correlation between mindfulness and slow fashion, and resonates with both a slow speed and time spent on contemplation and appreciation by all involved in the slow fashion movement from creators to wearers. Slow fashion embraces both slow production, by allowing time for materials to be sourced sustainably and ethically and garments to be crafted well, and slow consumption, by taking the time to consider the true value of purchases and appreciating longevity in the garments acquired. For example, in the previous chapter the element of slowness is particularly captured in the actions of *People Tree* (2017b), which prioritise the use of meticulous, time-consuming handwork over machine sewing in order to support garment workers in retaining traditional skill-sets.

Next is the characteristic *being mindful of and open to different perspectives* (Braza 1997; Germer 2005; Niedderer 2014), and within this, the points of *having a ‘spacious’ mind* (Kabat-Zinn 2003) and *allowing new categories to form* (Germer 2005; Niedderer 2014). There is not one prescribed method for practicing slow fashion as designers or as a company. The movement is open to varied perspectives and compilations of slow fashion criteria in alignment with the overarching ethos of the movement. This is evident in the case studies detailed in the previous chapter, as *Alabama Chanin, Filippa K, People Tree* and *Zady* each present its own unique methodology for the approach of slow fashion, despite a connection with shared criteria. The labels also indicate an openness to growth.
and improvement in pursuits toward social and environmental sustainability, which demonstrates a ‘spacious’ mind mentality and a willingness to allow new categories of slow fashion to form as the labels continue to invest in sourcing new information, resources and methods to engage with fashion slowly.

The embrace of a ‘spacious’, open mind within this area recognises the importance of allowing designers, producers, makers and consumers to retain agency in their production and consumption of slow fashion. The practice of slow fashion and the practice of mindfulness can both be subjective, holding a sense of freedom for individual engagement with either area in alignment with personal values and a person’s interpretation of the ethos. The practice of slow fashion will also vary due to its recent emergence. Designers and companies are trialling various approaches to slow fashion in accordance with the guiding principles of the movement. For some this may result in a close correlation with standard practices in the fashion industry, such as presenting collections at fashion weeks and distributing global marketing campaigns, yet for others this may lead to a disengagement from various norms of the current global fashion system in favour of a localised operation relying on face-to-face engagement with producers and clients.

The characteristic of non-harming (Kabat-Zinn 2003) can be carried out by designers, companies, producers and consumers. Slow fashion engages with this characteristic through the movement’s commitment to addressing current social and environmental crises via alternative approaches. This is particularly evident amongst the slow fashion criteria of a commitment to nurturing relationships (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), responsibility (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), transparency (Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), a commitment to designing, producing and consuming better for people and the planet (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al.
and Textiles 2017), and within this point, equity (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Amongst the case studies explored in this research, Zady (2017c) demonstrate non-harming through its commitment to produce ethically by partnering with businesses holding certifications, such as GOTS and Health and Textile Association.

Next is the characteristic of recognising everything is interconnected (Germer 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2005). Slow fashion, and the broader sustainable and ethical fashion movement, was built on a foundation of recognising the interconnection between our actions in producing, distributing, promoting and consuming fashion and the health of communities and the environment. This engages the practices and perspectives of all people involved in the slow fashion movement. As Fletcher (2010, p. 264) explains, slow culture ‘professes a heightened state of awareness of the design process and its impacts on resource flows, workers, communities, and ecosystems’. The commitment made to environmental sustainability in slow fashion reflects acknowledgement of our dependency on the natural environment. On its company website, Zady (2017c) state, ‘the first law of ecology is that everything is connected to everything else. For better or worse, your next piece of clothing is no exception’.

The characteristics of being mindful of intentions (Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005) and prioritising values (Germer 2005) relate to the practices of slow fashion companies. As demonstrated by the case study labels examined in Chapter 3, companies articulate key intentions and values through a clear company ethos that is predominantly sustainability focused. The labels prioritise these intentions and values within their actions, as there is a clear correlation between the company philosophies surrounding sustainability and the implementation of socially and environmentally conscious design and production practices. However, being mindful of intentions and prioritising
values are also practices open to consumers in selecting, caring for and responsibly disposing of garments.

The characteristic of *functioning with compassion and a calm heart* (Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003) particularly resonates with the slow fashion criteria of *a commitment to nurturing relationships* (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and *a commitment to producing better for people and the planet* (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). In order to embrace mindfulness of others within this space, slow fashion designers embrace compassion by paying attention to the needs of farmers, producers, artisans and garment workers involved in crafting their slow designs. For example, *People Tree* (2017b, WFTO: Working together for a fairer world) express its embrace of ‘long-term relationships based on solidarity, trust and mutual respect’. Nurturing relationships is a shared trait across mindfulness, slow fashion and craftsmanship. In mindfulness practice, this is demonstrated through paying full attention to those we are in the presence of, viewing them as the most important thing to engage with in the present moment. In slow fashion, nurturing relationships also involves uniting designers, producers and wearers by dissolving the barriers between them with *transparency* (Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), another slow fashion criterion, in terms of company and production information, and inclusion in terms of collaboration. This creates new awareness and compassion within the fashion system and amongst fashion consumers. Finally, with regard to craftsmanship, a collaborative spirit also resonates as people with varied skillsets unite to undertake quality work together, whilst also building a sense of community (Sennett 2009).
Next is the characteristic *engaging in the world and its reality* (Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2005). Slow fashion, along with sustainable fashion, eco fashion and ethical fashion, validates the notion that fashion is not inherently good or bad, there are merely good and bad practices undertaken within the fashion system. Recognising the reality of fashion as simply what is occurring, both positive and negative, allows the slow fashion movement to engage in the world as it is. This point also touches on the acceptance of this reality, to a certain extent, and engagement in the world of fashion in such a way that aligns with alternative values of enhancing the wellbeing of people and the environment, and creating, interacting and living well collectively. Therefore, this mindful characteristic is relevant to the slow practices of designers, producers, makers and wearers.

Engaging in the world and its reality within the sustainable and ethical fashion space has required acknowledging that we as a society, alongside previous generations, have created this reality in which our production and consumption habits have radically impacted upon the natural world around us and the wellbeing of many communities of people. There is a sense within this space in fashion that because humans have created these consequences, we also possess the power to readjust our behaviour. Fast fashion can provide a limited version of thriving through monetary success for industry professionals, ephemeral excitement and satisfaction through change and novelty for consumers, opportunities to define oneself as an individual or conform to a group aesthetic to develop a sense of identity and finally, the chance to share in a global phenomenon. However, unlike slow fashion, fast fashion practices that directly and indirectly harm the environment and human wellbeing in the process, do not allow for the opportunity to thrive collectively.

The final characteristic is *appreciation* – *valuing things as if everything is a miracle* (Hanh 1991). From a consumer perspective, this characteristic particularly aligns with the slow fashion movement’s penchant for valuing products purchased with intentionality and appreciating the
experience of wearing a garment or the greater purpose it serves. This applies to the garment’s craftsmanship, quality, longevity, style and uniqueness. However, this also extends beyond the physical garment to appreciation of, for example, how the garment was produced ethically and authentically using traditional techniques, or how purchasing the garment contributes to the local garment industry.

4.2.2 Contradictions in uniting slow fashion and mindfulness

The following explores key characteristics of mindfulness, first developed in the literature review (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 12.), that contradict the overarching approach to sustainable and ethical fashion issues. These contradictions represent the current limitations of uniting mindfulness and slow fashion theories; however, they also represent opportunities to re-evaluate the current methodology.

The four characteristics of being non-reactive (Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2003), refraining from being absorbed with the past or future (Germer 2005; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003), non-striving, particularly finding time to simply ‘be’ without striving to do anything (Braza 1997; Carmody 2015; Kabat-Zinn 2003), and finally, acceptance without judgement or rejection, engaging with all experiences whether positive, negative or neutral (Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007; Carmody 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005), are each relevant contradictions to the overall sustainable and ethical fashion movement. This space emerged in reaction to destructive practices evident predominantly amongst fast fashion brands. Some of the consequences involve exposing communities and the environment to toxic chemicals, pressuring garment factories with fast production schedules which cause the employment of underpaid workers, contributing to the depletion of our natural resources to create and distribute fashion product, and inciting overconsumption globally. The broad sustainable and ethical fashion movement both reacts to the consequences of past and current
fashion practices and strives for a desired sustainable future outcome involving diminished suffering for humans and nature at the hands of the fashion industry.

This community is also driven by a predominant activist spirit for change in the fashion system. The language and messages involving sustainability within and surrounding the fashion industry today are often negatively-geared and explicit in communicating the need for immediate action. This aligns the movement with a stance that strives to ignite support from more people, particularly consumers who possess purchasing power. As Kipöz describes:

slow is an ethical and activist approach not only for adopting a critical mindset against the conventional fashion system, but also for its potent to challenge power relations, fashion’s obsession with image and novelty (2013, p. 1).

Furthermore, amongst the slow fashion case studies undertaken for this thesis, Zady and People Tree strongly embrace this stance. However, employing a mindful perspective, slow fashion would arguably be better served by accepting the current state of the fashion industry rather than striving to ‘fix’ the system.

A mindful approach would involve letting go of the past or future, accepting the unknown, without expectations in order to focus wholeheartedly on creating, producing and consuming in the present moment in alignment with slow fashion values. In Slow Reader, Strauss (2016, p. 19) refers to the acceptance of ‘not-knowing’ as part of the slow design approach to letting go and trusting the way in which life unfolds, yet the author also brings attention to ‘non-knowing’. This term brings an active energy to the undertaking of simply ‘being’, which involves having awareness but choosing to disengage in favour of an alternative method as a form of unwillingness to participate, which is similar to non-violence. In this case, the slow fashion movement is aware of the effect the current predominant fashion system imposes on society and our planet, but supports a wilful approach to enjoy the pleasure of slow production and consumption.
Finally, the mindful characteristic of non-attachment by stripping things down to their actual form, absent of any attached meanings (Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007; Germer 2005) is a key point of disparity between mindfulness practice and the slow fashion ethos. As part of the commitment to consuming better (more sustainably), practicing slow consumption involves valuing products by nurturing personal attachments in order to wear, care for and appreciate garments for their functionality, the memories they evoke or the connection they hold to their origins, either the creator or the location in which it was made.

4.2.3 Holistically embracing mindfulness in slow fashion

Other components of mindfulness are congruent with the slow fashion movement yet have not reached their potential within this space. In the book, Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys, Fletcher (2014) points out the disjointed approach to sustainability evident within the fashion and textiles sector. Fletcher argues:

the whole is the problem – the cumulative values, discernments, habits of mind, industrial practices, business models, economic logic, deep societal forces and aggregated individual practices that make up the fashion and textile sector – and the whole we must understand before we consider the functions and needs of its elements (2014, p. XVI).

Mindfulness directs us to be aware of the true spectrum of what is occurring both internally and externally, encouraging a holistic and clear view of reality, which is a practice that can aid in first comprehending the perspective presented by Fletcher and then assist in refocusing individual efforts in alignment with issues regarding the whole.

Mindfulness practice can, therefore, assist in guiding us to reconcile the interconnectedness of people, the planet, the phenomenon of fashion and our need to grow and express ourselves through creative production. Slow fashion infused more holistically with mindfulness could potentially offer a method for fashion practice, and engagement with fashion product, to thrive within parameters
imposed by social and environmental crises. Thriving evokes a sense of balance, healthiness and mindfulness to the benefit of ourselves and the wider community. Together, slow culture and mindfulness provides the possibility for us to thrive through an intentionally curated way of life. It can elevate designers, producers, makers and consumers to that of curators. Living, creating and owning are innately personal curatorial processes, yet the slow ethos provides a meaningful framework for this process in an effort to flourish by living a more sustainable, intentional and pleasurable life.

The slow fashion movement encourages us to undertake a more considered curatorial process when it comes to selecting fibres, choosing producer partners, marketing products or curating wardrobes full of high-quality, well-fitting, locally sourced and unique garments to be enjoyed for years to come. Mindfulness can supplement this slow curatorial process by adding practices such as being conscious of your presence, embracing a ‘beginner’s mind’, focusing on the purpose of the moment or being mindful of the mind, mental objects, feelings and the body. For example, identifying and reflecting on our thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations can aid us in making highly informed and deeply attuned decisions. The following mindful concepts could either be newly embraced or implemented further within the slow fashion movement, and by labels such as Alabama Chanin, People Tree, Filippa K and Zady, which have been found to convey the embrace of certain mindful behaviour in earlier sections, to create a more holistic engagement with mindfulness. Along with the characteristics detailed in the section 4.2.1, the following explores further components that may be leveraged.

The first characteristic is conscious of your presence (Hanh 1991), which not only involves self-awareness but incorporates awareness of the self in relation to how your presence may impact the space in which you are situated and, in turn, others who also inhabit that space. In the context of slow fashion, this applies to designers and slow fashion labels as a whole. Being conscious of your
presence may involve people asking questions such as: ‘what does our presence within our own
local industry mean for those who already operate within this area, and how might we cooperate
with them harmoniously?’; ‘how might our production presence hinder or enhance the community
of artisans we partner with, a community of which we are not geographically or ethnically part of?’;
‘what are the true costs or benefits of the designs we bring to life?’. This is particularly relevant to
van Heeswijk’s (2016, p. 49-50) discussion of continuous self-scrutiny as a creative practitioner,
which involves knowing the space in which you are inserting yourself and your work into, or are
already immersed in as an active participant. This pertains to being conscious of the effect your work
imposes on others and who it may represent beyond yourself. This approach functions in alignment
with the mindful ethos of alleviating suffering for ourselves and others, but also enhances some of
the existing attributes of slow fashion, such as a commitment to social and environmental
sustainability (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008;
Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of
Fashion and Textiles 2017), responsibility (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017)
and localism, particularly in relation to local culture and the local industry (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover
2013; Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders
2009).

Next are the characteristics of being mindful of the mind (Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel & Fulton
2005; Hanh 1991), being mindful of mental objects (Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005), being mindful of
feelings (Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005), and being mindful of the body and aware of
any sensations that arise (Carmody 2015; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005). This is a broad set of
mindful practices that can generally be applied to most situations by anyone involved in the
creation, support or consumption of slow fashion in order to understand personal responses more
deeply and adjust behaviour accordingly to align actions with personal values. Being mindful of the
mind involves noticing whether, in that moment, ‘one of the three root causes of suffering, or
afflictive intentional constructs – greed, hatred, or delusion’ arises (Olendzki 2005, p. 255-256).

Being mindful of mental objects comprises awareness of the actual subject matter that arises with the internal experience, which involves noticing whether certain factors are present or absent, referring to, with respect to Buddhist tradition, the ‘Five Hindrances’, ‘Five Aggregates’, ‘Six Sense Spheres’ and ‘Seven Factors of Awakening’ (Olendzki 2005, p. 256-258).

Being mindful of feelings relates to noticing the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feelings that arise throughout daily life and isolating feelings from ‘an object known through a sense door’ (Olendzki 2005, p. 255). In other words, separating how you feel about an experience from what has actually been experienced. Finally, being mindful of the body involves being aware of any sensations that arise. The breadth of nuances expands as you bring closer awareness to the body and, furthermore, ‘one might augment one’s capacity to discern the raw physical manifestations of resistance, movement, and temperature, which the Buddhists identify as the basic components of all physical sensation’ (Olendzki 2005, p. 254). If the mind wanders beyond what is being thought, experienced and felt in the present, attention can be refocused using the breath or by attending to the task at hand as an anchor to the purpose, beauty and enjoyment of the present moment. This practice of focusing internally is transferable to slow fashion.

Being mindful of the mind, mental objects, feelings and the body can enhance components of the slow fashion movement in relation to designing, producing and consuming better, both socially and environmentally, as a contribution towards sustainability in the fashion realm. For example, monitoring and understanding your own inner landscape as a designer or consumer during the process of determining sustainable choices can guide you in ways that align your short-term behaviour with long-term slow fashion values held personally or professionally as part of a company ethos. This process can also be beneficial for designers when interacting with others or using resources, particularly with respect to the slow fashion criteria of a commitment to nurturing

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relationships (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), responsibility (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), localism, particularly in relation to local culture and local industry (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009), and spending the time via slow speed of process, production and consumption (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009).

The characteristic of having a ‘beginner’s mind’, experiencing everything as if for the first time (Braza 1997; Carmody 2015; Niedderer 2014) allows for experiencing all processes, products, resources, skills, interactions and working partnerships as entirely new and can be widely implemented across slow fashion from a designer’s perspective. In this internet era, with the prevalence of sharing content and 24-hour access to information, setting aside previous knowledge and preconceived ideas is a challenging concept. However, this practice has the potential to improve the quality, genuineness and enjoyment of these factors, ultimately nurturing wellbeing, compassion and open-mindedness within this space amongst designers, producers, craftspeople and retailers. It can also apply to consumers as, for example, the longevity of a garment would likely extend if a slow consumer viewed the style of the garment with a ‘beginner’s mind’ and experienced each wear with the recurring excitement of its initial experience. Furthermore, this would also likely enhance the consumer’s perceived value and appreciation of the garment.

Next are the characteristics of witnessing or observing with a sense of detachment (Braza 1997; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005) and meditating on the cause of suffering (Hanh 1991). Implementing each of these factors has the potential to enhance the slow fashion criteria of a commitment to social and environmental sustainability (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara &
Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and spending the time via slow speed of process, production or consumption (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009). Detaching oneself in order to meditate on the cause of a particular form of suffering allows one to both face the reality of the distress whilst experiencing a distance from the direct pain of the situation. This allows for clarity in understanding and attending to the cause mindfully with a sense of calm. As an example, a small batch, micro slow fashion designer could find solace in this mindful practice whilst facing the frustration of integrating sustainable practices. It can also be used as a tool when taking necessary risks within a label, removing oneself somewhat from the situation and the distress involved to assess the future trajectory of the risk more objectively.

Finally, spending the time via a slower pace may also cause frustration for the designer, evoking conflicting emotions, thoughts and mental objects toward slowness, which can be challenged with the practice of observing with detachment and meditating on the actual cause of the distress. This may reveal a deeper cause, such as production realities of needing to fulfil orders or pay suppliers, which the designer can address accordingly as these realities affect the extent to which these practices can be embraced. It is acknowledged here that financial viability is not necessarily a part of a perfect version of slow fashion practice. The reality of remaining financially viable often necessitates making compromises on certain practices, as some designers may not be in a position of privilege to be able to adopt all available practices.

The characteristics of focusing in on the purpose of the moment, in the moment, and focusing purely on the task at hand (Braza 1997; Germer 2005; Hanh 1991) and consistently remembering - in order to return awareness to the present (Germer 2005), whether attending to another person or a current activity, are highly transferrable to slow fashion and have the potential to refine a number of the existing components of the movement. Firstly, these include predominantly task-based slow fashion
criteria such as **quality, particularly prioritising quality over quantity** (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013), and **authenticity and craftsmanship through traditional techniques and hand skills** (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), which would benefit from persistent intentional focus from designers, makers and producers. These mindful practices would aid in providing **functionality and versatility of the product** (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) designed, **gaining knowledge of materials and greatly considering the materials used** (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Henninger et al. 2015; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), **being resourceful by utilising what is available** (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and **combining traditional and new techniques, skills or styles** (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009).

Secondly, **spending the time via slow speed of process, production or consumption** (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009) partners well with intentional focus on the present as it aids the quality, precision and ease of accomplishing what is necessary or meaningful to us. Thirdly, these also include social-based slow fashion criteria, such as a **commitment to nurturing relationships** (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) as a designer and **engaging the consumer** (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016) in the design or production process, either directly or through a transfer of knowledge. Finally, these mindful practices can similarly aid consumers in **valuing products, appreciating the experience with them or their greater purpose** (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). They can assist consumers in valuing a garment for its style or functionality, which can affect its use...
phase longevity, and returning focus to the present experience of wearing a garment, whether positive, negative or neutral. There is also potential for these practices to free consumers from the distress of desiring garments we do not own by replacing this with appreciation for the items we do.

4.3 Awakening collective mindfulness

In the essay ‘Unfolding Potentials (Within and Across)’, in the book Slow Reader, designer, curator and art director, Pais states that engulfed by this:

anthropocentric, competitive, and vertiginous approach to life, human activity has been developing in ways that tend to ignore its interdependent condition within a larger system of diverse and intertwined ecologies. In a capital-driven society, the most varied aspects of life – human and non-human – have become conditioned by market relations (2016, p. 22).

Slow fashion and the broader slow design space are associated with a significant expression of discontent in response to the pace and stress of current contemporary life demonstrated through the emergence of numerous social movements related to what Parkins and Craig (2006, p. 2) refer to as the overarching ‘wellness revolution’, which indicates a desire for simplicity and slow living. This societal shift signifies an enthusiasm to address the source of the discontent; the imbalance in the way we live, work, interact and experience the world. In the essay, ‘The Real Challenge of Sustainability’, Ehrenfeld (2015) advocates for the approach of targeting the core issues that drive our behaviour as opposed to the consequences of our actions, which also draws upon the mindful practice of unlearning or letting go of mindless habits and embedded conventional behaviours in today’s society. Generally, this shift reflects an intention to sustainably live well by living meaningfully; a broad and customisable approach that can support the notion of collective mindfulness and lead us to thrive collectively.

Whether it is slow living, mindfulness, simple living, minimalism or other wellness lifestyle movements, these social phenomena offer slightly different recipes for living well. Within each there
are countless methods made up of various ingredients, presented in the principles of these movements, that are combined in diverse ways depending on each individual’s circumstances, true personal values and how they interpret the general approach. What is important to note is that these movements are not rigid with strict dogmas but receptive to variability, allowing them to transcend various disciplines and areas of life. There are some common principles, which include awareness, reflecting on connections with things and people, living with intention, slowness, living in a way that is sustainable for yourself, the wider community and the environment, consuming mindfully, and minimising waste in different areas of life – in terms of time, money, resources or energy.

4.3.1 Framing the concept of collective mindfulness in slow fashion

The imperative nature of sustained change in the fashion and textile industries in response to social and environmental crises is a reality that will only become more unyielding as the detrimental effects are experienced more severely in the future. How do we shift toward aligning with our deeper values as designers, producers, makers or consumers to find an ethical and ecological balance and thrive collectively? ‘A sea of possibility lies within, between, around, and ahead of us,’ Strauss (2016, p. 17) states. Although Strauss (2016) is referring to the possibilities of slowness in design explored in the book Slow Reader, and the wider Slow Research Lab project, it could be argued a similar sentiment resonates with the possibilities offered by the embrace of mindfulness and the emergence of collective mindfulness. Within this thesis, collective mindfulness reflects the notion of a shared commitment to individually implement key tenets of mindfulness in slow fashion practice, to potentially form a larger and more meaningful collective body of mindful individuals. Thus, collective mindfulness is not necessarily a collective act requiring collaboration, however, those individuals acknowledge and act in accordance with the fact that our actions impact the lives of others because it is an inherent component of mindfulness practice. Furthermore, this pathway to collective mindfulness recognises everything is interconnected and, therefore, if our actions can
have negative consequences they can also have positive effects.

The prospect of reaching collective mindfulness in the practice of slow fashion is not about expecting a perfectly defined future outcome or forcing change. Neither is the goal to form a collective body using identical beliefs or a prescribed approach to slow fashion. Rather, collective mindfulness is about spreading a culture of mindfulness via a process of organic dissemination. Witnessing others in pursuit of living more mindfully can empower people to embrace a more caring, self-aware, socially conscious and ecologically cognisant method of engagement with fashion. This is particularly relevant to those exposed to the positive consequences of mindfulness, as the community at large benefits from the mindful actions of individuals. Networks of mindful interactions and experiences have the potential to shift the current value-set dominating the global fashion system, as do the products produced. As Ehrenfeld proposes:

what if ... design produced a change in the belief system of the ultimate user and others observing how the user behaved ... what if the design raised consciousness of the user’s multiple connections to the world, and further guided subsequent behaviour toward a caring, responsible stance toward that world (2015, p. 60).

The concept of collective mindfulness is also fluid in its capacity to unite any number of individuals, as it need not be restricted to an explicit amount to exist.

Collective mindfulness has the potential to grow amongst individuals or small communities of practice as they rely on others to support the slow design, production and consumption of their products. This may be an individual designer operating a micro slow fashion label, a slow fashion consumer purchasing both new and used garments across multiple platforms or a larger company operating in alignment with a selection of slow fashion values. Evoking Akama’s (2015, p. 309) view that ‘designing is inherently social and relational – it is with, by and for other people’, undertaking a mindful, slow fashion approach to the design, production and consumption of fashion opens
opportunities to interject mindful interactions at each of these stages. Furthermore, slow fashion possesses the foundation for facilitating collective mindfulness as key constituents of the movement’s ethos have embedded social components, which can encourage the embrace of mindfulness towards others (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 33.).

This slow, less invasive dissemination of mindfulness will aid in creating collective mindfulness in such a way that aligns with the ethos of the movement; through acceptance, slowness, non-striving and letting go of expectations. In maintaining a mindful perspective, framing a constructed, comprehensive idea of what collective mindfulness should entail would counter the mindful principle of allowing things to naturally evolve through acceptance of whatever form it takes,
without desiring it to be a certain way. In this thesis, collective mindfulness is not perceived as a utopian possibility, but rather a plausible reality with the removal of these expectations of its form and allowing it to develop in alignment with the characteristics of mindfulness. However, this is not a global claim as this perspective, developed from the position of a theory-based researcher, is focused on the niche slow fashion design market. Embracing mindfulness holistically is not presented in this thesis as the missing link to solve all issues of social and environmental sustainability within the fashion system; it is the introduction of a set of highly transferrable principles that have provided value to other disciplines and areas of life. Although various socio-economic situations impact the extent to which mindfulness can be implemented within this niche slow fashion design community, we each have the innate capability to embrace mindfulness on some level.

4.3.2 Exploring the slow ethos to inform collective mindfulness

The broader slow ethos, which the literature review showed is similar to slow fashion in that it embraces components of mindfulness, also intrinsically guides people toward a collective consciousness. As an artist, van Heeswijk (2016) discusses slowness in relation to a sense of awareness of others in the essay for Slow Reader, ‘Preparing for the not-yet’. The author argues it is important to embrace our personal agency, particularly in relation to how we can act upon our determination to experience a better life, with awareness of the potential for a ‘collective understanding’ of living better, or a ‘shared desire’, to build ‘collective agency’ (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 43-44). With the intention to journey toward a collective body, van Heeswijk (2016, p. 44) states it is important to remember that the form it will take is often not previously known as ‘it is a process of becoming’. Therefore, the journey entails accepting the uncertainty of the final outcome. However, the pathway to collective agency, does not detract from the value of personal agency. ‘If we think of agency only as a collective undertaking, then we forget the step of how two or more people actually become a collective’ (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 44). From an art and design standpoint,
van Heeswijk (2016) proposes a number of methods, based on being mindful of others whilst we actively engage with our communities, to embark on applying personal agency in a way that creates space for the formation of collective agency.

These include, firstly, a willingness to let go of your own subjectivity to a certain extent, to aid in finding shared perspectives with others (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 44). ‘It is a collective learning process in which we all have to let go of some of our ideas and our ideals in order to understand what it is that WE need’ (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 46). Secondly, being sensitive to how others are, allowing their insights to emerge, and open to absorbing what is being shared through conversation and behaviour (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 45). ‘It is an embodied experience of relationship’, van Heeswijk (2016, p. 45) explains, which also involves being non-reactive (Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Kabat-Zinn 2003), another characteristic of mindfulness. While van Heeswijk (2016) advocates for awareness and identifying commonalities with other individuals as part of building collective agency, it is interesting to evaluate this outlook in relation to Kabat-Zinn’s perspective on the universality of mindfulness. As noted in Chapter 2, Kabat-Zinn (2005, p. 11) argues, ‘mindfulness is the final common pathway of what makes us human, our capacity for awareness and for self-knowing’. Therefore, our common capacity to practice mindfulness unites us irrespectively, yet the practice can also strengthen our ability to find common ground with others and shift toward a collective body through awareness.

The third recommendation is viewing the notion of a collective, and your own personal agency, as a malleable form not a fixed outcome (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 45). It can be beneficial to maintain a willingness to break from or reconsider your beliefs (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 45). van Heeswijk (2016, p. 45) suggests viewing the collective as ‘a coming together and dissolving and recomposing’. Therefore, a certain degree of unlearning and letting go – particularly mindlessness, habitual reactions and expectations (Akama 2015; Bishop et al. 2004; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014;
Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005; Niedderer 2014), is required, which is often difficult to undertake as you may be shifting away from what is familiar to create space for new perspectives (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 46). The Slow Research Lab, from which the book Slow Reader emerged, is also predicated on the mindful principle of letting go, as it forms a ‘liberating space of poetry and risk in which to stretch and move out of comfort zones, to break and unlearn, (re)imagine and recalibrate’ (Strauss 2016, p. 17). This further signifies the practice of letting go and unlearning certain behaviours or beliefs as an underlying component of both the culture of slow design and mindfulness.

Following this, there is van Heeswijk’s (2016, p. 49) fourth recommendation of being mindful of your position and point of entry into a creative field. It is important to self-scrutinize or acquire critical feedback from others on your creative practice and how it is situated in order to remain aware of your evolving position as an active participant in a creative space and to develop a deep understanding of your field of practice and those within it (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 49). The author makes a suggestion ‘to think and act beyond one’s own immediate needs, assumptions or desires, and to be very conscious of when and where we are being privileged in relation to others’ (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 50). Next, creativity can be a useful tool for individuals to form personal identity and make a new contribution to an area in order to add to the collective culture (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 51). Finally, van Heeswijk (2016, p. 52) suggests being willing to accept that as we engage with others a different outcome may emerge than what we individually expected, which demonstrates the mindful practice of letting go of expectations. Forming a collective body is also not a fixed point to be reached in the future, but an ever-evolving recalibration of shared needs (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 46). This correlates with slow living and the practice of mindfulness as they are ways of being throughout a lifetime, rather than goals to be accomplished (Kabat-Zinn 2003, p. 149; Parkins & Craig 2006).
Forming a collective body is not without tension, but it is accessible in part through our shared capacity for awareness of present realities and experiences, seeing them clearly and authentically as they are and with full detail – to do with attention, focus and consciousness (Akama 2015; Braza 1997; Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007, 2015; Carmody 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Gethin 2015; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005; Niedderer 2014). Largely, ‘training for the not-yet is a relational, dialogical, discursive process, and a frictional process as well,’ van Heeswijk (2016, p. 45) denotes. They further argue, ‘this constantly working at it is what we need. It is collectively trying to become while not already identifying what can be’ (van Heeswijk 2016, p. 46). Part of this involves engaging with awareness of present realities. Pais (2016, p. 26) refers to the capacity we have to engage with our realities through creative practice. The author contends, “design(ing)” entails both: locating and challenging the conditions of our current realities, while creating alternative conditions that allow for new realities to happen’ (Pais 2016, p. 26). This also relies on the mindful notion of acceptance without judgement or rejection, engaging with all experiences whether positive, negative or neutral (Brown, Creswell & Ryan 2007; Carmody 2015; Ericson, Kjønstad & Barstad 2014; Germer 2005; Germer, Siegel & Fulton 2005; Hanh 1991; Kabat-Zinn 2003, 2005), as it entails welcoming our present reality in its entirety and functioning with awareness of the constraints and negative components within these spaces.

To practice acceptance, we must embrace any friction that follows, particularly in relation to others. Strauss (2016, p. 16) encapsulates this view in the essay ‘The Poetic Ship’, with specific reference to the author’s work as a curator in witnessing the effects of ‘temporary communities of practice’. Similar to van Heeswijk’s (2016) perspective above on accepting outcomes, Strauss explains:

commitment to such spaces of dialogue means accepting that the outcome may not always be what was hoped for. Embracing friction as an ally in our expansion relieves us of those expectations and creates confidence for wading further into the sometimes-murky and turbulent waters of collectivity (2016, p. 19).
This perspective can also be non-specific and applicable to many diverse spheres of life. It is significant to reaffirm here that with each collective formation we may build comes the capacity to self-critique and evolve accordingly with the acceptance of not-knowing and without expectations; we can grant ourselves eternal permission to transform. This is an outlook derived from Pendleton-Jullian’s response to the Open City architectural project introduced in section 2.3, as they argue:

this incessant returning to not-knowing is a very important argument made by the Open City and could only result in a deference to the principle of adhocism. It establishes a commitment to the belief in invention and reinvention (2016, p. 65).

With this mentality, we find freedom in embracing the reality of the present in its entirety and, simultaneously, freedom to create within this space.

The mindful attendance of both the internal and external present is a preliminary practice toward forming a collective body through slowness. Strauss acknowledges this by expressing:

this truly holistic way of knowing self and world is in essence a microcosm for every other form of Slow encounter: mirroring the attention and intention that must be brought to them, and modelling the practices of care through which new understandings and relationships are able to take shape (2016, p. 17).

The author also notes the perspective of psychologist Guy Claxton in relation to this comprehensive condition of knowing, which he associates with the ‘slow mind’ (Strauss 2016, p. 19). Interestingly, Strauss writes:

he argues that, in contrast with linear, analytical thinking, the fuzzy periphery of the brain houses capacities better suited to addressing problems that are ecological or systemic, and therefore are essential for navigating the scale and complexity of today’s challenges (2016, p. 19).

Furthermore, just as Fletcher (2010, p. 265) suggests that social movements such as slow culture can be harnessed for significant change in the fashion system, Parkins and Craig (2016) highlight Melucci’s argument that we should embrace presence as a tool for both personal wellness and ‘the resolution of social conflicts ‘where deep individual experience transforms itself into a social energy
for change”. This strengthens the conception introduced earlier in this section with reference to van Heeswijk (2016), that individual activity, including deep internal consideration, is valuable as part of the slow creation of a broader social collective based on shared needs, which may not yet be known, but manifests through the collation of individual agencies.

This chapter revealed the presence of mindfulness within slow fashion and its capacity for a more holistic and conscious embrace of mindfulness practice. There is a rich collection of guiding concepts defining what it is to practice mindfulness which is largely untapped in a comprehensive manner within the fashion system. A close examination indicated that the alignment between slowness and mindfulness intrinsically guides us toward a collective consciousness of each other and our internal and external realities. The slow ethos incorporates components of mindfulness such as acceptance, embracing reality, detaching from the overwhelm of desire for a certain outcome and being aware of others. This consciousness can shape new mindsets and, thus, influence how we choose to design, create, interact and lead our everyday and professional lives as a collective body. Exploring the slow ethos provides insights for the plausibility of collective mindfulness in a fashion context. The concept of collective mindfulness is introduced in this thesis as having the potential to emerge as a result of individual mindfulness practice in slow fashion.
CHAPTER 5: SLOW FASHION IN THE FASHION SYSTEM

A comparative analysis

Understanding slow fashion relies on comprehending the contexts in which the movement either operates or is affiliated with through shared practices. This chapter presents a discussion of slow fashion as part of the global fashion system and introduces its affiliation with other forms of slow garment making practice, including haute couture, slow clothing and artisanal fashion, operating within and outside of the global fashion system. Traditionally, garment making was slow in terms of speed and at times comparable to slow practice; therefore, this portion of the thesis also begins to contextualise slow fashion within a larger narrative of slow and mindful practice undertaken throughout fashion history.

The methodology for this chapter was underpinned by a comparative analysis method. Firstly, academic fashion theory and other non-scholarly fashion resources were sourced to provide information regarding the global fashion system and other historical or contemporary forms of slow garment making. Section 5.1 required conducting research into fashion theory in order to collect established understandings of fashion as a phenomenon. This section also required referring to the cases discussed in Chapter 3 to analyse slow fashion as part of the global fashion system by comparing the slow fashion approach to standard conventions and theories of fashion. Section 5.2 required gathering information on the practice of haute couture creation, craft and craftsmanship, artisanal fashion, slow clothing and the progression of garment making through fashion history. This research was used to form a comparative analysis of the slow fashion movement and other variations of traditional and contemporary slow garment making.
5.1 Exploring the function of slow fashion in the fashion system

Within this thesis, slow fashion, as the name suggests, is considered fashion in the sense that slow fashion garments are deemed products of fashion as opposed to simply clothing. However, this does not imply a comprehensive compliance with standard conventions of fashion, as slow fashion introduces the global fashion system to an alternative fashion culture in alignment with key tenets of slowness. Furthermore, this also does not discount the existence of companies that do simply create clothing by employing slow or sustainable practices, but such companies exceed the scope of this study. The complexity of combining fashion and slowness hinges on the integration of contrary values, but also the complexities that arise when comparing the slow fashion ethos and established theories of the phenomenon of fashion. The implications of this union relate to concerns of trust, product authenticity, transparency and the dilution of company values when applied practically, but also the general immersion of slow and mindful values, interactions and experiences into the global commercial fashion system.

Slow fashion, with aspirations for change in the fashion industry (Fletcher 2010), could either be perceived as operating in an autonomous system of its own with values that defy certain aspects of the current fashion system or operating as a subset within the broader system of fashion in addition to other models, such as fast fashion. Slow fashion offers an approach with the potential to achieve a more sustainable outlook for fashion, ‘but one which also demands a redefinition of fashion that acknowledges the slow principles and practices’ (Clark 2008, p. 444). Clark (2008) argues the slow fashion movement has been cultivated alongside the existing system and possesses strength as a potential rival of the established fashion system. From the perspective that slow fashion might operate in an external system, we could assume it would function differently. However, referring to Kawamura’s (2005) perspective on the system of fashion, a slow fashion system would gain structure through organisations, governing bodies with regulations of slow fashion practice and the development of relationships. Fashion is relational; therefore, this would involve connections.
between designers and those who communicate slow fashion practice and perpetuate the image and culture of slow fashion, such as fashion professionals, writers, bloggers and editors. The thriving function of slow fashion relies on embedded slow values, or open mindedness toward slow concepts, amongst all stakeholders involved in the production and provision of slow fashion. However, Clark (2008) also acknowledges the operation of slow approaches that critique aspects of fashion carried out by certain labels positioned within the current global fashion system.

This thesis argues that the slow fashion movement encompasses a spectrum of labels that operate within the global fashion system. Through the case study research presented in Chapter 3, it has been determined that varying levels of slow fashion engagement exist, with emphasis given to different components of slow fashion practice. The varying levels of slow fashion engagement depend on the balance, or imbalance, between slow and standard fashion practices, as demonstrated in figure 34. (Hayley Thompson 2018) to indicate the positioning of the case study labels in relation to each other in this niche slow fashion design community. Furthermore, slow fashion does not function in complete isolation from other forms of fashion practice, such as fast fashion, as accepting and embracing the present in this context requires acknowledging and functioning alongside the current fashion culture. In a way, there is a balancing act of detachment and complicity occurring with respect to the current predominant fashion system. Slow fashion labels, including Alabama Chanin, Zady and People Tree, have not withdrawn completely from the current fashion industry, they simply operate with more awareness and intentionality toward slowness and sustainability within that established system to varying degrees. Amongst these variations of slow fashion in the case study research, some labels comply with standard practices of the institutionalised system and its conventional channels of communication more than others, namely Filippa K, with its participation in fashion weeks for example. This suggests the integration of a range of slow fashion practices across the global commercial fashion system.
This observation also reinforces the notion that the industry is not intrinsically bad as not all established conventions of fashion are unsustainable, and fashion companies labelled as slow fashion do successfully operate within the overarching system, as do other sustainable and ethical fashion labels. The variety evident amongst the slow labels has resulted in the presence of slow fashion throughout the system, from the peripheries to the central ready-to-wear industry at mid-mass-market and premium mass-market levels. Operation within these market levels is not inherently negative unless harmful practices operate alongside select slow practices, counteracting their positive impact; however, it does raise questions about the extent to which slow fashion labels who actively function within the commercial fashion system genuinely operate in a way that...
enhances the wellbeing of humans and the planet. How slow can labels truly be when undertaking various standard fashion design, production, provision and marketing practices within a system currently highly intertwined with practices that hinder rather than aid human wellbeing and environmental sustainability?

Similar to sustainable fashion, eco fashion and ethical fashion, slow fashion is a counter offering for consumers to fast fashion and other forms of fashion practice that engage in unsustainable activities. Interestingly, the need for a slow fashion movement was dependent on the existence of these unsustainable fashion industries. As part of its alternative approach, the slow fashion movement employs a selection of traditional solutions to contend with contemporary problems, but this does not summarise its entire approach. As can be seen throughout this thesis, slow fashion creation is not simply a return to traditional values, techniques and resource usage, but an amalgamation of traditional and contemporary methods, drawing from all that is now known or is available through decades of research and technological advancement. It is also a reconnection with the essence of what it is to make or experience a garment, which at times leads to a return to traditional values or processes. Slow fashion is one of numerous redeveloped approaches which form a more inclusive, sustainable and mindful engagement with fashion. Fletcher writes:

"ideas of slow culture are part of a bigger story of change and transformation in the fashion sector towards sustainability. A story concerned with remodelling what we mean by development and success in fashion and profoundly rethinking the values that underpin these most influential of concepts (2010, p. 264)."

This transformation can be viewed in multiple ways due to the paradoxical nature of uniting the contending characteristics of fashion as a phenomenon and sustainability or slowness.

Broadly drawing on the position developed by Kawamura (2005) in the publication Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies, this thesis argues fashion is fluid and can be perceived as a
malleable ideological construct which, aided by an institutionalised system, has the capacity to react, absorb, dilute and reflect all aspects of life, consuming stimulus from external sources and oftentimes transforming its meaning. This can also extend to consuming the critical or alternative elements of labels and diluting their potency. Fashion, bolstered by those who create, maintain and communicate the concept of fashion, has the power to strip away the essence of an idea absorbed from another context and conceptually and aesthetically reimage it for its manifestation within the realm of fashion. This notion has implications for the function of slow fashion labels within the global fashion system.

There are fundamental characteristics of fashion, evident in established fashion theories, which are relevant to this analysis. After reviewing sustainable and ethical fashion literature in section 2.4, it is clear the fashion and textile industries are embedded with both harmful and non-harmful practices, but key fashion theorists also identify deeply rooted and influential characteristics of fashion, such as manufacturing desire, novelty and the need for newness within a framework of perpetual change and power (Kawamura 2005; Welters & Lillethun 2011). Fashion theorists support the notion of change as an inherent component of fashion supported by an institutionalised system and defined through various directional flows (Kawamura 2005; Lang & Lang 2011; Lillethun 2011; Welters & Lillethun 2011). Slow fashion defies this standard concept of perpetual and rapid change demonstrated by fast fashion, particularly through longevity. However, the concept of change still remains relevant in slow fashion, as it does allow for slower, more intentional change within the framework of the slow fashion ethos. Change can occur in garment styles through the slow production of new items or reworking used garments and materials, but also via slow consumption methods, such as sharing, swapping or reusing garments.
In terms of power, fashion theorists identify the influence of fashion institutions and the collective force of the mass population who embrace fashion trends (Kawamura 2005; Lang & Lang 2011).

Kawamura clarifies:

Institutions provide the means and context through which elites exercise power. Fashion professionals become powerful and dominant through the control of major social institutions. Extraordinary centralization of power allows control over many people and resources (2005, p. 54).

Alternatively, Lang and Lang (2011) discuss fashion as ‘an elementary form of collective behaviour, whose compelling power lies in the implicit judgment of an anonymous multitude’. Therefore, as fashion garments, presented by social institutions within the fashion system, are accepted by collections of people, a source of power is created that drives forward the desire for new garments in others. With regard to this concept of power, there is potential for slow fashion to experience effects relating to authenticity and trust.

Firstly, there is the risk of diluted product authenticity. Fashion labels may be affiliated with an image of slow fashion but there is the concern that a company’s brand philosophy may be diluted amongst fashion culture, particularly if it enters a realm highly accessible to mainstream consumers. Some slow fashion labels operating in a system that perpetuates goals of mass production and sales could become subject to the current predominant model in order to maintain a viable business; however, becoming consumed by the speed culture of this model may result in garments being a part of transient fashion movements. Others may only be able to maintain a certain level of engagement with slow fashion values and practices, whilst predominantly complying with standard industry actions, such as promoting products through advertising or features in fashion media.

Secondly, there is potential for distrust to arise. Consumers can become wary of labels that may possess disingenuous motives and present a slow fashion image in the industry yet fail to reinforce this with adequate slow practices. For example, projecting an ethos of holistic slow fashion
engagement when slow practices are only implemented within one line of garments in the company’s collection. Furthermore, distrust, with regard to motives or values, may resonate amongst designers toward those involved in either the production of garments or the construction of fashion within fashion institutions. This is particularly valid considering the nature of the fashion system, described by Kawamura (2005, p. 33) as a ‘manufactured thing produced in and by social organizations’. Distrust can arise if slow fashion products are promoted by fashion media in a way that contributes to the culture of overconsumption ingrained in fashion. Manufacturing desire for fashion products within consumers, through various advertising methods, can perpetuate the desire to continuously consume material goods and conceptually consume the experience of satisfying wants with novelty and newness. Where distrust is concerned within the fashion system, the slow fashion criterion of transparency (Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) can be an antidote to provide clarification and, as a substitute, foster the desire for the sustainable and ethical creation of high-quality garments consumed slowly.

Alternatively, standard activities or channels of fashion dissemination, including media and seasonal fashion weeks, can be embraced within the sustainable and ethical fashion space and approached intentionally in order to communicate redefined fashion values and consciously market more sustainable fashion products. Complicity with this system is largely problematic due to the current predominant speed-driven and growth-focused approach, however, with the wider acceptance of more socially and environmentally sustainable fashion in the industry, perhaps the shift in values deemed critical in academic discourse is slowly taking place. This would suggest the system is evolving and facilitating new ways of operating, designing, producing and consuming sustainably, and allowing alternative channels to develop that foster the dissemination of sustainable, ethical and slow fashion. From this perspective, it might be considered advantageous for mindful slow fashion to become fashionable as it denotes its widespread social acceptance.
Regardless, the possible effects presented above can be met with a mindful perspective. The variety of approaches undertaken as part of the slow fashion movement within the global fashion system can be accepted just as they are, which would involve letting go of any expectations or condemnation of labels based on their level of engagement with slow fashion criteria. There is freedom within this movement currently for designers, producers and consumers, among others, to make mindful decisions based on the values that resonate most significantly with them. Slow fashion is an emerging area which indicates we must accept the status of sustainable and ethical progress and allow time for experimentation to identify a set of proven slow fashion practices. Smaller fashion labels, which Black (2012) attests are important within the sustainable and ethical fashion space, arguably have the advantage of more freedom to trial new methods and ultimately shift the movement forward when these practices are dispersed amongst larger companies.

Analysing slow fashion as a practice exposed the strong connection between the production of garments and the production of slow fashion as a concept. Therefore, the relationship between clothes and fashion is highly intertwined in the context of slow fashion. The image and ethos of slow fashion labels are often crafted around the garments, including how the production processes and final products align with the sustainability of human wellbeing and the environment. It could be argued that due to the significance of socially and environmentally sustainable clothing production in the practice and image of slow fashion, it functions more holistically and with a greater connection to reality. It showcases the interdependency of each phase of the fashion process for sustainability by engaging facets of design, production, consumption and post-consumer use. Slow fashion labels are receptive to engaging each phase of the garment lifecycle, including the use phase in terms of caring for, repairing and valuing garments and responsible disposal with regard to salvaging materials, recycling or reuse by providing information or establishing systems for these practices to be carried out. The slow fashion case study labels explored in Chapter 3 demonstrate this, however as discussed, the actual practice of slow consumption by consumers is crucial to this
formula. A critical benefit of this holistic approach to fashion and clothing production and provision is its potential for allowing fashion to thrive within biophysical confines.

Designers desire the freedom to create and will, therefore, continue to produce fashion product, just as consumers desire the freedom to consume clothing and will continue to engage with fashion as a cultural practice. Slow fashion does not dictate zero production waste, finite resource use or consumption, but rather works towards the elimination of overproduction and overconsumption by embracing awareness, purpose-driven design, resourcefulness and realistic restraint for a sustainable and non-harmful engagement with fashion. Issues stem from both clothing, such as through manufacturing methods and clothing disposal, and fashion, such as through the culture of trend-driven fashion in fuelling the desire for newness, because both are relevant to the commercial fashion industry. However, it is acknowledged here that economic dependencies exist and rejecting the culture of trend-driven fashion is not a choice available to everyone within the fashion system. In past fashion theory, clothing production and fashion production, which is affiliated with cultural production, have been addressed as collective activities that function in separate systems with differing processes (Kawamura 2005). Therefore, by approaching the challenge as a whole through slow fashion, concerns pertaining to both fashion and clothing are addressed together. Furthermore, slow fashion also offers consumers alternative intangible sources of satisfaction than those provided by trend-driven fashion.

Fashion provides numerous sources of value, including a perpetually accessible and instantaneous form of satisfaction through the purchase of new items, a sense of belonging experienced through the adornment of certain garments that communicate an identity and personality, or the opportunity to connect with a brand that communicates a form of personal or socially constructed success, a ‘desirable’ lifestyle or any other fantasy. Slow fashion has the capacity to sustain some of these intangible sources of satisfaction, as Fletcher (2007, para. 8) states, ‘slow fashion supports our
psychological needs (to form identity, communicate and be creative through our clothes) as well as our physical needs (to cover and protect us from extremes of climate). In addition, it has the capacity to offer meaningful emotional benefits in alignment with consuming ethically and sustainably, engaging directly or indirectly with designers, producers, farmers and artisans, or developing a deeper experience of satisfaction with garments chosen very deliberately. Slow fashion is, therefore, embedded with symbolic values of authenticity, transparency and honesty. From Fletcher’s (2010, p. 265) perspective, ‘the challenge for us all is to model and influence the overall regulating fashion system to promote balance accompanied by richness across economic, social, and ecological systems as a whole.’ Furthermore, slow fashion and the wider sustainable and ethical fashion realm have the potential to inspire a re-evaluation of theories of fashion in light of social and environmental crises caused or accentuated by fashion and textile practices.

5.2 Garment making was traditionally slow

Traditionally, garment making was inherently slow, however, not all slow garment making in the global fashion system constitutes slow fashion. Considering the practice of garment making prior to the advent of the sewing machine, along with its numerous iterations (Bolton 2016), and the prevalence and significance of hand sewing in haute couture, there is evidence of what could arguably qualify as ‘slow’ fashion. However, slow fashion in the context of this thesis refers to the developing slow fashion movement which possesses a number of embedded values and practices associated with broader slow culture and sits within the context of the sustainable and ethical fashion space. From this standpoint, the term ‘slow’ in reference to speed does not capture the depth of the movement. Other areas of slow garment making, both traditional and contemporary, are not guided by the criteria of the slow fashion movement, however, some crossover exists between these areas through evidence of slow, mindful practices.
Slow, mindful and craft-oriented practices have always been an inherent component of fashion and clothing production. Aakko (2018, p. 534) presents an interesting observation in relation to artisanal fashion, that ‘discussing “artisanal” or “craft” in the context of contemporary fashion may seem antagonistic’. They note, ‘the work of artisans in the field of clothing and textiles could refer to traditional clothing and textile practices of rural cultures’, while ‘craft may be associated with functionality and generally a rather slowly changing aesthetic’ (Aakko 2018, p. 534-535).

Importantly, Aakko (2018, p. 535) highlights that ‘craft has always been a fundamental aspect of art and design and a crucial element in the production of high-end fashion, namely couture’. This is also a valid statement in the discussion of slow fashion with regard to its embrace of craftsmanship, but also reminiscent of Clark’s (2008) paper ‘SLOW + FASHION—an oxymoron—or a promise for the future ...?’, as the author presents the juxtaposition of combining slow and fashion. Considering craft as a vital component of fashion throughout its history to this day, another perspective is that the concept of mass production and the standardisation of fast fashion seems unnatural, as it counters the traditional roots of garment making practices. Farley Gordon and Hill (2015, p. 31) claim that alongside the rapid evolution of the fashion industry over the past three centuries, ‘changes in the way clothing is manufactured and consumed have likewise transformed our perceptions of how contemporary fashion should be valued’.

During the 18th century when the process of making clothes was slow and completed entirely by hand, components of the slow fashion movement and mindful practices, discussed throughout this thesis, were evident. Craftsmanship was cherished and, due to the manual work involved, makers and their specialist craft skills were also valued (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 32). Influenced by the high expense of textiles and materials used and the enormous amount of labour and time involved, the garments themselves were treasured, cared for and kept in use and reuse for longer periods, demonstrating a form of slow, mindful consumption (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 31-32). This also led to resourcefulness, where practices such as reworking garments, reusing fabrics and changing
trims and laces were commonplace (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 33 & 35). These resourceful practices rely on the knowledge and abilities of skilled garment makers in order to reduce costs and conserve materials. The second-hand clothes trade was also pertinent to this time and was embraced not for the sake of novelty but as a critical sector of the clothing market (Roche 1994). During this period, the collaborative nature of garment making was demonstrated through the networks of artisans involved in the creation of an entire garment (Bolton 2016). Every production process, such as hand-made lacework, was undertaken by multiple makers with advanced skills (Bolton 2016, p. 125; Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 32-33). The sheer number of people involved and the various stages of making within each craft suggests the necessity of nurturing local connections for the overall functioning of the system.

The 19th century welcomed the Industrial Revolution and, as a result, machine-based fabric and garment production methods, patterns for certain garments and an accurate body measurement structure, which lead to combined hand- and machine-based garment making processes (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015; Kawamura 2004, Prêt-à-Porter: Democratization of Fashion with Technological Invention). However, several components of slow fashion and mindful practices endured during this phase of technological advancement. Value, attention, maintenance and careful consideration for garments continued during this time, as did the longevity of clothing (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 36). From mid-19th century, when the ready-to-wear market emerged, up until the 20th century, women’s wardrobes were diverse and often made up of ready-to-wear garments, homemade clothes and items crafted by a dressmaker (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 31-32). Ready-made clothing during this time was generally of better quality than what is widely available today (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 31). Despite the transition to mechanised fabric making, it was still an expensive process for a time and there was also still a significant need for labour, therefore, fabric was conserved to reduce waste and the garments were crafted for long-term use (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 36, 38 & 42).
Resourcefulness also remained prevalent entering the 19th century. Garment separates were multifunctional and appropriate for various occasions with minor adjustments using removable pieces (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 38). Furthermore, the use of second-hand garments was also evident (Kawamura 2004, Prêt-à-Porter: Democratization of Fashion with Technological Invention). Kawamura (2004, Prêt-à-Porter: Democratization of Fashion with Technological Invention) clarifies, ‘ready-made clothes before and during the nineteenth century meant literally that it is already made, previously made, altered, restored, and cleaned clothing in popular markets’. The author explains, ‘secondhand clothing was the first mode of purchasing prefabricated garments since clothing was made at home by and for the poor while skilled tailors and seamstresses fitted out the rich’ (Kawamura 2004, Prêt-à-Porter: Democratization of Fashion with Technological Invention).

Toward the end of the 19th century, the growth of ready-made fashion signalled a democratisation of fashion, yet ready-made fashion ‘is considered a key progenitor of problems within the industry’ with regard to sustainability (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 39-40; Kawamura 2004). Furthermore, Kawamura states:

> the mechanization of fabric production has also led to relatively less expensive fabrics that are used in greater quantity and variety and were available to more people, which led to mass production (2004, Prêt-à-Porter: Democratization of Fashion with Technological Invention).

During this time, young consumers embraced the gratification of purchasing new, cheap and fashionable ready-made garments (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 42); a practice that endured into the 21st century. The perception of garments as disposable products also emerged within this period, with particular reference to the disposable novelty of paper garments (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 47). Although speed and efficiency increased with the advent of embroidery and sewing machinery (Bolton 2016, p. 125), the factory-based, ready-made garments eventually began to lack the construction quality of their non-factory-made counterparts (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 40).
The sewing machine made garment making easier, however it could not replace the expertise of couturiers and other craft specialists involved in the production of haute couture garments. Bolton (2016, p. 235), Head Curator of The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute in New York, explains haute couture is ‘French for “high fashion,” a designation reserved for fashion creation that employs the highest levels of technique and skill’ and forms an industry regulated by the French Ministry of Industry under the ‘Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture in Paris (a trade association of the Fédération Française de la Couture, du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode)’. Exemplars of this exclusive realm include labels such as Chanel, Christian Dior and Givenchy (Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode n.d.). Bolton argues:

> to understand the intricacies of manipulating fabric on the grain, and to envision how to most adroitly utilize an expanse of cloth with minimal surplus – all while exercising the utmost precision and accuracy when cutting – is an art form in its own right (2016, p. 53).

The 20th century incorporated both a further increase in the speed and efficiency of garment making and a resurgence of haute couture (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 44). During the 1910s, the production of manmade fibres was introduced, lowering the price of mass-produced garments and increasing the speed of the fashion cycle (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 43). The 1920s marked fashion’s reign over beauty and quality as garments were worn less often (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 43). However, with the couture resurgence from 1947 to 1957 came a revival of inherent slow fashion components within the couture industry, such as the implementation of traditional handwork, a ‘hallmark of couture craftsmanship’, valuing products by appreciating the experience of wearing and owning haute couture garments, and longevity in garment construction (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 44). However, the 1950s was a time of transformation and rampant consumerism, therefore, slow consumption was not always a part of the haute couture sector as clients were unsatisfied wearing the same piece over many years (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 44). In the 1960s, Western fashion was widely considered a practice just for fun, shedding its status of the previous
decade, as garments were viewed as disposable (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 46-47). Farley Gordon and Hill (2015, p. 47) note that ‘the waste and disposal of materials is a significant by-product of twentieth-century society’. By the 1970s, the vintage garment market also upheld slow fashion principles during this period. Vintage garments were associated with nostalgia and sentiment, adding value to the items, and required timelessness in the design and quality in the fabrics and garment construction (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 44).

In the 21st century, the predominant fashion system supports fast production and consumption of garments in the fast fashion industry and other areas of the ready-to-wear space, including some sectors of luxury designer fashion. Although, fast fashion only emerged in the 1990s (Maynard 2013), the increasing speed of production and the demand for cheap, machine-made products has grown over time since the Industrial Revolution and culminated in the fast fashion industry. Its force has managed to almost erase how garments were previously produced, disseminated and cherished by wearers (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 31). As discussed throughout this section, with the introduction of machine-based garment making came the allure of mass-production for fashion companies, reduced labour, a growing ease of access to products and the disposable fashion mentality, ultimately leading to overproduction and overconsumption. The appeal of low cost production opportunities influenced a rise in overseas garment production, which further facilitates the economic strength of the fast fashion industry yet also solidifies poor quality production often by a staff of underpaid or mistreated workers (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 57; The True Cost 2015). Farley Gordon and Hill (2015, p. 57) argue, ‘it is clear that changes in fashion production practices over the past 250 years...have led to severe problems such as waste, pollution and appalling labor conditions’.

Other key observations can be made on consumption during this period; instant and reoccurring gratification is sought from fast fashion by consumers and, whilst the attraction of brand names lives
on, ‘luxury’ fashion has also been diluted somewhat (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015). The value of
designer garments weakens with the emergence of diffusion labels and the infiltration of the
‘throwaway fashion’ concept in the luxury fashion space (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 42 & 48). As a
result, high price points in this sector no longer guarantee quality materials or craftsmanship (Farley
Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 48). Furthermore, consumers give very little consideration to the value of
resources used in garment making processes or the garment lifecycle beyond the short use phase
(Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 31). Fleeting trends beckon consumers with ‘bargain’ priced garments
or luxury designer names, unconcerned by the innate obsolescence the garments possess, which
surfaces soon after the first few wears due to the inherent component of change embedded within
the fashion industry (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 53-58).

However, during this time of quick, excessive production and consumption in fashion, slow garment
making retains its presence particularly in the avenues of haute couture and the sustainable and
ethical fashion space. As discussed throughout this thesis, the slow fashion movement sustains
traditional components from a time when garment making was a slow process; namely,
craftsmanship, quality and valuing garments – components widely discarded by the fast fashion
industry, its manufacturers and its consumers (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015). However, the same can
be said of the haute couture industry. Bolton (2016, p. 165) notes that the practices of paruriers, or
adornment makers, in the haute couture industry ‘remain surprisingly unchanged from the height of
their popularity at the turn of the twentieth century’. In the haute couture ateliers, craftsmanship is
elevated with techniques and skills representing the highest level of garment making, used to craft
customised, made-to-order garments to be cherished by an exclusive set of clientele (Bolton 2016,
p. 235).
5.2.1 Not all ‘slow’ fashion constitutes slow fashion

Various forms of slow garment making, such as haute couture, artisanal fashion and slow clothing, exist, which differ from slow fashion yet share certain values or practices (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 35.). Slow fashion can be viewed as a movement that draws from traditional slow garment making practices in combination with contemporary technologies and values that align with awareness of social and environmental sustainability, the heightened pace and pressure of life and the detriments of profit-focused values over people. Considering haute couture’s predominant purpose as an alluring showcase of absolute beauty, dressmaking perfection and imagination brought to life (Farnault 2014, p. 16), and its position at the height of fashion in the global system, this industry does not function as part of the slow fashion movement, but some slow fashion aspects are inherently embedded within this industry.

Figure 35: Contemporary slow garment making areas addressed in this thesis (© Hayley Thompson 2019).
To begin with, from one perspective, haute couture garments comprise the slow fashion criterion of longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), as made-to-order couture garments are cherished by the wearers and worn over many years for everyday use, such as a Chanel suit, or conserved as part of valued collections or archives. However, some haute couture garments present a contradiction in relation to longevity, as the style of certain items can restrict their frequent use to specific occasions only. Furthermore, there is at times less emphasis on the garments being worn at all, as haute couture garments can assume positions within the gallery or museum space or within an archival collection for a couture house. Haute couture garments in this capacity are appreciated less as pieces worn repeatedly over years of use, and more for their value as forms of art, their power to grant creative freedom, their capacity to create fantasy, their ability to reinforce a brand image or their gift for performing a spectacle. However, not all haute couture garments fit these representations. The slow and mindful value of realistic awareness of fashion’s social and environmental impact is not universally embraced across the haute couture spectrum in the same way as the slow fashion movement, but this does not negate the possibility of values and practices of social or environmental sustainability within this space.

Haute couture also encompasses a focus on traditional dressmaking skills in combination with new technologies, valuing high-quality materials and craftsmanship, localised making within the ateliers and uniting craftspeople, couturiers, creative directors and even wearers as together they create one-off garments crafted to fit individual couture clients – all of which relate to the slow fashion criteria (Hayley Thompson 2019, figure 10.) developed in Chapter 2 (Bolton 2016, 2016b; Farnault 2014; Kawamura 2004; Martin & Koda 1995). A number of these point to a key commonality between the two areas: a deep connection to craftsmanship. The haute couture industry demonstrates a connection to handwork, preciseness and customisation (Bolton 2016).
Craftsmanship is treasured in the industry of haute couture and adds value to its image (Bolton 2016). Couture houses must satisfy explicit criteria to achieve the haute couture status bestowed upon labels accepted into the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture in Paris (Bolton 2016).

Various craft practices are present in the haute couture supply chain, including toile making, tailoring and dressmaking, pleating and folding, lacework, leatherwork, embroidery, feather work and artificial flower making, which all require highly formed knowledge and skills (Bolton 2016). For example, ‘creating a toile is extremely labor intensive’ and requires ‘a balance of mathematical precision and intuitive hand-eye coordination’ (Bolton 2016, p. 21). As perfection is paramount, the toile process allows for ‘greater creative freedom and experimentation but also greater refinements in the fit’ (Bolton 2016, p. 21). The slow crafts of tailoring and dressmaking are split into separate specialised divisions within the couture houses, yet many other artisans sustain the production of haute couture externally (Farnault 2014). Farnault (2014, p. 15) explains, ‘like planets in motion around the sun, fashion designers, especially those in the field of haute couture, carry thousands of workers in their wake’. Furthermore, the author argues, ‘couturiers could not exist without craftspeople’, and ‘equally, the craftspeople could not exist without the designers. They are mutually dependent’ (Farnault 2014, p. 15).

Another form of contemporary slow garment making is artisanal fashion. In ‘Unfolding Artisanal Fashion’, Aakko (2018, p. 545) argues artisanal fashion is differentiated from slow fashion through its specific focus on the ‘artisanal aspects of fashion design and production, emphasizing the idea of skillful materiality’. According to Aakko (2018, p. 539), ‘skillful materiality’ is an essential component of artisanal fashion and strengthens its relationship with craftsmanship. The author argues:

the concept of skillful materiality signifies these essential features such as the skill and craft required in the design and making processes, as well as the materiality of the products and the process itself (Aakko 2018, p. 539).
This concept incorporates elements of ‘true’ or ‘new’ materialism, a concept described by Fletcher (2016) in *Craft of Use: Post-Growth Fashion*. The author states:

> it suggests that through fostering a deep appreciation and respect for intrinsic material qualities of things we develop an understanding of their value in ways that go beyond their usefulness to us.

Charged by this knowledge, we act with care (Fletcher 2016, p. 109-110).

Traces of the true materialism concept are also evident in the slow fashion movement under the criterion of *a commitment to producing better for people and the planet* (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Skillful materiality manifests both tangibly and intangibly in artisanal fashion through practices, physical resources and the knowledge and values that guide the craftspeople or designers involved (Aakko 2018).

It is important to note here that the fluid use of these terms, such as ‘slow’ and ‘artisanal’, and the practices involved can present exceptions whereby artisanal fashion labels may in fact also identify as a slow fashion brand. Yet not all artisanal fashion operates in alignment with the slow fashion movement. An important example is Maison Margiela (formerly Maison Martin Margiela), which presents an artisanal line as part of its broader collection of products (Maison Martin Margiela & Luna 2009, p. 360). This label does not operate as part of the slow fashion movement but demonstrates specific practices that resonate with the slow approach. The label’s Line ‘0’, the artisanal collection, comprises of unique hand-crafted couture garments that often expose the internal construction and makes use of unconventional objects and reconstructed, pre-worn garments (Maison Martin Margiela & Luna 2009, p. 360). This collection has operated both within and external to the haute couture industry throughout the brand’s history (Maison Martin Margiela & Luna 2009, p. 360). Additionally, Aakko (2018, p. 537) notes, ‘today, artisanal fashion may not be directly associated with the conceptual works of Margiela, but the highlighting of craftsmanship is their common ground’.
The craft-oriented components of artisanal fashion that resonate with the slow fashion criteria include small-batch production, provenance, high quality, aesthetics, a commitment to taking time, craft, skill and materiality (Aakko 2018) – some factors of which are also present within the haute couture space. However, the form of craftsmanship embraced in the practice of artisanal fashion differs from the haute couture industry, as ‘the aim is not to be on par with the exceptional haute couture in the use of craft or in its symbolic value, nor to create exclusive made-to-measure pieces’ (Aakko 2018, p. 538). Artisanal fashion often engages with craftsmanship in a holistic manner, as the design, aesthetic, production knowledge and the skills to craft it well experience a closer relationship or what can be deemed a more mindful, inclusive approach (Aakko 2018). For artisanal fashion, Aakko (2018) argues it is often related to the integrated role of the designer in a micro business setting as craftsperson, business owner, manager and designer. Artisanal fashion, slow fashion and haute couture engage with craftsmanship in the manner that Sennett first conveys and Aakko also supports; ‘expanding skill beyond mere skilled manual labor’ (Aakko 2018, p. 534) with a ‘desire to do something well for its own sake’ (Sennett 2009, p. 9). However, it is evident that engaging in craftsmanship in the slow garment making space expands beyond purely the practice of physically crafting an item to also include corresponding values and a sense of mindfulness.

Mindfulness was further identified in the slow garment making space by considering Sennett’s thoughts on advanced skill. Sennett writes:

> in the higher stages of skill, there is a constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness, the tacit knowledge serving as an anchor, the explicit awareness serving as critique and corrective. Craft quality emerges from this higher stage, in judgments made on tacit habits and suppositions (2009, p. 50).

Awareness is incorporated in craft practice to connect the craftsperson to the present, maintaining mindfulness of the current circumstances to improve the craft in that moment (Sennett 2009). This approach avoids relying entirely on tacit knowledge or what might become a form of habitual
mindless behaviour, as decisions are not treated as new situations in new moments and do not pass through a process of re-evaluation, which constitutes reacting. Of artisanal fashion labels, Aakko writes:

as an unspoken, shared philosophy of these labels lies a certain considerate attitude, which is integrated in their work in different ways: respect towards employees, collaborative partners, suppliers, and clients and reverence for artisanship itself (2018, p. 547).

Slow and artisanal fashion companies can assume the personal values and perspectives of the designer or business creator, which filter through to the company’s practices. Similar to slow fashion, some of these values may be experienced on a symbolic level, for example the significance of valuing a garment is embedded in an item by the maker and transferred to the wearer through its craftsmanship, its provenance or the presence of the maker in its hand-made construction (Aakko 2018).

Artisanal fashion bridges fashion and artisanship to represent a form of contemporary fashion that, similar to slow fashion and haute couture, incorporates traditional craftsmanship without negating the use of machine-made methods (Aakko 2018). This demonstrates a connection to the slow fashion criterion of combining traditional and new techniques, skills or styles (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009). Hand craft and machine work are both key methods in the production of garments across various levels of the fashion system, however, the relationship between the two is laden with embedded meanings, practices and outcomes (Bolton 2016). There is a perceived dichotomy between hand, which is widely associated with haute couture and oftentimes artisanal and slow fashion, and machine, which is aligned with ready-to-wear and fast fashion (Bolton 2016). The perception of this dichotomy has endured over time, as the relationship between hand and machine forms an integral part of the fashion system’s historical progression through the Industrial Revolution, specifically the development of the sewing machine, and the evolution of the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture, the governing body of the haute
couture industry (Bolton 2016). However, in actuality, it is clear handwork is often found in the practice of ready-to-wear garment making and machine work is frequently incorporated into the haute couture industry (Bolton 2016). Bolton (2016, p. 13) also indicates, ‘the technical separation between the haute couture and prêt-à-porter is becoming less definitive and more permeable’.

Haute couture, artisanal fashion, slow fashion and certain areas of luxury ready-to-wear each draw from the same set of traditional and new techniques and skills available, combining them in different ways in accordance with the varying values, aesthetics and goals of each sector and those of the designers or labels within that sector. These variations are also evident within the slow fashion movement amongst the case study labels explored in Chapter 3. For example, People tree (2017b) was found to employ the use of block printing and various weaving techniques practiced in developing countries, while Alabama Chanin (2017a) demonstrated a strong connection to embroidery and embellishment in its aesthetic, which have been developed as part of the company’s garment making practice for decades. However, regardless of the true methods of production undertaken, haute couture and ready-to-wear have socially constructed perceptions shaped by the cultural and symbolic meanings attributed to hand-made and machine-made garments (Bolton 2016; Kawamura 2004).

Craftsmanship, and in turn hand craft, can be used as a value adding component, with both tangible and intangible effects attached to garments and fashion labels. Bolton (2016) explains hand-made items, and in turn haute couture, are often synonymous with exclusivity, spontaneity, individuality, elitism and the cult of personality, while machine made, which has been aligned with ready-to-wear, signifies progress, democracy, mass production, homogenisation and, at times, inferiority and dehumanisation. Of French 19th Century haute couture, Kawamura (2004, Social Significance of Haute Couture) writes, ‘it is the symbolic production of fashion that gives credit to elite designers and couturiers. This exclusivity of luxury clothes was manufactured and manipulated by the fashion
system.’ Therefore, haute couture traditionally traded on the socially-constructed superiority of high-quality, hand-made garments as a point of difference distinguishing it from mass produced ready-to-wear garments or fast fashion product. With ‘hand skills that spoke of mastery, subtlety, etiquette and refinement’, craftsmanship in haute couture is leveraged by a number of brands, with the support of the fashion industry, to create an image (Bolton 2016, p. 9). Kawamura (2004, Social Significance of Haute Couture) also writes, ‘today, the social meaning of Haute Couture has shifted from the institution that produces expensive clothes to Haute Couture as the image-making institution’.

The attached symbolic and cultural meanings given to hand and machine practices in the past have been questioned based on the realistic interaction designers have with each approach across both haute couture and ready-to-wear (Bolton 2016). This is evident in the exhibition Manus x Machina: Fashion in an Age of Technology, which proposes ‘a spectrum or continuum of practice...whereby the hand and the machine are equal’ (Bolton 2016, p. 12). With regard to slow fashion, the term ‘slow’ brings about connotations of hand crafting as the technique is more labour-intensive and, therefore, is achieved via a slower process. Slow fashion’s hand-made perception does not hold the same prestige as that of haute couture’s hand-crafted image, but does slow fashion, like haute couture, trade on the notion of slowness as a form of superiority? It certainly presents this as a differentiating point, among others, to add value in opposition to fast fashion and other forms of ready-made garments.

Analysing the broader slow garment making space in terms of adding value, both tangible and intangible elements also apply. Tangibly the garments are embedded with the value of the materials, the quality of the construction, the colours of the garment and the feel of the fabrics. Intangibly they are embedded with the trace of the craftsperson, the essence of the environment where the garments were made or the materials were sourced from, the culture of a place and nostalgia.
through memories created wearing the garment or stories told of former use phases with previous owners. With regard to slow garment making labels, intangibly they reflect a brand image associated with craftsmanship, whilst tangibly they are embedded with the craft-oriented practices undertaken as a company. Engagement in craftsmanship can also add value for the maker, as Sennett (2009, p. 21) describes, ‘the emotional rewards craftsmanship holds out for attaining skill are twofold: people are anchored in tangible reality, and they can take pride in their work’. It is interesting to note that this connection to tangible reality links engagement in craft practice with the practice of mindfulness.

It is noteworthy that slow fashion aligns with exclusivity, spontaneity and individuality, as indicated in the criterion of exclusivity, relating to product uniqueness (Jung & Jin 2014; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). The unique material qualities of certain slow fashion garments showcase the presence of the maker through aesthetic aspects such as stitching imperfections, the hand-constructed style or the traditional hand-sewn techniques demonstrated through garment embellishments. Exclusivity is also often provided through another slow fashion criterion; slow, small batch production (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013). Similar to slow fashion, Aakko (2018, p. 544) associates artisanal fashion with a departure from fast fashion and an embrace of the ‘slow ideology’. This translates to abandoning seasonal trend changes in favour of maintaining a chosen aesthetic for longer periods and introducing new pieces slowly in conjunction with ‘classic’ items, celebrating the approach of creative continuity (Aakko 2018). The artisanal fashion aesthetic, like slow fashion, can be a result of the hand-made, craft production prominent in this space, marked by the nuances of organic fibres or natural human imperfections. Aakko (2018, p. 546) notes that this aesthetic in artisanal fashion emphasises ‘the uniqueness and authenticity of the garments in contrast to uniform mass-produced clothing’.
This aesthetic uniqueness in certain slow garment making products collectively celebrates the designer, producer and maker. Sennett (2009, p. 134-135) notes that people have the ability to make their presence known by making subtle or conspicuous marks in the work they create, which is particularly meaningful in an industry that generally attributes fashion products broadly to a fashion brand, or admired as the work of a head designer or creative director, as opposed to also observing the garment workers and craftspeople involved in the supply chain. This also relates to the embrace of the slow fashion criterion of transparency (Clark 2008; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) within the practice of craftsmanship in slow garment making. For slow fashion, the nurturing of producer partnerships and a production-centric focus further indicates the rejection of the anonymous craftsperson concept, in order to celebrate the makers behind the garments. For example, the case study research into People Tree (2017b), undertaken for Chapter 3 of this thesis, revealed the company commends its producer partners on its website by naming and exploring each organisation and the value they bring to the production of People Tree products.

Furthermore, this deeper engagement between designers, producers and garment makers indicates a space for collaboration in the embrace of craftsmanship. Sennett (2009, p. 43) advocates for collaboration via his points on problems that arise when a social disconnection occurs between, what he refers to as, ‘the head and the hand’. In other words, issues tend to ensue when the theory, the designs or the planning of a project is isolated from the practice of implementing that project. The author explains, ‘hands-off design disables a certain kind of relational understanding’ (Sennett 2009, p. 43). This can lead to disengagement from the hands-on work or a hindering of the function or natural thriving of what is designed via over planning (Sennett 2009, p. 43). In the context of slow fashion, the interaction between designers, makers and also wearers can empower the process of producing and consuming slow garments via greater transparency, mindfulness of the reality of the process and shared knowledge. Evidence of collaboration between designers and producers was
identified in the case study research presented in the contextual review. Zady (2017c) refers to collaborating with producers to establish sustainable garment making practices whilst also creating comfortable garments for its consumers. People Tree (2017b) notes its collaboration with Fairtrade certified producers in a united effort to use certified materials and engage with craftspeople in developing countries.

Although this study focuses on the slow fashion movement functioning as a segment of the global fashion system, non-professional, everyday home sewing or slow clothing is a pertinent area of slow garment making practice, existing throughout fashion history, that also aligns with some components of slow fashion. An important point to acknowledge before beginning is that, according to designer and researcher Twigger Holroyd (2017, p. 3), clothes of any kind, including home-sewn folk fashion or slow clothing, are not exempt from the influence of fashion and practices, such as mending, undertaken in the garment use phase are all interrelated with fashion practices carried out in the industry. The author draws this outlook from readings by fashion theorist Elizabeth Wilson and Fletcher (Twigger Holroyd 2017, p. 3). Also, from this perspective, the fashion system stands as a signifier of meaning, which in turn also gives meaning to what is considered non-fashion, like home-sewn garments created outside of the fashion system (Twigger Holroyd 2017).

In Folk Fashion: Understanding Homemade Clothes, Twigger Holroyd (2017, p. 1) refers to slow clothing or home sewing as folk fashion, which encapsulates all of ‘the making and mending of garments for ourselves, family and friends; the items these activities produce; and the wearing of those clothes once they are made’. The author points out, folk fashion can contribute to the social and environmental sustainability crisis in fashion both with intention or incidentally, as:

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\text{it is important to note that sustainability benefits could emerge from folk fashion practices even in cases where makers are not primarily motivated by environmental or social issues and have never thought about their activities in such terms (Twigger Holroyd 2017, p. 18).}
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Home sewing in previous decades was also not necessarily perceived at the time as an action of social and environmental sustainability as it appears today, yet it incidentally made some contribution even into the 19th century, as homemade clothes were still a significant part of women’s wardrobes (Farley Gordon & Hill 2015, p. 31-32). However, Emery explains:

the dynamics of nineteenth-century households shifted considerably in the closing decade. The Industrial Revolution accelerated production of ready-made garments, so clothing production in the home was less essential, minimizing the necessity of home-teaching sewing skills (2014, Shifts and Balances: 1900-1920s).

As the pace of life quickened and the necessity for and availability of ready-made garments increased, home-sewn clothing would have appeared far less appealing to the time-poor consumer. However, Twigger Holroyd (2017, p. 3) acknowledges the ‘striking resurgence of sewing and knitting in recent years’.

This area of slow garment making aligns with slow, mindful production and consumption. What can be observed is not only the slow fashion criterion of spending the time via slow speed of process, production or consumption (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009), but an association with other slow fashion criteria also. There are obvious connections to longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and being resourceful by utilising what is available (Brydges, Lavanga & von Gunten 2014; Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), such as repairing or reinvigorating garments and the freedom that comes with making in accordance with the individual’s style preferences.
Another key criterion is exclusivity, relating to product uniqueness (Jung & Jin 2014; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), demonstrated via freedom in the materials used, the embellishments added, or the fabric colours chosen. There is also heightened opportunity for the consumer to be engaged in situations where the maker is crafting garments for others, which engages the criteria of a commitment to nurturing relationships (Fletcher 2007, 2010; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and engaging the consumer (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016). For example, wearers can be involved in the process of selecting styles and materials, participate in fittings for the garments to their own specifications and possibly the making process. Slow, small batch production (Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013) is another aspect of slow fashion relevant to home sewers who create for friends, family or their local community; however, it could be out of necessity in terms of manageability for one person or a small group of amateur makers rather than consciously about a commitment to producing better for people and the planet (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Fletcher 2007; Henninger et al. 2015; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Minney 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017).

This leads to the slow fashion criterion of localism, particularly in relation to local culture and local industry (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009), whereby makers are sourcing tools and materials within their communities and disseminating the final products locally, supporting the local industry and contributing to local craft culture. There is also the opportunity of combining traditional and new techniques, skills or styles (Minney 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017; Wanders 2009) with home sewing endeavours. The prospect of engaging in different experiences of fashion (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), whether as a maker or wearer of homemade garments, is also present as wardrobes can be built on not only ready-made clothing but items made by the individual themselves, the hands of a loved one or a local garment maker.
This leads to the criterion of valuing products, appreciating the experience with them or their greater purpose (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Twigger Holroyd (2017, p. 20) argues that folk fashion provides an alternative way of engaging with fashion, whilst also ‘satisfying our human needs for identity and participation’ without relying so heavily on fast fashion options. Home-sewn clothing can be embedded with added value for the wearer due to a relationship with the maker or having created the garment themselves. Milburn (2017, p. 7), a sustainability consultant, refers to this area of slow garment making as slow clothing and writes, it ‘is about individual expression and personal connection to what we wear’.

Garments crafted at home can alter a wearer’s perception of the clothing for the benefit of longevity, whilst also enhancing the positive experience of wearing the clothing. Twigger Holroyd notes:

> the slowness of making offers benefits in terms of sustainability because it slows consumption and also builds emotional attachment, which prompts us to keep wearing homemade items over an extended period (2017, p. 18).

Finally, slow clothing or home sewing provides a greater connection to the criterion of embracing attentiveness and mindfulness (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Clark 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013) simply through the experience of making. Milburn (2017, p. 7) believes, ‘we stitch to make our own mark on things, and to be mindfully engaged and productive’.

Attention is paid to the selection of a pattern, or the design of one, the appropriate materials necessary, alterations to the pattern in accordance with the wearers specifications, the fit of the pinned fabric, the types of appropriate stitching and the design and placement of embellishments, such as embroidery or sequinning, among others. There is also a conscious focus on the way in which a garment making practice is crafted and maintained, which speaks to a mindful approach. Makers are free to develop their own methodologies, awareness of craft practices and knowledge of materials, which also prompts a deeper connection to the origins of those materials and how they
came to be in their processed state, engaging the slow fashion criterion of *gaining knowledge of materials and greatly considering the materials used* (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover 2013; Henninger et al. 2015; Pal 2016; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). Twigger Holroyd also states:

...a further way in which making can be said to contribute to a paradigm of sustainability is by prompting critical thinking about the material world, which can lead to a change in behaviour (2017, p. 19).

Furthermore, there is a sense of awareness around the purpose of the garment and the types of environments or occasions the garment is intended for.

This embrace of attentiveness and mindfulness feeds into and bolsters other criteria of slow fashion, such as *longevity in the lifespan of products, particularly in relation to physical durability, repair and the style of the garment* (Clark 2008; Jung & Jin 2014, 2016; Pal 2016; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017), *valuing products, appreciating the experience with them or their greater purpose* (Clark 2008; Fletcher 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard 2013; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017) and *exclusivity, relating to product uniqueness* (Jung & Jin 2014; RMIT School of Fashion and Textiles 2017). In *Slow Clothing: Finding meaning in what we wear*, Milburn (2017, p. 103) presents a slow clothing manifesto, commencing with ‘think’, which sets the precedent for the other points, such as ‘make’, ‘revive’ and ‘adapt’. Investing time in thinking, questioning and evolving our views and preferences is key to embracing a slow approach, whether in relation to slow fashion or slow clothing (Milburn 2017). Milburn (2017, p. 107) developed the manifesto, containing a total of 10 action points, ‘as a process of thinking about how we can survive and thrive in a material world, and become more conscious of what we are wearing’; in other words, embedding a sense of mindfulness in this area.

Garment making in its many forms, from haute couture to home sewing, has traditionally involved slowness both in speed and in the unconscious engagement with traits of the slow ethos. Slow,
mindful practices related to the making and use of garments have always had a presence within, and adjacent to, the fashion system. Yet, not all forms of slow garment making function as part of the slow fashion movement or identify with slow fashion; slowness is simply an inherent component of garment making. Specific slow fashion criteria are present within other fashion cultures and practices and particularly emerge from the common space of craftsmanship. Craftsmanship is critical in the sustainable and ethical fashion space and, as discussed throughout this chapter, mindfulness also emerges from craftsmanship. As Farley Gordon and Hill (2015, p. 31) write, ‘an important ethos in the sustainable fashion industry: that an understanding of how our clothing is made is essential to changing production methods for the better’. This reveals knowledge and skill, or theory and practice, have emerged in this study as a necessary and beneficial collaboration in the journey toward enriching slow fashion for human and environmental wellbeing.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

On the surface, slow fashion appears to embrace aspects of mindfulness practice, but a careful and close examination determined it is not a conscious engagement. Despite this ironically suggesting mindlessness, slow fashion has the potential to leverage mindfulness more holistically and consciously. It can be embraced as a methodology for slow fashion practice by engaging the theory and practice of mindfulness, and in doing so, it may lead to a more extensive practice of slow fashion. After deep exploration into slow fashion and mindfulness, the research broached the surface of a theory referred to in this thesis as collective mindfulness, which is proposed as having the potential to flourish from the slow fashion movement through a process of organic dissemination from individual mindfulness practice. The inherent social components of mindfulness can nurture individual practice toward collective engagement and a sharing of knowledge to potentially enrich the practice of slow fashion and grow to thrive in other aspects of life. The place of mindfulness within slow fashion emerges amongst the slow values and practices. From the various viewpoints in the fashion construct, the practice of slow fashion infused with mindfulness practice may differ in application, but the key components remain constant as guiding criteria. Therefore, each stakeholder throughout the fashion cycle would be committed to the same overarching ethos, which may require formally consolidating slow, mindful fashion principles for accessible industry reference.

Slow fashion is a holistic approach, whereby uniting slow design, production and consumption is critical to the optimal function of the movement. It relies on the commitment and accountability of designers, producers, makers and consumers. The slow fashion criteria developed in the literature review is relevant to multiple viewpoints including slow consumers. The importance of slow consumption and the consumer actively participating in the movement is stated in the theory but not deeply explored. There did not appear to be a clear method as to how slow consumption may be effectively undertaken by consumers in the literature, or a clear and proven engagement with
consumers amongst the slow fashion labels examined, as they typically favoured a slow production focus. Understanding the consumer practice is important as slow fashion is also about a fashion practice of wearing, therefore, there needs to be a slow fashion consumer market and a clear understanding of where slow fashion labels and their outputs sit within the fashion system. Can a garment style crafted by Alabama Chanin be as enduring as the iconic Chanel suit?

The critical analysis of slow fashion undertaken in this thesis contributes to the growing understanding of slow fashion theory and slow aspects within other areas of fashion culture. Slow fashion is the result of a critique of the current predominant fashion system. It is a critique of the way in which natural resources are overused or damaged, how fashion companies and institutions reinforce overconsumption, overproduction and disposable fashion culture, how quality craftsmanship has diminished in areas of the industry and how fashion supply chains are shrouded in mystery and bad practices to the detriment of human and environmental wellbeing. Traces of slow, mindful behaviour exist in the history of clothing and fashion with acts of conserving fabrics and consuming slowly. Signs of various slow and mindful values and practices are also evident in the current fashion system; therefore, attention has been drawn to a wider, contemporary slow garment making space that – for the purposes of this thesis – encompasses haute couture, artisanal fashion, slow fashion and slow clothing. Although these areas differ from each other, they correlate over aspects such as a deep, shared engagement with craftsmanship and a depth of consciousness about materials, clothing construction and the tangible and intangible value of well-crafted garments.

At this point the name ‘slow fashion’ could be called into question and a debate presented on its accuracy in representing the movement. However, the sustainable and ethical fashion space is not the only context in which this movement operates, as it is also situated within the overarching slow culture movement. Slow fashion’s alignment with slow culture provides an important contextual
foundation for the movement by clarifying its ethos and highlighting the historical and cultural underpinnings of its values and practices. Slowness also connects with the notion of traditional, slow garment making, which commenced with pre-Industrial Revolution, hand-crafted garment processes. Therefore, slow fashion means a connection to slow culture, a return to some of the fundamental elements of garment craft and a connection to the enrichment of human and environmental wellbeing. With regard to the use of the term ‘fashion’, although the movement opposes the profit and growth focused principles commonly held in the industry and the ingrained fashion component of perpetual change, slow fashion still functions as a subsection of the global fashion system.

Many levels of fashion design exist and sit alongside areas of fast or slow fashion within the global fashion system. It is not as definite as simply sustainable or unsustainable. However, as the scope of this study emphasises the overarching sustainable and ethical fashion movement, the discourse aligns with the significance of slow fashion as an alternative to fast fashion, but not as a direct opposite. Yet in the industry of fashion there are conflicting opinions about fast fashion. Fast fashion is accepted as part of the global fashion system, which indicates a portion of the industry does not consider it to be detrimental. In the realm of slow, ethical, eco and sustainable fashion, fast fashion is condemned as the source of copious damaging practices effecting the health, and general wellbeing, of the environment and humans. Slow is celebrated as positive, while fast is considered a negative trait. However, viewing slow fashion and fast fashion simply as different approaches, consisting of various practices, creates space to separate good practices from bad, regardless of the broader approach.

From this perspective, fast fashion has the potential to be a positive approach to fashion with regard to the environment and human wellbeing. The component of fast speed in isolation is not inherently bad, as the quick provision of fashion product to consumers is not damaging in itself. However, it is
the ‘race to the bottom’ of the market that has led to unethical and unsustainable practices, such as the use of sweatshops in an effort to present competitive retail prices to consumers (Root 2014, p. 633). Interestingly, Fletcher (2007) points out that despite the increase in garment production speed and product demand, the time it takes to grow the fibres, produce the textiles and, later, launder the garments remains the same. This indicates the fundamental values of quick growth and financial profit as the highest priority within the fast fashion industry is problematic. The prospect of sharing such values and practices across slow and fast approaches could, from this perspective, redefine the negative impact of fast fashion to facilitate a balance between people, the planet and profits within large companies in a mass market sector of the fashion industry.

Fashion is a structure through which ideas are absorbed consciously, often by designers, and unconsciously, usually by consumers, and disseminated both intentionally through institutionalised systems of fashion communication and organically through people across cultures and countries, in person and online. There is space for all types of fashion within the global fashion system; haute couture, designer ready-to-wear, critical and conceptual fashion, artisanal fashion and various forms of sustainability-focused fashion, among others. The malleable, subjective concept of fashion gives power to designers to equip garments with symbolic meaning. All designer fashion is an expression of personal ideals and imagination, whilst on a wider scale, fashion movements are essentially driven by values, which indicates there is a broad spectrum of what is considered fashion. Therefore, fashion movements of all varieties are effectively derived from ways of being in the world, perceptions of it or how it might be reimagined.

The foundation of values that define the slow fashion movement are embedded within the very practices of slow fashion production and consumption, demonstrated through mindsets and practical applications. Slow fashion garments, therefore, possess meaning both within the materiality of the items and conceptually from the designers, makers and, later, consumers. Unlike
various designer fashion which absorbs concepts and converts them into different forms based on the preferences of the designer, often engaging with the ideas on a fairly surface level, slow fashion functions at an authentic material level. This is oriented around the reality of the people, natural resources and craftsmanship of what is created, adding value through the pleasure surrounding the deep enjoyment of the crafted product and who was involved in its creation. Slow fashion, and potentially other forms of sustainable and ethical fashion, unifies clothing and fashion more seamlessly than other areas of the fashion industry. The distribution of clothing becomes a methodology for disseminating embedded concepts or fantasies throughout the industry and on to consumers, with contributions made along the way by fashion journalists, bloggers and theorists in a collaborative effort to make sense of creative work. Clothing and fashion, including fashion imagery, writing and other content, become vehicles through which knowledge and values are intentionally and organically disseminated to people throughout the world. The slow fashion movement disseminates slow, mindful values, including ways of experiencing life and the items we bring into it.

In uniting the values and practices of mindfulness and slow fashion, and in turn, also the broader sustainable and ethical fashion space, a key paradox of acceptance and action emerges. There is a tension between accepting the reality of fashion’s current unsustainability and acting on this reality in an effort to activate effectual change. Mindfulness involves a practice of non-striving and acceptance without judgement or rejection, engaging with all experiences whether positive, negative or neutral. In the realm of sustainable and ethical fashion movements this perspective appears counterintuitive, as they strive for a sustainable and ethical fashion future and champion the notion of taking action. Alternatively, there is an option to embrace a dual engagement with these areas by practicing acceptance of reality whilst undertaking actions, with a focus on the tasks at hand in the moment, that support long-term values and beliefs in alignment with the slow fashion movement. The key is to relinquish any hold on a specific version of a sustainable future outcome and trust that decisions, actions and reassessments engaging the criteria of slow fashion will
manifest a future in which we may sustainably thrive. Acceptance allows us to take action and progress.

Mindfulness practice also presents a paradox in the form of time; it is both a lifetime and momentary endeavour. This can similarly be applied to garments as they too exist within momentary engagements, passing through numerous phases within a lengthier lifecycle. Each instantaneous moment stands as an opportunity to be present, just as in each phase of the garment lifecycle there is an opening to be mindful. Although the length of a moment may differ according to personal perception, each moment is linked in our progression through life. To be present in reality when practicing slow fashion is to acknowledge the realms of both time and space; it is to be aware of what is occurring internally and externally in our immediate surroundings within the movement or within a slow fashion label and beyond, to what we are aware is transpiring globally in the fashion system, season to season. Furthermore, everything we attend to in the present moment is filtered through our existing knowledge, personal experiences, community history and social traditions. This allows us to make sense of the world in the present moment, as distinguishing what something is, what it means and how we engage with it is essential. Therefore, practicing mindfulness does not advocate disregard for a relationship to historical making traditions, traditional skills and techniques or various cultural practices in other communities, which may be beyond a designer’s immediate community of practice or local region, but simply urges refrainment from being absorbed with the past.

After implementing a method of carefully reviewing practice alongside theory, a correlation between the literature and the slow fashion case study labels was revealed. The ethos of each label resonated with the key tenets of the slow fashion movement and the company practices mapped to the slow fashion criteria derived from the literature. However, the contextual review also supported the ambiguity of boundaries between approaches in the sustainable and ethical fashion space, and
the tendency of labels to adopt broader sustainable or ethical brand images, values or practices beyond those explicitly characteristic of slow fashion that combine the varying approaches in unique ways. The theory mirrors this observation with the lack of clarity between various slow, sustainable, eco and ethical approaches, or widely accepted definitions. It appears the practice of slow fashion by designers and fashion labels has evolved alongside the research, or perhaps even prior to it, with practice informing the research.

The notion of practice has featured in an array of forms throughout this thesis, particularly in relation to slow fashion practice and mindfulness practice. A blurring of the boundaries between theory and practice has become evident through the application of mindfulness as a conceptual framework. Practicing awareness in slow fashion involves referring to theory in the form of research surrounding the sustainability and ethicality of fashion and its systems, and applying that knowledge in the actions undertaken in the practice of slow fashion design, production and consumption. Therefore, at times the theory is a practice, or involves a practice to engage with it or create it.

Practice is internal and mental; reflection and awareness. Practice is external; physical or manual. Practice is craft. Practice is independent, but also collaborative. Practice is personal and public. Practice is the process and the outcome. There is less distinction between theory and practice from this perspective and the convoluted nature of this relationship reveals the two strands are highly intertwined and should be persistently treated as a dual engagement.

Fashion is a malleable ideological construct that functions as a practice through the production and dissemination of material goods embedded with meaning. Therefore, viewing fashion, or an item of fashion, differently is to change it or apply new meaning to it. Fashion, and fashion practice, can be any number of things at once. The thinking (theory) becomes practice because we act through what we know, what we have experienced and how we perceive the world. If this can be undertaken mindfully, then we introduce new avenues of reality, both internal and external, as a resource to
augment, for the better, how we act and create in each moment. We constantly oscillate between theory and practice, and as they begin to meld into each other they bind in some areas more than others. They are still defined separately, but to affirm the dichotomous relationship between theory and practice is to also advocate they function entirely in isolation and do not exhibit traits of the other, which in the context of this thesis is inaccurate.

This study opens a variety of future slow fashion research pathways. With the hope of further developing theory on the slow fashion movement, further studies may entail reusing the methodology of reviewing practice alongside theory to explore a larger scope of slow fashion case study labels. Also, this research broached the topic of slow consumption, however, research expanding on slow fashion consumers and the practice of slow consumption is necessary. Additionally, a study of the implementation of mindful characteristics as actionable practices amongst designers, fashion labels, producers or consumers could be undertaken, based on their potential to be newly incorporated into slow fashion practice or further embraced consciously as a mindful practice. This direction could explore what a conscious mindful fashion practice may entail and how mindfulness could practically guide decisions and actions throughout the design, production, manufacturing, consumption and disposal processes, among others. This direction would necessitate addressing the realistic economic implications of choosing to holistically embrace mindfulness in slow fashion practice and the feasibility of this approach for different people with varying levels of privilege.

It would also involve exploring the necessary constraints of applying mindfulness to slow fashion methodologies. Some of the constraints, however, could be decided upon consciously and imposed personally; designers, producers and consumers, among others, may have the privilege of personal ownership and accountability in imposing these guiding boundaries in alignment with their personal mindful values. Limitations, such as unlearning past behaviour, are necessary but not rigid, as they
are flexible with our growth, knowledge consumption and our evolving critique as we make sense of
the world, together. The constraints can also enhance creativity, creating the necessary friction to
stoke our most creative solutions to enhance outcomes for the environment and human wellbeing
amongst the wider community. Mindfulness practice is personal and can produce various readings of
the content, which would then be applied differently according to varied interpretations. Therefore,
the practice will not produce a homogenous result for all, but still a unifying experience in alignment
with shared overarching values; as it creates space for questioning, deep contemplation and
thorough awareness as opposed to mindlessly carrying out ingrained habitual actions void of
reflection, re-evaluation and course correction. This study initiates a discourse surrounding the
strength of united methods, whether currently occurring subconsciously and lacking elucidation or
showing potential to be leveraged. It opens a pathway for exploring the potential to unite other
approaches emerging amongst the environmental, ecological, slow, ethical and wellness move-
ments where values and practices may coincide. Future theoretical research into some of these other areas
may further elucidate and strengthen the theories within the sustainable and ethical fashion space.

This thesis demonstrates embracing mindfulness consciously and holistically has great potential to
enrich the slow fashion approach in its ability to address social and environmental issues resulting
from fashion production and consumption. Mindfulness is not the end goal however; it is a
perpetually accessible state of being for the transition to a more sustainable functioning of not only
the fashion and textile industries, but a more sustainable way of life, given the extensive reach of
fashion and the necessity of clothing for the majority of communities across the world. The fashion
industry, like other creative industries, contributes to the cultural landscape of stories, perceptions
and knowledge that shape the world. As a powerful influencer, the fashion system has the wide-
reaching capacity to redefine the narrative of mindless design, overproduction, overconsumption
and careless disposal of garments, and change the status of fashion as a highly polluting industry.
Mindfulness and slow fashion have the space to evolve within the fashion system, to awaken greater mindfulness of the environment and human wellbeing in the creation and enjoyment of fashion.
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