



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT

Titel der Masterarbeit

„Fashion designers in Barcelona –

A multidimensional study on the philosophy of selected Catalan fashion designers
and the representation of their fashion design on the body“

verfasst von

Emanuela Holder

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2013

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 066 656

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:

Masterstudium DDP CREOLE

Betreut von:

Prof. Dr. Thomas Fillitz

Table of Contents

1 Introduction.....	4
2 Theories and methodologies applied.....	7
2.1 Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's “The mindful body” as a theoretical approach.....	8
2.1.1 The individual body in fashion design.....	9
2.1.2 The social body in fashion design.....	12
2.1.3 The body politic in fashion design.....	13
2.2 Pierre Bourdieu's habitus and capital concepts.....	15
2.2.1 The capital concepts.....	15
2.2.2 The habitus	18
2.2.3 Taste and aesthetics	20
3 Conducting ethnographic fieldwork – Methodologies.....	23
3.1 Prior to fieldwork - Preparation and documentation.....	25
3.2 Procedures during fieldwork.....	28
3.3 After fieldwork - Post-fieldwork analysis and writing.....	30
3.4 Conducting interviews – Questionnaire.....	31
3.5 Outcome of the interviews.....	33
4 Short history of the Spanish fashion business.....	34
4.1 The Catalan fashion industry.....	36
4.2 Fashion designers in Barcelona.....	37
5 Selected young and vibrant fashion designers and their work in Barcelona	39
5.1 Aloma Lafontana.....	41
5.1.1 Personal data.....	41
5.1.2 Fashion and the fashion designer.....	43
5.1.3 Impact of fashion design on the body	44
5.1.4 Entrepreneurship.....	45
5.1.5 Artistic projects.....	49
5.2 Alexis Reyna.....	54
5.2.1 Personal data.....	56
5.2.2 Fashion and the fashion designer.....	59
5.2.3 Impact of fashion design on the body.....	63
5.2.4 Entrepreneurship.....	65
5.3 Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso.....	67

5.3.1 Personal data.....	68
5.3.2 Fashion and the fashion designer	69
5.3.3 Impact of fashion design on the body.....	73
5.3.4 Entrepreneurship.....	74
6 Analyzing fashion designs in theory and practice.....	77
6.1 Fashion system	77
6.2 Fashion and the body.....	89
6.3 Impact of garment on the body.....	98
6.4 Fashion and identity.....	104
6.5 Fashion and gender.....	108
6.6 Fashion and representation.....	114
7 Conclusion.....	119
8 Bibliography	121
8.1 Monographs and articles from journals and collections.....	121
8.2 Internet links:.....	129
8.3 Appendix.....	132
8.3.1 Alexis Reyna's fashion design.....	132
8.3.2 Aloma Lafontana's fashion design and art projects.....	134
8.3.3 Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso's fashion design	137
8.3.4 Abstract.....	139
8.3.5 Outcome of the study.....	142
8.3.6 Questionnaire.....	144
9 Curriculum Vitae.....	150
10 Declaration.....	153
Illustration Index	
Illustration 1: Alexis Reyna's "Hot Shade" autumn/winter 2012/2013 collection.....	132
Illustration 2: Alexis Reyna's "Unleashed" spring/summer 2011 collection.....	133
Illustration 3: OSLO shop in Torrent D'Olla/Gràcia/Barcelona.....	134
Illustration 4: Aloma Lafontana's successful dress from the summer 2011 collection.....	135
Illustration 5: Parts of Aloma Lafontana's "11 thoughts" art project.....	136
Illustration 6: Madre Mía's "Urban Chic" fashion design.....	137
Illustration 7: Madre Mía's "Brides" fashion design.....	138

1 Introduction

Fashion is the mirror in which societies and cultures are recognizing and identifying themselves. They live up to certain standards that are prevailing within their dimension. It is at the same time a cultural phenomenon and a very complex psychological and social process of negotiation which reflects the social, economic, sexual and political attitudes of an era. Even though fashion conveys a rather aesthetic character, it implies at the same time an ethical aspect. Furthermore it reaches out to a whole new dimension on an anthropological level, which serves the individual within the society utmost. In Western as in non-Western societies equally the meaning of fashion is based on similar characteristics. It protects the individual's intimacy, reflecting the human dignity and creating an environment of serenity and equilibrium within the society.

But how is fashion translated into everyday's dress? On the one hand it is more than obvious that fashion explains the body to a certain degree while producing discourses on the body which are furthermore transmitted into the dress through the bodily dressing of the individual. This phenomenon is also referred to as the embodiment of fashion. On the other hand one has to consider different strategies on the micro level, i.e. how the individual experiences dress, as well as on the macro level, i.e. economic strategies and marketing, which have to keep the body in mind when designing, promoting and selling fashion. Hence dress in everyday's life is about living in and acting on the body.

It is clear that fashion in itself is very divers. Different waves at its core reflect consumeristic, hedonistic or subjectivistic inclinations, i.e. belonging, but there are also such that focus more on the promotion of a culture of beauty and dignity of the human being and of distinct ways of expressing a social origin. Besides anthropological concepts in fashion and design are becoming more and more important nowadays. The individual, or to be more precise the individual's body, plays a major part in the whole process of fashion design. The item of clothing would lose its

importance without the body, as well as the body would be naked without the garment. In fashion the body and the apparel not only complement each other but they exist through the symbiosis of their counterparts, that is to say, they co-depend on each other.

Furthermore fashion is not about the ceremonial garment or about the typical clothes of a region or country, which basically embody and preserve past times and rituals. It is most of all about the constant, dynamic and irresistible change that is part of any societal, political and economic development. Fashion is thus continuously progressing and is full of impulses from within and without not only in order to satisfy a necessity but also in order to lead to an unsteady change. A change which shows the profound and compact system of the concerned society with all its different social classes, its wide and explicit tastes and trends, as well as its economic success.

Today nevertheless fashion is neither primarily maintained by a prosperous economic system or the trends of certain social classes and subcultures, nor can one claim that fashion matters only to those who choose to participate. This phenomenon is taking place on a global scale and is not solely dedicated to a world of *haute couture*, design brands, glossy magazines and the upper social elites. At the same time fashion plays an essential part in our construction and representation of a social identity, a social class system, sexuality, age, ethnicity, gender, as well as cultural preferences.

However this substantial paper is the outcome of private interests on the topic that is going to be investigated from an anthropological angle. As an anthropologist I conducted my ethnographical fieldwork among young, vibrant, meaningful but still not mainstream fashion designers and their fashion designs in Barcelona. The thesis is thus on the one hand dedicated to the study of fashion and body, that is to say, fashion theory, representation and progress over the time in general and explicitly in Barcelona. On the other hand I regard the study of the fashion designer's philosophy expressed in the investigated fashion design, as well as the interconnectedness between body and garment, as crucial. I chose to concentrate on little, almost unknown brands in own production, due

to the uncomplicated and more reliable entry to the field of research. The time constraint of approximately one year during my academic exchange stay in Barcelona is another decisive factor of my choice that will help me to gain insight to my topic in a more accurate way. The fieldwork was mostly conducted in the alternative but at the same time vanguard neighborhoods of Gràcia and Ciutat Vella in Barcelona. These sites offer a large variety of boutiques and markets that sell fashion and other accessories from in-house manufacturing. At the same time, I established contact with three different fashion designers in Barcelona, observed their work, conducted interviews, analyzed techniques and trends, as well as the fashion designer's philosophy behind the design.

As an anthropologist I will try to scrutinize the *habitus* of the concerned fashion designers, who maintain a certain position in the field of interest. Thus Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* and capital concepts will take effect here. The interaction of the clothing with the body of the individual and the kind of emanating power, is another major focal point in my thesis. In this regard I decided to apply and verify the theory based on Margaret Lock's and Nancy Scheper-Hughes' article "The mindful body". The threefold dimension of their body concept, i.e. the individual body, the social body and the body politic will be analyzed in detail, regarding the interaction, appearance and representation of body, garment, and fashion design, thus the fashion concept. The theoretical background will comprise in addition numerous scientific articles from different disciplines, as well as other anthropological and sociological works by Georg Simmel, Roland Barthes, Arjun Appadurai, Igor Kopytoff, Joanne Entwistle, and Anne Hollander, amongst others, in order to assess aspects of fashion, body, identity, gender and representation. Visits to the Disseny HUB Museum for Textiles and Clothing in Barcelona and to several fashion events in 2012 broadened the ethnographic fieldwork. Internet research of specific fashion designers and their designs was also included and accounts for a decisive part in order to gain insight to the history of fashion, trends, brands, styles, textiles, designs and technologies used.

My choice to apply several terms to describe dress, i.e. cloth, clothing, garment, apparel, was made in an effort to be inclusive and to avoid a frequent repetition of a word, even though overlapping meanings appear in the works reviewed here. It is self-explanatory that I will clarify in advance cases that will not apply to this meaning.

Eventually the research question is thus to some extent oriented to illuminate how the fashion designer's trajectory, thus her or his philosophy and *habitus*, is reflected in her or his design and ambition in fashion, while comparing the empirical data with the theoretical background. In addition I will dedicate a substantial amount of time in order to go one step further and to assess carefully the interaction between the body and the dress that emanates from the investigated fashion patterns and designs. Thus in conclusion it can be said that the verification of the fashion designer's philosophy and the interplay between the dress and the body is going to be examined in this regard throughout the thesis.

2 Theories and methodologies applied

The following chapter will illustrate and discuss in detail the theoretical background of the thesis. It is partially based on Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' threefold body dimension as well as on Bourdieu's *habitus* and capitals concept which will complement the theory. I will refrain from a multidimensional combination of two different theoretical approaches as it would go beyond the scope of a master thesis.

2.1 Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's "The mindful body" as a theoretical approach

Even though Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's article "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology" appeared in 1987 its timeliness should not to be underestimated. The wisely chosen title "The mindful body" already indicates the obvious and nowadays prevalent connection of body and mind and their interrelatedness. The new aspect in their article is the threefold dimension of the body that they are applying. The individual body stands at the base of the imaginary pyramid and describes the individual's body self, i.e. the experiences between mind, matter, psyche, and self, amongst others, which mainly determine one's attitude towards the body and oneself. The social body is the next level that can be experienced by individuals. Its main advantage is to think about nature, society, and culture via the social body. This dimension of the body is already known by previous research done by Mary Douglas. Douglas is of the opinion that the human body is "taught" to individuals by society and that it is based on social experience. Thus she argues that by understanding how the body works, we understand how the society works. Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's argumentation is very much based on Douglas' notion. They affirm that the way the body is experienced in sickness or in health is similar to how the society is dealing with corresponding situations. Finally, the last dimension of the body refers to the body politic. Hereby the authors describe the level of control and power which is exercised from the respective society on the individuals, i.e. the whole rules and regulations apparatus which concerns the private and professional lives as well as the ethics of its members (Douglas 1971/2004: 9-13; Scheper-Hughes/Lock 1987: 6-8).

After all an anthropology of the body fundamentally comprises a theory of emotions, too. Emotions affect the way the body is experienced in good as in bad times and they are directly transferred to how the social body and the body politic will respond to it. Depending on the society or culture one grew up in but also on the individual capabilities the outcome will vary. Emotions include feelings and cognitive orientations, public and private ethics as well as cultural ideologies. At the same time

emotions can be comprehended as the only competent link to connect the mind with the body and the individual with the society. Merleau-Ponty asserts that the body is playing a major part in our distinct ways of perception. We comprehend the world through our perceptive conscience, meaning that we understand our world through the body which is playing an active part (Merleau-Ponty 1957 in Entwistle 2002: 44-45; Scheper-Hughes/Lock 1987: 6-8, 28-29).

The three bodies do not only describe three different levels of how the body is experienced but also three distinct ways of how to explore the body. They are liable to a constant struggle between the three dimensions in order to merge. Thus a major conflict is constantly given, which is hard to reconcile. Depending on the situation one body extent or the other will always outweigh. The closest situation which could describe a well-balanced status of the individual, would be emotional stability. According to Scheper-Hughes and Lock it is the only way when the mind and the body as well as the individual and the society not only connect but harmonize. Similarly fashion and fashion design are not only concerned with the dress but basically with the person in a certain society or culture who is going to wear it. Hence the body can be considered as a major part and a bond in the whole process from having an idea about a dress, drawing the pattern, choosing the fabrics, sewing and fitting (Scheper-Hughes/Lock 1987: 28-29).

Furthermore I am going to specify the connection of Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's theoretical approach with my empirical purpose.

2.1.1 The individual body in fashion design

As already mentioned the individual body is concerned with the experienced body self, by means of how the mind, psyche, self or soul affect the body. Thus on explored and applied measures of coping with conflicts but also with well-balanced times. It is obvious that the fabric, the colors and the final fashion design applied depend a lot on the fashion designer who invented and visualized them. I assume that due to our socialization process, and the experience that we gather during the

course of our lives, we develop certain tastes. Past experience is highly influenced by the society one grew up in, therefore by the values, norms, and morals one was brought up with. Personal as well as professional experience and the way one is coping with conflicts and at the same time with harmony are remarkably interconnected with each other. Therefore each artist's work of art describes also the prevalent physical and psychical condition one was in at a particular time. Fashion designs can be lively, colorful, vibrant, severe, minimalistic, dreamy, playful, sporty, useful, classy or casual amongst others. Every choice made is the consequence of some previous action or experience. Consequently most of the individuals are going to dress according to their personal or/and professional condition in that specific moment. Besides one will choose the color, the pattern and the clothing according to how she/he feels within the body. This attitude will be clearly expressed through the combination of garment on the body, even though the individual might not be aware of it. Depending on the combined accessorizes, i.e. shoes, jewelry, cosmetics and haircut, the person will convey a certain position. The posture will change as well as the mimics and the gesture. But to draw certain general conclusions from what people are wearing about one's character or purpose should be applied with caution, as individuals are as different as tastes, experience or circumstances.

In addition the relation between the individual and the society is often based on the natural opposition between the demands of the social or the moral order and the egocentric drives, wishes and impulses of the individual. The more hierarchical the society is in which one lives in, the more difficult it may get to satisfy those individual drives and wishes. Unlike in many non-Western cultures experiences of more than one self, i.e. schizophrenia, multiple personality disorder, borderline etc., are medicated and not regarded as pursuable for a so called well-balanced lifestyle. Body images that prevail in Western societies also play a crucial role how one's body self is experienced. The interdependence between the body and the environment, including internal and

external perceptions, memories, affects, and cognitions represent the body image a person usually has. Bruch assumes that the body image is responsible for the body structure and that created images are a reflection of various psychological constructions. Gilman argues in her book on plastic surgery that we are not solely those looked upon and judged. We rather tend to look upon and judge on others by creating visual categories that provide meanings for us. The desire to become different emerges within this examination (Bruch 1973/1997: 212, 221; Gilman 2001: 334; Scheper-Hughes/Lock 1987: 13-16).

According to Blood the self is perceived as objective and autonomous, hence a rational and consistent subject. The individual is considered to be unique and to have an own inner world of thoughts and feelings even though language is transparent and understood by many from the same background. Furthermore personality traits which are mostly innate are seen as stable and consistent over time. It can be assumed that the body stands for a social entity and that in combination with the dress it is the outcome of both social factors and individual actions. Understanding the dress in everyday's life begins foremost with understanding the representation of the body within the fashion system as well as the discourse on dress and how the body is experienced and lived within the role dress plays in the presentation of the body self. Besides the dress involves practical actions directed by the body upon the body, i.e. ways of being or dressing. The analysis of dress as embodied enables to see the operation of power in social spaces, and how power impacts upon the lived body resulting in particular strategies on the part of the individual (Blood 2005: 30-31; Entwistle 2002: 39).

Fashion designs which represent the individual body are the type of clothes that we choose to wear when we feel the less obliged to fit a certain dress code. It can be dress that we would wear at home, light casual clothes or a leisure time outfit.

2.1.2 The social body in fashion design

The social body “is good to think with”, as Scheper-Hughes and Lock put it. It is trained depending on the concerned societies and it reflects how one is experiencing and dealing with good and bad times. When it comes to fashion the social body plays a decisive role. If the individual body was to embody one's individual personality, desires and drives that are many times opposed to the imposed goals of the society the social body is used to think one step further. It is externalizing the values, norms and morals of the concerned society. For instance wearing a colorful or elegant dress is suitable when going to celebrate a specific festive occasion, whereas choosing to wear some baggy clothes and even a hat is more acceptable within a private context. The communication that takes place, and which is expressed through the clothing and the body shows how Western individuals usually deal with health and sickness, i.e. show your body when you are feeling happy and healthy, and hide it when you are experiencing depression or illness. Unlike non-Western people who use their bodies in order to think about the world, we have never been encouraged to do so. The Western society rather sees the human body and the mind as some kind of commodity, that can be “reciprocated” in order to achieve self-realization, hence a certain prestige and position in life. Featherstone states that the body is constantly exposed and undergoing increasing work processes. The idea of surveillance through self-surveillance is one that has also been extended to describe the emergence of a new modern self that is increasingly called upon to regulate behavior, often by technologies of the body, such as diet, exercise and plastic surgery, to name a few. Hence there is a general tendency to perceive the body as an unfinished part of one's self that is open to revision, change, and transformation. The care about the body in terms of feeling good or being happy is rather connected to contemporary prevailing standards of health and body. Barthes detects correctly that many individuals are misled when considering current or future body images. The future self-functions through the perceived discrepancy between who we are now and who we can be in the

future. Besides he also argues that the white, flawless, thin and toned model in a magazine cannot be representative of any ideal. Especially since the model's bodies are their businesses and they work out at them in a full-time job. The main focus should rather be on self-acceptance as most of the times our bodies are fine just the way they are. It is clear that the improvement that should be applied starts first in our minds and will be automatically transferred to our bodies. Bodies are primarily a product of socio-historical discourses about women, sexuality and the female body. Besides society plays a crucial role in how women visualize their bodies. In the end it is up to the ones who feel affected and suffer to work on their well-being of mind and body, and defeat the unjust system, obsessed with appearance, and its vicious circle (Barthes 1973 in Blood 2005: 65; Blood 2005: 77-82, 113, 121, 125, 135; Featherstone 1991 in Entwistle 2002: 19; Entwistle 2003: 102; Scheper-Hughes/Lock 1987: 18-23).

Fashion designs that would rather be associated with the social body are not so strictly divided by gender roles as in case of the following body politic. I would link classic or casual clothes that are not too vibrant, elegant, shrill or otherwise noticeable to this specific level of discourse on the body.

2.1.3 The body politic in fashion design

The third body, the body politic, is considered to be the most dynamic part of the threefold dimension, due to its relationship of power and control that emanates from it. Scheper-Hughes and Lock emphasize that in addition to controlling bodies in times of crisis by intensifying certain measures of self-control and defense, societies constantly reproduce and socialize the kind of bodies that they need. Fact is that in many Western societies the culturally and politically correct body is the beautiful, strong and healthy one. Body decoration or enhancement, thus clothes become therefore the language through which one's cultural and societal identity is constructed and expressed. The nude body is rather used in order to express sexual publicity than strength and vitality like in some non-Western societies. The Western societies which mainly consist of health-

and body-conscious cultures ascribe certain attributes to the politically correct body, as follows: lean, strong, androgynous, and physically fit. Cultural values like autonomy, toughness, competitiveness, youth, and self-control are basically expressed through them. This Darwinistic view lies at the same time at the core of many disorders directed to the body that prevail in Western societies. Eating disorders and distortions in body images expressed in obsessional jogging, anorexia, and bulimia are some of the contradictory characteristics of Western societies. To be a self-disciplined, fit and productive member of the society and at the same time a self-indulgent, pleasure-seeking consumer is mainly responsible for this destructive character. Furthermore these traits are more strongly imposed on women than on men in Western societies (Bruch 1973/1997: 218-221; Maté 2003: 27-38, 96-99; Scheper-Hughes/Lock 1987: 24-26).

The body politic is strongly concerned with political ambitions that convey a level of power and control. Clothes that express the body politic are rather residing in executive positions with a certain amount of responsibility, but can also be found among costumes that are specifically designed for roleplaying. They can rather be referred to as uniforms. Uniforms are not necessarily ascribed only to the executive power within a state but can also be business suits, evening gowns or theater costumes. They transmit a certain level of authority towards the ones who are not wearing them. Sometimes uniforms might elevate a certain person's social background, due to its hierarchical attributes. Therefore I assume that when a fashion designer visualizes an uniform, the associations regarding the fabric, color, cut and design that is about to be applied, can be described, as follows: robust but not too rigid materials that allow a certain ease of movement, dark colors, elegant tight-fitting cuts that underline the body shape, and finally not too sophisticated designs that apply to certain standards.

2.2 Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* and capital concepts

I decided to partially apply Bourdieu's *habitus* and capital concepts to my investigation, even though contested by many, due to his cynical view of human things, because I regard this theoretical background as indispensable for my attempt to assess how the fashion designer's philosophy is represented in her or his fashion design. Besides he conducted in addition research on various fields that are related to my topic, i.e. fashion and taste amongst others. Thus his notion is a decisive tool that can be considered. At the same time I will refrain from putting the main focus on his theoretical background, due to its complexity and extent. I will explain and utilize the *habitus* concept in brief and employ it only as an addition to Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' body dimensions. Everything else would go beyond the scope of a master thesis.

In order to provide a better understanding for the reader I have divided this main chapter into subchapters that will deal a bit more in detail with the capital concepts, the *habitus*, and Bourdieu's notion of taste and aesthetics.

2.2.1 The capital concepts

The motive force of social life is the pursuit of distinction, power, profit, wealth and so on. Bourdieu's account of capital is an explanation of the resources that people use in such pursuit. The capital concepts can be most easily described as the product of accumulated history of a person that is partially innate and partially developed during the course of one's life, similar to one's trajectory. It becomes the most effective in a fictive universe of perfect competition where equal opportunities are granted to all participants. Capital in its embodied forms requires time to be acquired and developed, and depends mainly on the efforts that are undertaken by the individual within a social space or to be more clear a society. This space or field is constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation. Apart from that individuals possess different capitals in the field in which they

interact. They apply different strategies depending on their dispositions and hence take different positions in the respective space, which help them to identify each other. One can occupy various fields within one region at a time, but never two opposite ones. The position of an individual within the social space can thus be defined by the positions occupied in the distinct fields, thus the distribution of the powers embodied by the respective individual. The kinds of powers are powers that define the chances of profit in a given field. Alliances between opposite antagonists are not impossible. However those in dominant positions are constantly engaged in struggles of different forms with peers rather than with non-peers. Bourdieu illustrates three fundamental natures of the capital according to which it can be explained: cultural capital, economic capital and social capital. The fourth form of capital, the symbolic capital, can be considered as the final product of all three base capital concepts together. The cultural capital may be characterized by one's educational background; the economic capital describes one's materialistic background; the social capital is concerned with social connections; and finally the symbolic capital embodies prestige and recognition. The individual capitals are convertible depending on the attained level of acknowledgement achieved, i.e. cultural capital can be transmuted into economic capital under certain circumstances, economic capital can be changed into money, social capital can be also converted into economic capital, while symbolic capital displays the same financial capability (Bourdieu 1985: 723-724, 726, 736; Bourdieu 1986: 46-47; Bourdieu 1989: 17; Guillory 2000: 23, 28).

Furthermore I will introduce the mentioned capital notions in a more detailed way in order to ease its complexity. Cultural capital can be partially perceived as a state of mind and body which assumes embodiment amongst others. It can also be referred to as academic capital, which is in fact the combined effect of cultural transmission by the family and cultural transmission by the school. This crucial form of capital can be manifested into three forms, i.e. the embodied state, the

objectified state, and the institutionalized state. The accumulation of cultural capital in its most vital form, which is the best described by its embodied state, referring to one's educational background, is very much concerned with time. It requires a lot of personal sacrifices, self-improvement and above all time in order for its capabilities to develop to a maximum level. The embodied capital cannot be transmitted, bought or exchanged, unlike money, property rights or titles, whereas cultural capital in the objectified state is transferable in its materiality. The institutionalized form is to be refrained from here in more detail. As cultural capital depends the most on one's own efforts it can be viewed as the form of capital with the greatest weight within the system of strategies that are applied in the field (Bourdieu 1984: 23; Bourdieu 1986: 47-50).

The social capital describes one's actual or potential resources that are actively used in order to create a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. It is equal to a social network which can be helpful in regard to crucial information for private and professional utility. But its volume is not related to its quality. The quantity of the social capital that is owned by the individual depends on the size of the network of connections that can be mobilized and on the size of the capital (cultural, social, economic, symbolic) held. The social network that one creates is based on investment strategies which consciously or unconsciously attempt to establish or maintain social relationships (Bourdieu 1986: 51-52).

As already clarified the different forms of capital can be converted into economic capital and thus derive from economic capital. In order for the cultural and social capital to be transformed into economic capital a great amount of efforts have to be transformed into the type of power that is necessary in the respective field. Economic capital in turn provides access to a volume of goods and services, due to its monetary character, but by far not to all existing types. Some access can only be delivered via a distinct social capital of relationships or a cultural capital of valuable skills and knowledge. The interchangeability of the different forms of capital and the positions occupied in the

field is the result of strategies that become indispensable if the reproduction of capital is to be secured and reproduced. The different types of capital can be distinguished in respect to their interchangeability or their degree of transmission (Ibid: 53-54).

The last form of capital, the symbolic capital, can be regarded as a powerful interplay of all capitals that a certain person in the field possesses and manifests. The position that one is taking up in the respective field is earned due to the quality of capital that one embodies, and according to which one has earned a certain power and prestige. The symbolic capital is the type of capital which remains often unrecognized, despite its powerful endowment and attributes. It is the only form of capital that is not directly connected to the economic capital of the respective individual. The strategies which serve to accumulate the capital of honor and prestige shape one as much as they can shape and influence others who do not possess it. Symbolic capital is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition acquired in previous struggles. It is at the same time a power to impose upon other minds a vision that depends on one's social authority. Bourdieu emphasizes that symbolic capital can be easily converted into money or economic capital under certain circumstances and vice versa, thus making it an attractive capital to strive for in the field (Bourdieu 1989: 23; Bourdieu 1990: 118-120).

The combination of one's capitals is transmitted and visible via the *habitus*, which will be introduced in the following chapter.

2.2.2 The *habitus*

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* draws on Mauss' idea of the body techniques. He scrutinizes embodied experiences and their effect on daily practices directed at the body. The society one grew up in influences the most the way these experiences become manifest. Social change is as much visible and comprehensive in the daily practices as is one's social origin. Bourdieu has elaborated the concept of the *habitus* in order to avoid the endless conflict of objectivism and subjectivism,

which prevails in social sciences, be it anthropology, sociology or history. The incompatibility of these two perspectives leads to different world views that may treat social facts as things on the one hand, or reduce the social world to the representation that people have of it on the other hand, as Bourdieu justifies. The dialectic describes the aim of the *habitus*, which can be perceived in actions directed from dispositions of mind and body. The *habitus* is both a system of schemes of production of practices, and a system of perception and appreciation practices. Consequently *habitus* produces practices and representations which help to classify and differentiate. It should be mentioned that they are detectable only by those individuals who understand their social meaning. In addition the *habitus* functions below the level of consciousness and language and also beyond the control of the will. Practices are embodied in gestures, mimics and other techniques of the body like ways of walking, talking, blowing one's nose, and ways of eating. One's knowledge of the social world includes one's practical knowledge of the respective world which is manifested via representations (Bourdieu 1984: 466-467; Bourdieu 1989: 14, 19; Gremillion 2005: 19; King 2000: 417).

The *habitus* which is developed in practice is primarily directed towards practical functions. The practice is keeping the individual from falling back to subjectivism. Bourdieu explains the *habitus* as the locus of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*, “the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice and structure”. Social conditions of a particular class produce the *habitus*, which can also be explained as a system of durable dispositions intended to function as structured structures. It contains all the features which determine a particular class in a specific field. The *habitus* is a product of history which accumulated all kinds of practices and schemes based on experience. It differs from individual to individual and it is not static. The person who we are today is at the same time the person we were yesterday, influencing the present consciously as unconsciously. The *habitus* which embodies history can be regarded as “the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product” (Bourdieu 1990: 52-56; Ekelund 2000: 230-

231; Pizanias 2000: 158).

The *habitus* defines oneself, especially one's position in the field. A class is not only specified by one's occupation, income, educational achievements but also by a sex-ratio, by its geographical location and by a whole set of other features which help to distinguish individuals from each other. Besides people in the field are not exclusively characterized by the *habitus*. But it is true that depending on the conditions of the *habitus* one can build a space whose three fundamental dimensions are described by volume of capital, composition of capital, and its ability to change over time. The *habitus* can be basically justified as the relationship between the capacity to produce practices and the capacity to distinguish between these practices. The previously mentioned *opus operatum* and *modus operandi* are found in all properties with which individuals and groups surround themselves, i.e. books, clothes etc., and in which they manifest their distinction from each other. Hence the *habitus* contains embodied dispositions which organize the way individuals see the world and act in (Bourdieu 1984: 102, 114, 170, 173; King 2000: 422-423).

Finally it can be summarized that the *habitus* stands for a relationship between aims that are established between practices and situations. It generates meaning through categories of understanding and estimation. Bourdieu established a formula which explains its notion the best, as follows: “[(*habitus*) (capital)] + field= practice” (Bourdieu 1984: 101).

2.2.3 Taste and aesthetics

Furthermore a brief introduction to Bourdieu's view on taste will be provided. Bourdieu visualizes how bodies display cultural capital that discusses sociopolitical distinction. Body size is at the same time associated with decisive elements of class taste which he describes as an embodied objective not only of classification but above all of distinction. Taste is obvious in bodily practices, i.e. to care for it, to feed it, to treat it. Those routines reveal the deepest dispositions of the *habitus* and at the same time reproduce the universe of social structure along which class, gender, occupational status

and age become obvious (Bourdieu 1984; Gremillion 2005: 21).

The eye is just a product of history which is reproduced via education. The distinct ways that one is applying, in order to identify a certain aesthetic characteristic on objects, i.e. cooking, clothing, decoration etc., is very much connected to the cultural and economic capital that the individual is endowed with via strategies of improvement and reproduction. At the same time the economic and social conditions are very closely linked to the positions in social space and to the systems of dispositions, correspondingly to the *habitus* of the different classes within a society. Bourdieu argues that the taste which the *habitus* produces and the kinds of social practices by which it is determined are deeply inscribed in the very bodies of the individuals. Taste classifies hence and is classified by the classifier. Simultaneously Bourdieu asserts that the science of taste is not necessarily connected to aesthetics (Bourdieu 1984: 3, 5, 6; King 2000: 422).

Taste can also be classified as a unitary set of distinctive preferences expressed in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces like clothing, language or body image. Taste in food for instance depends on the idea each class has of the body and on the effects of food on the body, that is to say, on its strength, health and beauty. Hence it shapes the class body. At the same time it controls all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests, digests, and assimilates physiologically and psychologically. It is made most apparent in the most natural features of the body, its dimensions (height, weight) and its shapes (round, square, curvy) which express in numerous ways one's relation to the body, i.e. the way of treating it, caring for it, feeding it, maintaining it, revealing the deepest dispositions of the *habitus*. The self-esteem given by a certain perception of one's own value, above all in regard to one's body, is closely linked to the position occupied in the field. Women who have achieved a certain social position refrain more from perceiving themselves below average in beauty. Beauty can be simultaneously a gift of nature and a conquest of merit. Bourdieu illustrates that women from the lower class of the society do not

value themselves enough, therefore do not engage into any practices that are directed at improving their body image. Very few attention and indulgence is devoted to their bodies which is not enough in order to achieve and maintain health, slimness and beauty (Bourdieu 1984: 173, 190-193, 206-208, 380).

When it comes to clothing the different societal classes can also be identified according to their choice of garment, even though it became harder to distinguish someone via the dress due to the accessibility of fashion styles for everyone. Among women and men purchases of formal cloths grow equally when one is moving up the social hierarchy. On the other hand the younger one is regarding the biological age, the greater the affinity to experiment with all new forms of dress, i.e. unisex garment, jeans etc., and to reject any constraints and conventions of dressing up. The proclamation of power over a controlled necessity contains always the legitimate superiority over those who are excluded from it, thus maintaining ordinary interests and demands. Taste identifies in an essential way people and things, hence classifies oneself and is classified by others (Ibid: 56, 200-202).

According to Bourdieu the continuous changes in fashion result from the numerous struggles internal to the field where it is produced and organized in terms of the opposition old/new or expensive/cheap amongst others. The fashion designers who also occupy a dominant position in the field of fashion are often forced to follow strategies which are imposed on them due to the harsh competition from other challengers. Even for the newcomers to the field of fashion design it remains extremely difficult to prevail and to establish themselves. However it depends on the buyer, if a new fashion designer will experience success in this field. Bourdieu identifies that the location where clothes are purchased varies between markets, popular department store, boutiques and up-market department stores. But the spaces to buy fashion assimilated a lot nowadays, since the combination of cheap and expensive cloths and accessorizes became more than popular. However

typical boutiques for luxury products or cheap second-hand markets still predominate and classify between the buyers (Ibid: 233, 378).

3 Conducting ethnographic fieldwork – Methodologies

This chapter is entirely dedicated to explain the used methodologies and their outcome while conducting fieldwork. Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas were the first anthropologists to introduce ethnographic fieldwork and therefore put the emphasis on the crucial need of qualitative methods within the discipline of anthropology. However ethnographic fieldwork remained highly controversial until the 1970s among social scientists. From then on its acceptance started to grow and conducting ethnographic fieldwork became an essential tool for all anthropologists. The basic concept of ethnography is one that contains ontologies, methodologies, and epistemologies. The study of language as well as of the man comes to the fore. Therefore an active participation is required. It involves intimate, face-to-face interaction with the participants in their natural setting. Apart from that perspectives and behaviors of the participants are reflected upon. Eventually a concept of culture is applied to the collected data in order to interpret results (LeCompte/Schensul 1999: 9-21).

However, at the beginning of each scientific undertaking one is experiencing an almost threatening solitude accompanied by one's chaotic efforts to accomplish tasks and find a way out. First of all a coherent research plan that includes readings, questions and methods has to be framed. It is true that the field can appear highly complex and chaotic during the initial stage. I have to agree that when I arrived to Barcelona by the end of August 2011 I had only a slight idea of what I would like to research upon. But I was also aware of the fact that my intention may not be feasible and that I might have to change the whole project. This complexity may remain, especially when one is conducting fieldwork within another society and culture as it is the case with me. The use of another

language than the mother tongue might lead to even more difficult circumstances with regard to comprehension. My Spanish language skills were somewhere between a beginner and a medium level at the beginning of my stay. I knew that I would have to improve my language skills and my knowledge about the culture during the first two to three months, in order to have a more positive outcome of my fieldwork, regardless of the field where I would conduct it. The more I started to deal with my topic of interest, which was fashion as a first choice, the more I began to visualize what I wanted to do. To find a theory that would be interesting enough and applicable was one of the first bigger undertakings that had to be overcome. In addition the awareness that the rules of academia do not always apply to everyday's life is raising further questions of concern. But through an efficient adaptation to the environment and a certain performance in order to acquire the knowledge needed, one learns to defeat and to cope with uncertainty. It is most of all crucial to concentrate on a topic that one entirely identifies with. In this case any obstacles that one may encounter may become bearable due to one's drive and motivation. I have basically chosen fashion not because I would consider myself a fashion victim, that may not be the case at all, but more because it has always been a topic that I wanted to investigate upon. Solely the idea of understanding better the complex system that is supported by so many followers was enough of an incentive to start dedicating myself to the topic. Usually a sequence that involves reading and other pre-field preparation like getting familiar with the new environment, the culture, the people, along with entering the field, observation, interviews, discussions, data formulation and so on is applied during the whole process of investigation. In order to attain self-assurance and self-confidence for the research project that needs to be accomplished I have to know what I am doing and why I am doing it. Furthermore, it is more than helpful to be aware of the fact that nobody possesses the full range of skills and resources, and that everyone has just control over parts. For instance nobody is a perfect member of a culture or society as well as nobody is a perfect speaker of a language. The

goal of ethnographic fieldwork is to find out more about the culture of groups of people. In my particular case the fashion designer's philosophy which determines the creation of certain fashion styles, and especially the representation of dress on the body, is to be analyzed. As already mentioned in detail Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' "The mindful body", next to Bourdieu's *habitus* and capital concepts, will frame the theory which I will verify during my ethnographic fieldwork (Blommaert/Jie 2010: 1-13; LeCompte/Schensul 1999: 21-39).

Furthermore, I am going to introduce three sequential stages that I have been following in order to achieve the best outcome possible.

3.1 Prior to fieldwork - Preparation and documentation

Before I decided to start conducting ethnographic fieldwork, I first needed to explore the real environment that I had chosen. This means that I had to get acquainted with the city of Barcelona and the neighborhoods that I considered to be relevant for my fieldwork. In addition, I was aware of the fact that one's position in the field concerning age, gender, culture, society, politics, education and language has to be clear before starting. I knew that by being European and conducting my fieldwork in an European country the obstacles would be easier to overcome than when being outside of this cultural and societal context. Thus, for a successful outcome, the macro contexts of the field one is interacting with, i.e. social, cultural, political, institutional, have to be assessed and known. This is crucial in order to understand the coherence that defines the situation, hence the micro contexts, and furthermore the object in a situated event. Even though I am probably more regarded as a stranger or a tourist than an inhabitant of Barcelona, I tried to get rid of this stigma in the best way possible for myself. But I also knew that the perception by others will still remain the same, due to my appearance. I considered this crucial step to be the most decisive one at the beginning and I was also conscious of the fact that it might take several months to achieve full

acceptance and awareness of the city, the culture and its people. Besides I was lucky enough to share the flat with a native girl from Barcelona and a French working girl with whom I spoke exclusively Spanish, no matter the poor language skills that I had in the beginning. Later I met my Peruvian boyfriend with whom I could continue practicing on a daily basis. Improving language skills is truly helpful to feel the comfort and the confidence needed in order to conduct proper fieldwork even though most of the interviews were conducted in English due to my better command of the language. However understanding the language is a decisive step towards understanding the culture and partially the interviewee.

My interest in the field of fashion dates back to teen-age times, when I first started to develop my own dressing style and to pay attention to fashion styles and trends. But to be honest I have never considered myself to be a fashion victim, that is, to be always and at any time dressed according to *“le dernier cri”*. I would rather see myself as a casual or classic wear girl during most of the time and a dressed-up one on special occasions. Likewise I tend towards having visions about certain style combinations or creating new ones. Just like the majority of people who are interested in fashion, too. It is a fact that taste is only partially innate. The rest is unconsciously imposed by the respective society one is living in. I had also always only certain fabrics in mind when designing my own new style and I never gave up on the idea of buying a new dress until I really found exactly what I was looking for. Furthermore I also imagined first how the new dress or skirt or any other piece of cloth would look on me or on my body. Thus my main motivation to focus on this specific topic for my master thesis is very much related to the idea to find out what makes people think about or vision patterns, clothes and styles, amongst others, and about its representation on the human body, respectively what it would convey and state. The previous knowledge that I possessed about the field of research was rather limited, considering the fact that I was more acquainted with cosmopolitan trends and styles outside of Barcelona. I have previously visited Barcelona but I have

never interacted in an intense way with the Catalan fashion scene. I was rather a consumer than an investigator by that time. But still the fascination with the city's unique and alternative approach to fashion left a mark on me.

After a certain period of time that was rather dedicated to knowing the environment better I had to start to interact with the people who might be of interest for my master thesis, that is to say the young, vibrant but still not mainstream Catalan fashion designers in Barcelona. I didn't choose to conduct my fieldwork with the multinational Catalan labels like Mango, Desigual or Custo. The main reason was the direct contact to the fashion designer and their individual fashion design that I was looking for. In the big multinational companies I could have never gather the kind of information that I was looking for due to their hierarchies. Besides the fashion designers within those companies have to follow guidelines in fashion design and are therefore restricted in their creativity.

The first established contacts to local fashion designers and their businesses were either via visiting certain shops or markets and speaking directly to the fashion designers or via e-mail. I met the three fashion designers that I conducted my fieldwork with rather by accident. Aloma Lafontana was a friend of one of my ex-flatmates. Alexis Reyna impressed me with his latest fall/winter collection 2012/2013 at the 080Barcelona fashion event. Madre Mía exhibited their technology enhanced fashion design at a pop art and design festival that I attended. I will dedicate more time to every fashion designer in particular in a later chapter.

My plan B, in case that I might have experienced irreconcilable difficulties with the people of interest, would have been to verify and analyze the websites of certain little fashion businesses in Barcelona. But this was fortunately not the case. However internet research remains indispensable during the whole investigation process, in order to gather information about the people of interest and the fashion system in general.

3.2 Procedures during fieldwork

The stage while being in the field and trying to collect all the necessary data is not only the most important phase but also the most difficult one. Soft skills that are more than required in order to have a successful outcome would be patience, endurance, stamina, flexibility, adaptability, empathy, tolerance, the willingness to lose a battle in order to win a war, creativity, humor and wit, diplomacy, and being happy about small achievements (Blommaert/Jie 2010: 24-60; LeCompte/Schensul 1999: 161-181).

Most of all it is important to note that collecting the data is part of a learning process, due to the interactions that take place and the particular kinds of knowledge that are exchanged between the parties involved. Main instruments for my observation process were eyes, ears, notebook, visual and other recording devices. The archive that I created contains everything that might be worthy for reconstructing the timeline of my itinerary. I am also aware of the fact that my field notes will be mainly subjective due to the daily condition I might be in when writing them down but also because I will more likely pay attention to something or someone my taste or my previous experience identifies with the best. I recorded the interviews that I conducted and transferred them to my laptop for transcription. During the interviews I took notes on interruptions through other people as well as on the atmosphere prevailing, and also on how the interviewees answered. Even though I am aware that revealing some traces of the fashion designer's position in the field, during and after the interviews, is hard to accomplish, I would be more than satisfied if however observable. Furthermore I know that interviews are as complex and as contradictory as everyday conversations, especially when conducted in a non-native language, for the interviewer and the interviewee. One might get lost in details, loose the line of reasoning, not find the exact words. Silence, hesitations and pauses are also very likely to happen. In addition I knew that I might misunderstand and misinterpret the answers of the interviewees as well as they might be confused by my questions due

to the language barrier.

Every interview yields something in unexpected ways and sometimes a failure can become a success. Anyhow, before encountering the fashion designers with whom I could conduct my fieldwork with, I had to face many times rejections or no replies at all from other fashion designers that I had contacted. But in the end I can consider myself lucky enough that I managed to find fashion designers who were truly interested to co-operate and to share their information with me. Another crucial part of the methodology applied was to design a questionnaire for the interviews that I wanted to conduct and the data which I wanted to collect. There is a version of the questionnaire available in the appendix. My purpose was to collect as much information as possible, so that I could prove or reject the theoretical approaches in the best way possible. I was also aware of the fact that even though the questionnaire was designed in a structured way, I might have to abandon my thread and adjust or improvise. I conducted numerous interviews with all three fashion designers which have been all recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions helped me to recall the time that we spend together, the atmosphere that prevailed, and the topics that we talked about. I could meet only two of the fashion designers in their actual environment for interviews, that is to say, shop, workshop or atelier. However the amount of information collected was not less or more due to the chosen environment, as I have suspected in the beginning. The only disadvantage that I experience while conducting an interview in a coffee shop was the noise that surrounded us and that I had to blank out later during the transcription. Even though I am not an expert in fashion at all, the fashion designers were more than interested to have an interview with me. They also found the questions that I have asked them quite challenging and stimulating. In the end I was more than satisfied with the outcome of the interviews. Apart from that I never really felt boredom among any of the fashion designers I interviewed. The only thing that was quite common among all was the fact, that even though they showed interest for the investigative part, they were not so willing to

meet outside of this context. I refer to the dinner that I offered to buy to all of them in private as a sign of my gratitude. I even insisted several times, until I left it up to them to contact me whenever they might feel eager to have dinner with me. Anyhow the experience I made with all of them was very positive, despite their reserved attitudes, which I would rather relate to a cultural trait of character.

3.3 After fieldwork - Post-fieldwork analysis and writing

Once all data was collected the learning process continues, while trying to assemble all jigsaw pieces into a master piece of work. The chaos might not be as big as in the beginning, but it still has to be sorted out, because reality is messy, complex and chaotic and it is reflected in the data collected. My proceeding after having transcribed all the interviews was to highlight the important parts and to make a summary of every fashion designer's story in particular. The summaries helped me to focus on the essential parts that were of interest for my master thesis. Along with other data collected from various sources, the jigsaw puzzle could be assembled little by little.

Bourdieu emphasized once on reflexivity in research, meaning that “the way in which the observer has an impact on what is observed, and the way in which it is observed, events themselves are captured in a real historical context, from which they derive meaning and salience”. Another way of using reflexivity in research would be the epistemic reflexivity that indicates that in order to be objective one must be subjective. Furthermore one must be aware of subjectivity because subjectivity is playing a role in the way in which one constructs objects. Objects are a reflection of the reality, as one sees, experiences and understands it. And since everybody interprets most of the things, happenings, and especially conversations in many different ways, one has to be aware of the fact that the own interpretation is just one way of seeing the world. Furthermore in case of transcriptions one should know that they will never be a perfect copy of the tape, because the way

that one transcribes contains already a certain bias due to own preferences. Coherence is another important aspect that has to be pursued, as it is associated with truth. Truth depends as well a lot on what is regarded to be the truth in the society or culture of interest. Especially when one is dealing with strangers the truth becomes even harder to assess. Sometimes interviews may encourage the interviewee to speak very openly about certain facts but sometimes issues might be raised that are experienced as very sensitive material, i.e. family background or own past (Blommaert/Jie 2010: 63-80; LeCompte/Schensul 1999: 147-160).

However chaos is the state of things and the perceived lack of structure and transparency is getting better the further one gets during the ethnographic fieldwork. The next chapter is dedicated to explain the main tool that has been applied during the interviews with the respective fashion designers. It will also help the layperson to understand better my undertaking and the development aspired.

3.4 Conducting interviews – Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been divided into three main parts, which were preceded by a few questions on general personal data, i.e. name, birth cohort, sex, marital status, highest education, involvement in the fashion business. The first part was dedicated to gather some preliminary information about how the fashion designer comprehended fashion and fashion design in general. It helped me to assess the previous personal experience that the individual made in regard to the fashion business, thus how she or he got to exercise the respective profession, the meaning of the job and the personal and professional development that was already in progress. At the same time I gained insight on the fashion designer's philosophy, drive and motivation, her or his concept of beauty, the ultimate goal in fashion and life, as well as on people that might have exercised any kind of influence on the actual career. In total the introductory parts was designed in order to provide me with some

information on the economic and the cultural capital of the respective person.

The second part was dedicated to the impact of fashion design on the body. It was very much connected to the type of approaches the fashion designer was considering in order to design a certain dress. In this particular case I mean inspiration that emanates from textiles, colors, body types and shapes, people that one knows or not. The patterns and final fashion designs as well as the representation on the body were of main interest here. Important was also the message that was transmitted via the dress. I considered this part to be the most decisive one because it helped me to verify or to reject the threefold dimension of the body that Lock and Scheper-Hughes posited. It was also useful in order to see if there is a connection between the two applied theories, meaning the individual body and the cultural and economic capital, the social body and the economic and social capital, and finally the body politic and the symbolic capital.

The third part of the questionnaire dealt with the entrepreneurship of the fashion designers, meaning the way they run their businesses, their collaborations with other people from the fashion scene and their perspectives for the future. I regarded this part as decisive basically because it provided me with some more personal and professional background information about the fashion designers. The support that they experienced from their entourage is very much important for how their attitude towards their businesses, respectively success in general, will turn out. It can be regarded as a control mechanism that is applied in order to verify if one is on the right path or not. Especially in superficial and competitive business honesty from friends and family, thus people who look at one in a different and honest way, is crucial. This part helped me to assess the social and the symbolic capital of the respective people.

During the next chapter I will explain in short the outcome of the interviews that I conducted with three selected Catalan fashion designers, Alexis Reyna, Aloma Lafontana, and Laura Morata from Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso. However, I am not going to summarize the results now but rather in

a following chapter. This is due to its context and a better comprehension of my undertaking.

3.5 Outcome of the interviews

I have conducted two long interviews of approximately two hours with Alexis Reyna and Laura Morata during distinct occasions. In addition I interviewed Aloma Lafontana three times, each interview lasting between one and two hours. In total I have collected data from seven interviews and more than ten hours of recorded material. The time span of my ethnographic fieldwork was from December 2011 until April 2012. Due to the busy schedules of the fashion designers meetings had to be cancelled and postponed several times, accounting for the almost 5 months of investigation time. Aloma Lafontana was the first to whom I established contact in November 2011. We had the first interview in December 2011, the second in February 2012 and the last in April 2012. Further contacts to Alexis Reyna and Madre Mía took place shortly after the 080Barcelona fashion event in January 2012, in case of Alexis Reyna, and in February 2012 with Madre Mía. I met both during February and April 2012, depending on their availability. There were also other meetings prior to the conducted interviews, but also in between, where I was basically introducing myself and my purpose to the fashion designers. In case of Alexis Reyna, for instance, I also joined him to his classes that he is teaching at Felicidad Duce, so that I could gain more insight on his multi-faceted personality. As already mentioned most interviews took place in an environment that was familiar to the fashion designers, like the shop or the atelier. In Laura Morata's case we met at a nearby coffee-shop to the actual store that was still under construction.

I have started with the necessary readings for my master thesis already by November 2011. I had to experience some phases of interruption due to my full-time job that I had started in December 2011 in order to cope with the living costs in Barcelona. However I managed to close my fieldwork by the end of April 2012 as planned, so that I could start with its evaluation. All interviews have been transcribed and reviewed according to the information that I was looking for, helping me to verify

the theoretical background. Once that the transcriptions were finished I could start to compare it with what I have already read and summarized. I will refrain from presenting the results in this chapter, simply because I consider it more adequate and more stringent during the fifth and the sixth chapter. During the next chapter I will give first a short overview of the Spanish or to be more precise the relevant Catalan fashion business, which I regard of help to the layperson to understand the outcome better.

4 Short history of the Spanish fashion business

The following chapter is supposed to provide a brief overview on the current situation of the Spanish fashion business market, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the topic. The constant search for innovative ideas, its rapid pace in terms of change in the world and the society is the most crucial phenomenon that awards universal importance to fashion in general. But what about the history of the Spanish fashion scene? Its dreams and realities that prevail and that helped to shape a whole industry and accounts for its voluminous market share on an international level so far?

Furthermore I am going to provide a brief introduction to the Spanish fashion landscape alluding to some of the most decisive events during the last century until nowadays. On the one hand fashion doesn't really seem to have any kind of barriers threatening its own evolution and improvement. It is constantly moving between its glamorous, fictional and creative world without experiencing a halt. But on the other hand it is damned to respect the emanating forces of the market, thus of the demand and the consumption, the technological culture and the prevalent laws. Figueras, one of the best known fashion journalists in Spain, who is also one of the founders of *modauniversidadempresa.com*, an organization that is dedicated to provide, to promote and to support professional education in the fashion business, explains the previously mentioned dualism

as some kind of a drive that benefitted the Spanish fashion industry. The Spanish fashion scene experienced some brilliant moments in the past, especially in the *haute couture* segment. Even though they were of rather short-term, they evoked a whole new world of upcoming designers, who tried to combine their ideas with art and all sorts of new technologies. However, conflicts and failure, especially outside the national market, did not hold the fashion business back from attaining further goals and from eventually promoting the incredible democratization of large and little enterprises and their designers, who persist nationally as well as internationally. The trajectories of some of the most estimated designers of *haute couture* like Cristóbal Balenciaga, Pedro Rodríguez, Manolo Pertegaz but also of regular high-class fashion like Antonio Miró, Custo Barcelona, Josep Font, Purificación García, amongst others, reflect the long and sometimes exhaustive development the Spanish fashion scene experienced so far. But the most crucial personalities and brands of Spanish origin on the international stage are probably Paco Rabanne and Manolo Blahnik. Their particular talent and passionate dedication helped to establish an international character and to create at the same time a unique and thriving etiquette “Made in Spain” (Figueras 2003: 11-13).

Anyhow one shouldn't forget about fashion businesses like Zara, Mango or Cortefiel, which offer in their worldwide existent stores contemporary fashion designs at affordable prices for everyone. They contributed to the fact that the international fashion scene has been revolutionized in general during the last decades. But since the main purpose of this thesis is neither dedicated to *haute couture* nor to high-class fashion I would like to emphasize from now on more on the Catalan fashion industry in general before I continue with the fashion designers that I have chosen as a focal point for my ethnographic fieldwork and thesis. Their particular style of combining arts, technologies and humanistic approaches aim at raising attention, and offering a completely new experience for, and a gaze towards, the body. Garment, body and mind are main goals in their endless process of achievement and recognition, as it will be illustrated soon.

4.1 The Catalan fashion industry

The Catalan fashion industry has always played a crucial role in the Spanish fashion market. I would say especially because of the Catalan textile industry that has been a flagship for the region in the 19th and 20th century, and the motor of its economy for a hundred years. Some of the most eminently respectable fashion designers like Antonio Miró, Custo Barcelona, Purificación García, Lydia Delgado or Josep Font are mainly of Catalan origin or have chosen Catalonia as their adopted country. Thus they have all established their headquarters in Barcelona. Furthermore Catalonia still produces a huge part of the Spanish fashion and exports a likewise estimated percentage.

The primarily founded runway Gaudí, as a counterpart to the runway Cibeles in Madrid, was one of the most important fairs that took place annually in Barcelona and where new and old fashion designers were presenting their newest collections. While the first one adopted the name of their famous and ingenious architect Antonio Gaudí, the latter one has chosen the name of the Greek goddess Cibeles. Unfortunately the runway Gaudí in Barcelona has closed its doors a few years ago, due to a lack of participating fashion designers. However other runways, like the 080Barcelona fashion event or The Brandery, which are taking place twice a year, presenting the newest spring/summer and fall/winter collections, are very keen on maintaining Catalonia's unique image and unifying cultural and artistic facets with the most vanguardian components of fashion. As a matter of fact there is a lot of rivalry between the two fashion capitals, Madrid and Barcelona, in Spain. But since Catalonia is still one of the main fashion exporters in Spain it would furthermore insist in becoming the next Spanish Milan. However competition is tough and the current economic development is leaving its marks on the business. Many fashion companies had to set up manufacturing plants in low cost countries as a means of survival. Besides The EU doesn't offer nowadays any specific programs to support retail, outsourcing or logistics, critical not only for

textiles but for many other industries and services, too.¹

It is more than obvious that such a decisive position in fashion lead to the spread of further exhibitions, congresses and festivals in the different arts sectors. As for the still unknown fashion designers there are several other competition shows that offer them a possibility to show their fashion designs, to receive feedback from experienced peers of the fashion business, and to network with other designers and textiles industries. Circuit² is another platform for fashion designers to exchange ideas. It has been founded in 1999 by the Brazilian Paulinha Rio promoting a new form of business that was combining fashion with arts and music and thus appealing to a much younger and hipper audience than Gaudí. Some of the nowadays well-known fashion designers from Catalonia, like Antonio Miró and Josep Font, presented successfully their collections there. But also other designers from other parts of Spain, i.e. La casita de Wendy, Locking Shocking, and also students from various design and fashion academies have at least got the opportunity to present and raise attention towards their collections. Unfortunately it closed its doors as well due to a lack of financial support (Figueras 2003: 89-95, 108-109).

However this new form of combining fashion with culture, which firstly has been established in Catalonia, spread very fast over to other countries and metropolises. Nowadays the Catalan runways or fairs, like 080Barcelona or The Brandery, turned into a real pilgrimage site for fashionistas.

4.2 Fashion designers in Barcelona

One of the questions that are equal in all sectors is that of the nature of a designer. Is it innate or can everybody with a certain amount of interest and effort can become a fashion designer? The answer is the same as in every other sector, too. Sometimes your qualification is the key into the chosen

1 URL:<http://www.080barcelonafashion.com/ca/home> [09. January 2012]. URL:<http://www.thebrandery.com/> [12. January 2012]. URL:<http://www.euc2c.com/graphics/en/pdfs/mod9/Case,%20Textile%20Catalonia%20vF.pdf> [01. March 2012].

2 URL:http://elpais.com/diario/2000/03/09/catalunya/952567667_850215.html [07. January 2012].

business, but sometimes it is just luck. In Barcelona one can find at least two famous fashion and design schools: La Escuela Superior de Diseño (ESDI) in Sabadell, which is approximately 25 km outside of Barcelona but which is a faculty that belongs to the Universidad Ramón Llull de Barcelona; and the Instituto Europeo de Diseño (IED) in Barcelona. The first one is a public institution, while the latter is a private one. Other design schools would be the Escuela Felicidad Duce Barcelona, known as Escuela Superior de Diseño y Moda de Barcelona (FDModa) or the Escola Superior d'Imatge y Disseny (IDEP).³

McRobbie argues that fashion design education is too obsessed to defend the Fine Arts status of fashion and that teachers in fashion design have looked up towards the field of Fine Arts for legitimization. The purpose of every fashion designer while generating ideas for a new style begins with making the right choices which hopefully will be adopted by a wider audience, according to Blumer. Inspiration comes as well from revising old trends and styles and also from considering other related disciplines that convey a lot of influence. But also current, promising trends are included in their research. Furthermore the fashion designers are more than prone to include further disciplines like recent literature, philosophy, and politics in their dress designs and express the spirit of the development. At the same time they are trying to translate the discourse. What is nevertheless stunning is the fact that even though many fashion designers do not even interact with other peers they end up creating incredibly similar designs. Maybe this is due to the fact that they all consider past looks and filter them so that they may fit into the present. Blumer emphasizes that in the end it is no longer the prestige of the elite which accounts for a trend, but it is rather the suitability of the design which has to appeal to the consuming public that makes up for its reputation. The prestige of the elite affects but does not control the direction of the taste. Consequently it can be said that not all prestigious persons are innovators and vice versa. Andre Courreges, a French fashion designer,

3 URL:<http://www.esdi.es/index.php?llengua=3> [05. December 2011]. URL:<http://www.ied.es/barcelona/home> [05. December 2011]. URL:http://www.fdmoda.com/en?set_language=en [15. February 2012]. URL:[http://www.idep.es/estudios/moda/\(area\)/fashion_area](http://www.idep.es/estudios/moda/(area)/fashion_area) [15. February 2012].

considers the job of a fashion designer to be a job like any other designing job that requires a certain skill in taste and proportion. It is all about problem solving. Courreges is seeking for grace and harmony and also for modern women to have a unique experience of comfort that satisfies their true needs. To him it is the person who takes up the most important part in the process, not the dress (Blumer 1969: 279-281; Courreges 1967: 138; McRobbie 1997: 86).

In Spain the universities are trying to adapt their syllabus in the most effective way so that the young designers do not only gain a strictly academic education but are also aware of the current and future responsibilities and necessities of the society. The society is constantly growing not only culturally but also industrially. Therefore it is considered highly important to support and to enforce that within the syllabus, so that the future fashion designers will not only focus on the business part but will also engage at the same time in acquiring a humanistic base. In order to become aware of the crucial needs and the differences of every individual and to design in a more humble but at the same time authentic way, designers have to focus most of all on the people's needs that they are trying to satisfy. Besides creativity and sensitivity towards design is never a matter of sole fabric, technologies and arts applied. Without its cultural and humanistic aspect it is doomed to fail.

5 Selected young and vibrant fashion designers and their work in Barcelona

Why do people do what they do? This is one of the main questions that preoccupied scientists from distinct disciplines and which still remains a riddle to discuss and investigate upon. Strauss affirms that human motivation should rather be understood as the result of interaction between circumstances and matters in the social world and their interpretation to people's mind. The most traditional models of motivation can be found in psychology. However human needs and motivation became a decisive topic to investigate upon also among cognitive anthropologists. Human needs have often been categorized as the desire for achievement, affiliation and self-esteem. But desires

are a cultural construct and therefore it is obvious that they cannot be applied on a general basis. In order to understand why people do what they do, it is crucial to consider their social, cultural and educational background. Experiences may be similar but they are interpreted in different ways as individuals apply different schemas to the resolution process. But it is not a universal fact that experiences are associated with feelings and human needs. D'Andrade accentuates that the fundament of engaging more in certain things than in others is not the result of culture and action. The only drive is due to own motivation, no matter where and under which circumstances one grew up. The way the human body is constructed, the way the brain works, individual interests or economic considerations, they all form the base and play a certain role in this construct. To him motivation can be defined as “an experienced desire or wish, followed by a feeling of satisfaction if the desire is fulfilled or a sense of frustration if it is not”. Cognitive anthropology still has to provide more concepts and methods, which scrutinizes human needs and its interrelation with motivation. D'Andrade suggests that a schema should be elaborated which helps to identify objects on the basis of simplified pattern recognition. The learning of motives is thus the result of a learning process based on experience that we already start making as infants via the socialization and the parental identification (D'Andrade 1992: 23-28, 37; Strauss 1992: 1-3, 8-14).

Bourdieu explains that as soon as an individual with an artistic approach becomes a known person in her or his field of interest and gains a well-respected reputation the symbolic capital improves. This can easily be transferred to fashion designers. The artistic field where they are acting becomes the social space where the faith in the value of a fashion design and the fashion designer's power of valuable creation is constantly produced and reproduced (Bourdieu 1987: 204).

The following Catalan fashion designers are the main protagonists in this master thesis and are going to be scrutinized on a more detailed basis, basically regarding their philosophy in fashion design and the representation of their dress on the body. I have divided the outcome of the collected

data according to the structure of my questionnaire that I basically applied during the conducted interviews. Every main chapter consists of subchapters that should visualize and help to comprehend the fashion designer and her or his undertaking in a better way. The personal data reflects to some extent the fashion designer's social and cultural background. The fashion and fashion designer part explains the respective philosophy of the fashion designs and also the approaches used by the fashion designers. The impact of pattern and body is directed to verify the interplay of dress and body, as much as it is applicable to Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' theory. The last part entrepreneurship is dedicated to demonstrate how the distinct businesses of the fashion designers are run, helping to understand the fashion designer's symbolic capital. In case of Aloma Lafontana an additional chapter on her artistic projects from her studies of Fine Arts has been added. I regard the chapter as decisive in order to comprehend her undertaking and philosophy better.

In addition I have included a table to the appendix which gives a clearly arranged overview of the outcome of the theories and methodologies applied.

5.1 Aloma Lafontana

5.1.1 Personal data

Aloma Lafontana is a young Costume Design and Fine Arts alumna from the IED in Barcelona, who is currently working in a small boutique, called OSLO⁴, that she manages with two other girls. I met Aloma by accident through a friend of mine who basically introduced us to each other. She has been one of the main fashion designers that I directed my attention to, while conducting my fieldwork and writing my thesis. This was basically due to the agreeable personal connection that I have to Aloma and her willingness to co-operate. I met her several times during various occasions

4 URL:<http://www.oslobarcelona.com/> [05. October 2011].

and conducted in total three long interviews with her, which were partially structured and partially unstructured and improvisational.

Aloma started to grow her current fashion business on a serious basis at the age of 20, due to an accident where she broke her arm and couldn't dedicate herself for a certain period of time to sculpturing. She was about to finish her studies of Fine Arts by that time, accounting for a huge part of her current cultural capital. In order to overcome boredom she bought a sewing machine and started designing skirts, which happened to sell successfully, and which gave her the incentive and the motivation to continue. Previously she got the fabrics from her mother and grandmother and recycled them into skirts. The experiment turned out to be successful in the end. In addition it also underlines Aloma's trait of character of constantly looking for improvement and satisfying needs and necessities of the society and women in general. In a nutshell it can be said that her being nowadays in the fashion business was due to an instinct that she followed, without knowing much about the tool that she was applying, but which turned out to be right in the end.

It has been clearly her grandmother who probably influenced her most in matters of fashion design, as she was a costume designer herself, constituting for her cultural and economic capital. Later during her studies in Costume Design she fell in love with Hussein Chalayan's⁵ abstract fashion design who was one of the few fashion designers who combined approaches from art with actual fashion design, that is to say concepts of sculpturing and fashion design. She also admits that his current fashion collections are not that much appealing to her as the previous artistic work done by him. The play with different techniques and technologies fascinated her in many ways. Furthermore Alexander McQueen⁶ was also someone who left a mark on her approach to fashion design.

As already mentioned Aloma's professional career started first in Fine Arts. Deducting from her narration during an interview sculpturing was a true passion for her, until she felt the need to

5 URL:<http://chalayan.com/> [05. December 2011].

6 URL:http://www.alexandermcqueen.eu/alexandermcqueen/en_GB [05. December 2011].

enhance a bit her skills and knowledge and continue her education with a master in Costume Design. It was the first time that she encountered and learned everything about the fashion world from scratch. “Dressing” the naked sculptures from her past studies completed the missing link in her life. Especially costumes, that weren't meant for the mass but rather were supporting own interests and desires, became a new, exciting and challenging passion in her life path transforming bit by bit her cultural capital into economic and later symbolic capital.

5.1.2 Fashion and the fashion designer

Aloma doesn't see herself more of a fashion victim than anybody else. At the same time she emphasizes that she doesn't like to follow trends but rather to create her own, by combining different looks, according to her own taste. Her style stands very much for her personality; modest, confident, very down to earth and with no need to set apart from others. She claims that everybody who cares about fashion can be considered a fashion victim, because of the distinct ways one decides to express her or his personality to the outside world. Even the ones who pretend to not care about fashion are into fashion, as they instinctively follow certain rules of dressing.

Fashion no longer has a political ambition to her. She mentions the lack of perspective nowadays, that could enforce changes in fashion with a massive impact on the society, as it has been experienced during past times, referring to women's emancipation. To speak of genderless fashion is not a new phenomenon to her, as it already started during the last century. The only changes that can be perceived, according to her, are regarding colors, if that can even be considered to be a change at all.

Aloma's signature is very genuine consisting of her own name: Aloma Lafontana. For Aloma the body, thus the individual, is frequently taking center stage when a design process is under way, but it is not the most decisive part in the whole process. Aloma's inspiration comes from society, to be more precise, women's necessity. For instance her most successful dress from the summer 2011

collection, which can be viewed in the appendix, was mainly designed in order to help women of all sizes to fit perfectly in a dress and to put emphasis on femininity. The advantage of the dress is mainly due to the fact that it accentuates the feminine body shape, while at the same time it conceals the problem area. She tried and succeeded to underline the feminine side without exposing the naked body to the outside world. It is all about the mix that transmits beauty and comfort, underlining perfectly the individual and social body in theory. Besides new fashion designs don't come so easily, especially when one is experiencing difficult phases in life. There are times when Aloma can focus and tries to experiment and make use of all the ideas that come to her mind, and there are times when inspiration is blocked. Generally she agrees that new ideas are always in her mind, but that it depends a lot on the circumstances, if they can be implemented or not. When she is about to design something she is in this mood all day long and she uses every single second of her inspiration to the maximum. Inspiration can also come to her when the least expected, like when showering, on a bike, eating or sleeping.

5.1.3 Impact of fashion design on the body

Aloma agrees that there is definitely a certain symbiosis occurring when the garment is connecting with the body. Equilibrium between the body and the garment is more than required, in order to express a certain comfort. But she also states that the body doesn't always come first to her mind when visualizing a new design. Sometimes she just wants to see if an idea works in practice. The fabric and the colors are also frequently chosen randomly, in order to check what merges and what not. It is more than important to Aloma to design something that applies to a larger variety of women. She takes into consideration the various necessities that can also be linked to the numerous body shapes. Aloma acknowledges that what she would like to transmit via her fashion design is femininity and comfort, justifying her cultural capital. It is all about looking nice and fashionable without suffering. She mentions the high-heels and the short skirts which mainly make one feel

uncomfortable. At the same time she dislikes the idea that women have to suffer in order to look nice, which basically shows her objective of paying primarily attention to the individual and the social body. For Aloma beauty can only be found inside of oneself. Therefore in the love that one has for oneself and then respectively for own actions. It is all about feeling comfortable enough in one's body. Regarding fabrics that she is using she also likes to experiment and to try new things out. The use of thick materials for her fashion designs is essential to her, in order to protect the naked body. But the textiles shouldn't be too stiff and also allow some kind of elbowroom. When it comes to colors she prefers brighter colors more than darker ones, because she relates brighter colors more to happiness. Even though dark colors in general are what the majority wears and would buy, as she admits. Aloma's fashion design applies perfectly to the individual and the social body of Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' theory, because it communicates especially a certain freedom towards fashion in general. Besides the combination of Fine Arts and Costume Design studies, which are both artistic studies, describe her cultural and economic capital and allude to her symbolic capital.

5.1.4 Entrepreneurship

The business, that is to say, the boutique with the integrated workshop is located in the famous, alternative, vibrant and stylish neighborhood of Gràcia in Barcelona. The efforts to make the brands and the shop popular and well known are accompanied by high financial expenses that are hard to cope with. Aloma mentions that the shop has been once in the newspaper, and that it helped in order to promote the store. Due to current economic and financial circumstances the success of OSLO is still written in the stars. The harsh competition from fashion chains like Zara, and Desigual, to name only a few, is another main obstacle that the little fashion designers are facing in this unsteady times. However they are not necessarily competing in terms of fashion design but of price range. In addition many fashion businesses abandoned the idea of creating own designs and are rather

purchasing mass-produced clothes imported from Asian countries due to its cost-efficiency. Many fashion designers, as it is the case for the OSLO girls, too, work additionally in other jobs in order to make ends meet. Many quit the unsuccessful business and engage in jobs that are not related to their educational background, according to Aloma's narration.

Aloma has her own website⁷, where she publishes her designs and artistic projects. In addition she uses several blogs in order to promote her work. Thanks to her previous studies that also lead her abroad she could establish some professional contacts, which later served her to sell her dresses in various European countries as well. Her national and international contacts are part of the social capital that she developed and which helps her to convert it into economic capital via her sales. Besides she used to travel around Europe not only in order to find new stores to sell but also in order to have the direct contact to her sellers, understand the market and the demand of the respective country better. It is more than only simply traveling to her. After finding the ideal location for her dresses she usually closes the deal by negotiating the price and the conditions. Friends who happen to live abroad are also a very important source that helps her to establish her business abroad, justifying the convertibility of social capital into economic capital.

As in every other job obstacles are part of the deal that cannot be avoided. The main obstacle that Aloma has encountered so far was mainly related to being in the position of having to run the business on her own and also focus on the creative part at the same time. Focusing on many, many things simultaneously leads to mistakes and also to burn-out symptoms, if pursued on a long-term basis. For Aloma phases like that are equal to suffocation, and a killer for inspiration.

Colleagues from the fashion business are regarded as important sources concerning the purchase of textiles or in terms of exchanging or recommending ateliers or the like. But as in any other business as well competition goes hand in hand with cooperation. Different individuals with different needs and goals in life always lead to a certain level of hostility in the market. Everybody wants a piece of

⁷ URL:<http://alomalafontana.com/> [05. October 2011].

the cake and only a few get to have one. But on the other hand challenges may grow out of miserable conditions or out of other opportunities. Especially in Barcelona, which is one of the mekkas for fashion design in Spain the competition is more than harsh. One has to distinguish oneself from the mass in order to become successful. That's also what OSLO is mainly about. Three people who do what they love and love what they do. Their focus is all on quality and not on quantity. Everything is hand made in Barcelona, directly in the shop, with no exception. The customer can see and feel all this vibrant energy, which is more than appealing and convincing. Running a well-known shop that pays the costs and helps the owners to maintain themselves in a certain kind of way justifies their cultural and economic capital which has been partially converted into money and partially into symbolic capital, due to its success on a national as an international level.

Presenting her collection at one of the famous fashion shows in Barcelona is one of the goals Aloma strives for. Even though it is not so easy to enter the stage, the ones who studied at famous design schools are more prone to be accepted to fashion shows than the ones from outside. Besides one has a better chance to establish oneself abroad as a fashion designer than in Barcelona, due to the good reputation Barcelona has and its exotic factor. The support at home is very poor and there is almost no funding available for young fashion designers. Aloma admits that this is also due to the fact that the fashion industry in Spain kind of stuck during the last 20 years and that the great and brilliant ideas almost vanished. Everybody is only copying from everybody and only a few focus on new vibrant and distinct fashion designs. The big multinationals like Zara or Mango are killing the small industries and the Spanish fashion market in general. She also speaks about the poor Spanish economy and the Spanish mentality of always exposing more than one really has, and respectively buying cheaper products in order to get good value for money, thus encouraging mass-consumption and -production.

Aloma agrees that there are many lessons we are taught during the course of our lives, but the most important one is to believe in oneself. Thus to continue one's path, remain active and not lose one's focus. It should be all about passion and about learning to deal with the obstacles that one encounters in life. It is also very much about being honest to oneself, and also about not being afraid to adapt when required. For Aloma it is more than clear that what she would like to achieve in life is related to recognition from the outside world and to get paid for what she does, so that she can continue to satisfy inner drives and desires and at the same time make a living from it. Success, recognition and prestige are crucial, because they help one to achieve a certain position in life.

Support from family and friends, as well as from teachers, is something that Aloma considers as a tool of control assuring her that she is on the right path. She also mentions her obsessive trait of character to want something so badly that she would do everything possible in order to get it. At the same time she mentions her endurance, thus currently trying to find a balance between her obsession and her passion.

Aloma also spoke about the future projects that she focuses on right now. Her main goal is to concentrate more on her art projects, as she finally wants to start to look for more quality in her life. An exhibition of her latest art project "11 thoughts" in Reykjavik, which will be introduced in a further chapter, is one of the biggest events she plans for the summer. She has contacts there from her various stays, and is therefore more than confident that things will turn out fine. The promotion of her art project is involving a lot of promotion at the moment, and will also in the future. Times are difficult, especially when one is not famous enough yet and surrounded by a lot of competitors.

Another project connected to the shop OSLO, which the three girls are about to turn into a bigger workshop, is based on the idea to teach. The collaborations with different artists from different backgrounds should thrive into a factory of ideas, equal to a think tank, where knowledge and skills can be shared and seeded. The approach should be also more distinct than the one used from school

times. More interaction and exchange should be encouraged. The girls hope to raise the attention towards the shop via this initiative, too. In conclusion it can be stated that the shop, the art projects, and the teaching approach account all for the symbolic capital that Aloma has already successfully developed so far. She is already recognized on a local basis and at the same time about to establish herself with her fashion design and her art projects on an international level.

5.1.5 Artistic projects

Since Aloma's education in Fine Arts is accounting for a big part of her cultural, economic and symbolic capital, I perceive it as very decisive to direct some attention in brief also to her artistic projects, in order to understand her endeavor better. Illustrations to all her past and present artistic projects can be viewed on her website.

Aloma gains inspiration for all her art or costume design projects from society, and especially from human mistakes and things that went wrong at some point and which she would like to fix somehow. She speaks of human banalities that prevail due to their universality. As already mentioned the body is not centric to Aloma when designing fashion but it remains important. Aloma's purpose is rather to build something around it and to play with it, than to expose it. At the same time she also refers to the fact that the gender aspect is no longer of interest nowadays. The fabric tells equally a lot about the meaning and can be the source of new ideas. Experimenting and playing with new tools like technologies, which is also very much related to uniting past and present worlds, remains crucial to her despite its economic factor.

The costumes and art projects that Aloma designs are still little undertakings which have not reached a larger audience yet. The future is still unknown in general because there are various options that she might consider, like designing costumes for the theater, dressing other artists in the entertainment business, teaching in school or cooperating with other artists. Besides she likes to make use of all the tools that she has been given along her way during her previous studies. These

attributes are also visible in her art projects.

Some of the cooperation that she has already experienced so far was with local and foreign music bands that approached her for costumes. Regarding the future Aloma would like to pursue more active ways of promoting her skills and knowledge by being the one who is contacting the artists. The only thing that is still like an obstacle in her way is the fact that especially bigger artists would like to co-operate with somebody who has already a name in the business. The video projects that she designed costumes for were rather recommended to her via friends or friends of friends. She agrees that as in any other business the hardest part is to enter the respective world. Once one has set foot in it, everything else comes easily too. Until now it has been difficult to establish her work outside of a close entourage. But her newest art project “11 thoughts” is going to be promoted on a wider basis, i.e. in art galleries, blogs and reviews at home and abroad. Aloma's goal is to reach a wider audience.

Rafel Forga⁸, one of her old class-mates from the studies of Fine Arts, is one of the main artists that she is cooperating with on a long-term basis. They share the same language, ideas, and support. And they happened to follow similar paths, even though they didn't know about it in the beginning. The co-operation with Rafel is very fruitful and the two of them are completing each other in many ways. She also explains how rare it is to encounter someone who shares the same interests and ideas in such an intense way.

The path that Aloma already followed when she was at the beginning of her studies, is still the same that she is pursuing nowadays. It is just that she improved a lot. This purpose is pursued and visible in her fashion designs as in her art projects. She admits that she will never stop as long as she still feels that inner inquietude to find solutions to all kind of issues. It is also about change, changing and challenging perception, and rethinking actions. Trying to find solutions on a long-term basis and start appreciating true necessities in life. Let loose of imposed attitudes and expectations and

8 URL:<http://rafelforga.com/> [09. March 2012].

just follow own wishes and drives. It is also about caring for others that surround you, about society in general and not living that intense, addictive, and superficial Facebook life that the majority is already living. The change towards individuality should at the same time also be questioned, as well as the trend to choose the easy way in life and just go with the flow, without questioning what the flow does to you. Aloma also mentions the fact that she wasn't even really aware of what she was doing in the beginning and that she understands much better the purpose of her art projects now that her personality is more stable. If her project make people think about what happens around them, her absolute goal of satisfaction is achieved. She asserts that people should become aware that they are not the ones who control their lives but that this is done by other higher powers within the system. Society needs to be challenged, so that we stop moving towards an uncertain future, according to her.

Aloma was so kind to explain to me her newest project “11 thoughts”⁹, which was more like a succession of individual art projects that she did during the course of several years. I suggest to take a look at her indicated website in order to understand better her work. Anyhow a few pictures of “11 thoughts” have been added to the appendix. She divided the whole project into two parts, that is to say, a dark one and a light one. Two female models were the antagonists. The first dark side of the project stands especially for cold and aggressive seduction, while the second light part stands for something that is warm, more intense and easier to identify with without confronting pain. Aloma told me about how she looked for models that were also strong characters in real life, in order to be able to transmit the various messages in the best and most intense way possible. She looked for personality and at the same time tried to escape those psycho-pallid, dry and with no expression on their faces models that are pure hangers. Besides she wants to make a statement via her artistic projects against meaningless and superficial things of the Western society. My conclusion from this latest release was, after discussing in detail the project and gaining insight to it, that it could have

9 URL:<http://alomalafontana.com/11thoughts.html> [29. April 2012].

been a way of dealing with personal, past issues and losses that occurred. I have numbered the various stages of the art project in order to make it easier for the layperson to understand “11 thoughts”. The pieces of art have no titles and Aloma left it up to the viewer to interpret its meaning.

1.) The first piece of art was a walking stick that had a hand on top as a holder. I have asked her if it was the same walking stick that Rafel was once doing at the same time without the two knowing about each other. She explained that Rafel did a walking stick which had a double faced head on top as a holder, that is to say, partially the face of the King and partially the face of Franco. She also told me a bit about the background when I have asked her to do so, concluding that the king himself is in the position he is today due to his friendship with Franco.

Getting back to her walking stick she started telling about the intimate memories that she had attached to it. The hand on top was a bronze cast of her boyfriend's hand, who had a mortal car accident a few years ago. The walking stick stands thus in general for somebody who is or used to be a good companion during a phase in one's lifetime and who will always remain, due to the powerful connection to each other.

2.) The second piece of art was a pair of high-heels with heels that were replaced by little hammers. In this case the little hammers had a symbolic meaning. The steps that we do in our lives due to the paths that we choose should be as intense as possible and should also leave a mark on us. Like a reminder of what we did and whom we became so far.

3.) The third piece of art consisted of some shoulder pads that were made out of needles. Aloma herself described the shoulder pads as some kind of self-protection from the outside world or preventing somebody from approaching you.

4.) The forth piece of art was a woman whose eyes were painted with black eye shadow and who had extremely long eye-lashes hanging down her face, symbolizing the tears, the memories one is

handling during grieving periods in life. Like black curtains that open and close every now and then.

5.) The fifth element in row is the three folded superego. Firstly it stands for power, for having the guts to deal with something. To be strong enough to face an issue, indicated by the shoulder pads.

6.) Second, the pon-pon dress relates also very much to the superego stating the paths towards happiness.

7.) Third, the moving dress accounts for total seduction, which is only possible when one has come to terms with oneself.

From now on begins the light part of the art project. 8.+9.) The underwear stands for the counterparts YES and NO, and is very much related to the physical aspect of getting the closest possible to someone via intercourse. The steel brush standing for rejection and the fire matches for the passion burning inside.

10.) The peacock feathered costume is worn by a woman who doesn't embody the actual beauty ideal, but who fills the costume perfectly with life and which would be impossible if worn by a thin model. It is more sensual at the same time and one can almost feel the peacock feathers caressing one's skin. The dress is also designed in order to be finished by the viewer. She or he has to imagine the "missing parts" and draw them in their individual way.

11.) The last piece of art is the sponge above one's eyes. They are little dry gherkins that are part of Spain's flora. Usually they have a lot of seeds when fresh. But when dried they fell out. In earlier times they were used for various things related to washing and cleaning. The sponges symbolize here the center of the brain where emotions and feelings are handled. When watching the video one sees tears dropping from the sponges on the models face. Its signification is that when one is facing difficult times, and a lot of crying is involved, a learning process results out of it. The learning process has been illustrated by the tears returning back as wisdom. While rewinding the video one

can perceive this phenomenon, even though it may not be clear right away. I was myself very much touched by its intense impact.

As previously mentioned my conclusion from “11 thoughts” was related to coping with the loss of a beloved person, which is symbolized via the first piece to be seen, the walking stick (1). This harsh event left a very deep scar, indicated by the hammer high-heels (2). The needle shoulder pads (3) stand for the time after the loss, when one is in a phase of rejection towards everybody who wants to get too close. It is all about self-protection. The mourning is also symbolized via the long black eye-lashes (4), which indicate grieving and remembering a beloved person and the sorrow attached to it. The superego, consisting of the shoulder pad (5), the pon-pon dress (6), and the moving dress (7), tell the story about the last stage that one has to go through in order to close the chapter. It is all about being perceived again by others as a self-confident, happy and seductive human being.

The light part of the project refers to the time when one starts to move on with one's life. The YES/NO underwear (8+9) signifies the first steps undertaken towards a new future with a potential new partner. The peacock costume (10) stands for the final redemption, but without ever forgetting about the respective person, illustrated by the sponges (11). Anyhow my interpretation stands for itself and has no guarantee for being what I saw in it. As previously mentioned Aloma left it up to the viewer to interpret freely the whole project. I wanted to include it to my master thesis because it partially reflects Aloma's symbolic capital.

5.2 Alexis Reyna

Fashion has the power to act as a vehicle of fantasy. It is a tool that can be applied in order to create the perfect world of the future for oneself and others who might identify with it. At the same time fashion reflects also the ambivalence of a culture of modernity. The cloths that we chose to wear are the result of art, personal psychology and social order. However we remain troubled by its

ambivalent and unstable character that might surprise and scare us at the same time, due to the hidden messages that it transports and that we interpret differently. The dilemma of fashion is the dilemma of modern art. Kopytoff accentuated that art shouldn't be transformed into a good, as its characteristics cannot be generalized as in the case of mass goods that circulate among the economic circle. Art has ambiguous meaning and it is open to the push and pull of events and desires. This is the case in our Western world which consists of highly monetized societies that distinguish between the homogenous area of commodities and the private valuation. But in the end it is a fact that societies construct things as they construct people. Fashion designers who understand to reinvent themselves on a continuous basis are often those who seek for new ideas in the most unexpected places and who are not afraid of daydreaming. That's usually when new visions arise. It is all about imagination, with a gleam of visionary. Living one's dream and not being afraid of it, even though it might not be compatible with everybody's opinion. Sidelines that become predictable are on the way to become new paths which initiate change in the cultural construction of goods. Change is always also a function of new demands (Appadurai 1988: 19, 26, 29; Kopytoff 1988: 83, 88, 90 ; Newman 2003: 414; Wilson 2003: 211).

When speaking of a unique fashion design, that not only contains sophisticated patterns but most of all a combination of precious fabrics and accessories, the commodity could easily be converted into a luxury good, especially when its edition is limited and the used fabrics scarce or the good restricted to only one piece. Alexis Reyna's fashion design is very well described by the above cited attributes, as follows: a vehicle of fantasy that helps to create a perfect world along with the competence to reinvent oneself on a continuous basis. His diversion from a specified path, that is to say, his eclectic style, is certainly a sign of creativity or crisis, whether aesthetic or economic.

5.2.1 Personal data

I first heard of Alexis Reyna at this year's 080Barcelona fashion event which took place in January in Barcelona. As the event itself is exclusively devoted to the Catalan fashion industry, I saw a big opportunity for me and my master thesis to get in touch with some of the fashion designers. After I attended some of the fashion shows, I decided to contact all the fashion designers who were situated in Barcelona with their businesses. Alexis was the only one who replied to my email and who showed interest in my fieldwork. I conducted two interviews with him and collected over four hours of information. The interviews were partially structured and unstructured. In addition I joined him to classes that he is teaching at Felicidad Duce.

Alexis is what one would call a late bloomer when it comes to fashion design, as he didn't follow a typical fashion design career from the beginning. He was rather experimenting in various fields, like poetry, photography or even social and economic sciences, before he started his career in fashion design. Poetry is still nowadays one of his huge passions, but he doesn't want to dedicate himself on a full-time basis to it due to its complexity, multiple facets and high standard which it requires. Besides he argues that without patience, integrity, and a well-balanced personality no satisfactory level can be reached. Furthermore he considers poetry to be a very unique and fruitful way to visualize things. The visual aspect accounts also for a very decisive part in his life, due to his previous studies of photography. Alexis emphasizes on having crafted his way to fashion through the visual part.

After several meetings and discussions with him I would regard his approach to poetry as a way of expressing something that he cannot say outside of this context. He mentions an inner conflict from his childhood that leads him to use this tool in order to solve the issue. Besides he always seems to question the usual way of approaching things, which makes him even more interesting as an individual than he already is. He agreed once that he was never able to achieve the same level of

self-confidence via the poetry as he already achieved through fashion. Alexis relates it to the fact that it turned out to be impossible for him to maintain a high level of quality, emotion and honesty in poetry that he demands from himself.

Working first as a fashion photographer, he found the answer to his current dedication after a fashion show in Madrid. For him fashion design is regarded as a tool that helps him to express himself in a more authentic and individual way. Alexis main aim is to break out on a personal basis. He doesn't want to fit in like the majority of people and to do things the way others already do it. He wants to apply his skills and knowledge in a more enriching way so that he attains absolute satisfaction on a professional and personal basis. That's why he includes his own poetry to his fashion shows, plays only the background music that he likes, designs genderless dresses for nobody in particular, builds characters via the collections, who in turn tell his story about a new, more powerful, vivid and different world, where no borders should hold one back from achieving one's goals and dreams. And it is crucial for him to use all visual technics possible in order to express inner wishes and desires, including the shocking and disturbing ones. Salvador Dalí seems to have had also a big influence on his approach to fashion and art in general, which partially also originates from his own family. I found that out in a later interview when he talked a bit about his family background.

His dedication to fashion and the look that he creates represent perfectly the individual and the social body as well as the body politic. The accumulated symbolic capital in the field is impressive, as it will be shown later, despite his down-to-earth personality. His entire philosophy or *habitus* is perfectly translated into the way he designs the dresses and adorns or wraps up the body. I suggest to take a look at Alexis' website¹⁰ in order to get more acquainted with his fashion design.

In one of our interviews Alexis starts telling me about his first mother, who died when he was very young. His stepmother worked as an expert in Italian opera in Barcelona. She developed a mental

10 URL:<http://alexisreyna.com/> [01. February 2012].

sickness over the years, which in turn affected the relationship to Alexis. His father used to work first as a painter, due to his education in the famous San Fernando Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid. But he had to stop and dedicate himself to a technical job which required a lot of traveling. Therefore the relationship between the two wasn't the closest for years but somehow got closer lately. Meanwhile he considers his father to be his best friend. Somebody to whom he can talk about everything. He also mentions that it is easier for parents in general to accept an abstract profession of their children when it is related to success.

I also asked him a bit about his Swedish fiancée Natalie, whom I got to meet as well during one of our interviews. Alexis mentions straight away Natalie's kindness and the fact that she is not involved in the fashion business at all. He also asserts that he couldn't commit to a relationship with somebody involved in the fashion business. Alexis' love and affection for Natalie is obvious, but he seemed to have experienced a lot of negative things and conflicts in previous relationships. What he desires from his current relationship is very much related to simplicity, tranquility, and safety. Emotional stability that would create a balance to his complex and unstable professional world.

At the same time he pretends to be absolutely unpretentious towards life in general and to not care about money or materialistic things at all. Even though he emphasizes that he doesn't design in order to sell but rather to satisfy inner drives, he admits at the same time in previous interviews that he can make a living as a fashion designer. Furthermore Alexis teaches at different fashion institutes in Barcelona because of the money he receives, as he recognizes in one of the interviews, and not necessarily in order to share the knowledge with his students. The classes are basically about fashion in general, from photography to cutting techniques and patterns. He also mentions the necessity to do something that is not part of one's daily work routine. I never asked him regarding his financial background, but deducting from his narration his family seems to be quite well-off.

Alexis considers the whole fashion scene superficial and spiritless and he doesn't want to get too

involved with it, although it is a major part of his current life. To gain new perspective on things and to surround himself with people from different businesses outside the fashion world seems to gain more priority in his life. Neither his family nor his fiancée or his best friend is involved in fashion and it is possible that this fact also helped me to get to know him a bit better and accompany him for my fieldwork. It looks as if he tries to do everything possible in order to not become one of the numerous controlled and manipulated wheels within the society. Alexis is also somebody who doesn't take things for granted, but likes to argue about everything. Meaningless banalities in general are the worst that one can confront him with. He refers to monkeys when speaking of ordinary people who do their thing day in day out without questioning it. Actually he also acknowledges that monkeys are more widespread and that it is hard to find somebody who doesn't bore him intellectually. During one of our interviews he referred to the distinct roles that one has to play in daily life. For instance while teaching in class he was rather the nice, helpful, smiling guy to his students, to whom he referred as monkeys as soon as he was out of reach due to their lack of interest in life in general.

Alexis doesn't see one specific lesson that life has taught him as more important than other ones. In the end all lessons are important because it is all about who we are and what we achieved in life, which can be very manifold. Life is an adventure and has to be experienced as one, according to him. His strong cultural capital, deduced from his various studies and work experience, as well as his economic capital, that he achieves via his successful sales, account for the impressive symbolic capital he owns in the field. This is perfectly described via the personal data that I collected during the interviews, and which will be furthermore illustrated throughout the following subchapters.

5.2.2 Fashion and the fashion designer

Alexis Reyna's fashion design, which he promotes via his website, reminds a lot of costumes on the first glance, due to the unusual wide and long finishing. The collections are in general very

sophisticated and eclectic, a combination of various technics, approaches, as well as fabrics. Regarding Scheper-Hughes' and Lock's theory one can easily relate his fashion designs to the body politic, as well as partially to the individual and the social body. There are some pictures attached in the appendix of the thesis, but I would recommend in general his website for a better understanding.¹¹

The dress that Alexis creates refrains from gender-specific clothing. Instead a successful integration process can be rather perceived. In Alexis' collections males wear long dresses, while females wear suits and ties. As there are almost no boundaries attached to his fashion design the layperson's eye might feel a bit irritated by this kind of transgression. Besides he manages to illustrate all three body dimensions within his collections. However he mentions his own ambitions of not letting the outside world with its circumstances influence his path. Alexis also agrees that he likes to be Catalan due to the culture's attitude, which he considers as edgy and risky, and also due to its past, which also helped to form his traits of character.

Alexis rejects the combination or the influence of politics and fashion, because it comprises the heavy burden of entertaining or following someone not for personal but rather imposed reasons. As already said Alexis wants to distinguish himself from others, because to him this is the only way to achieve another level of inspiration, creativity and honesty towards his work. In addition he strengthens that whatever message one has to communicate, it should be about lightness, meaning and balance. At the same time he agrees that fashion has had some huge influence in past decades on society in general. He mentions past and current times and political regimes, which are responsible for a certain level of development within a country, and therefore influence also the way people dress. His conclusion was that the more democratic a society is the more vivid and manifold the fashion is and vice versa.

11 URL:<http://alexisreyna.com/collections/unleashed/index.html> [01. February 2012].
URL:<http://alexisreyna.com/collections/autumnwinter2012/index.html> [01. February 2012].

He also passed criticism on the prevailing plastic culture of the Western world which finally leads to people no longer questioning their actions, behaviors or entire lives. Alexis is always getting very philosophical even though he considers himself to be too stupid to be a philosopher. He also says that humanity should stop changing or challenging the untouchable, referring to current environmental and political issues that prevail. Even though he condemns the intervention into nature he appears to be a bit contradictory, because he doesn't seem to care about sustainable ways that he could apply to his fashion designs, in terms of purchasing and manufacturing.

Alexis used to work for Stylmode and Desigual in Spain and for other famous fashion designers in Scandinavia and Asia. Even though it was worth an experience he decided to start his own business, especially due to his attempt to escape the market and sales driven demand. Luckily he found the right place in his old home town of Barcelona to make a start and to further work on his cultural and economic capital.

Due to his previous education, the MA in Womenswear at the famous Central St. Martins College of Art and Design in London, and his previous work experience, he managed to set a footprint on the fashion scene and therefore dressed famous entertainers like M.I.A or Lady Gaga. Even though he achieved a valuable symbolic capital due to his past education and work experience, he considers the sales part in his business more like a survival strategy than a necessity. His clients are basically abroad, except for a few in Spain. Like his unique and very eclectic style his clientele is also very much looking for some special experience via the fashion design. Alexis also emphasizes that he will never have an own store as his main goal is not to sell but to build and create new worlds via his collections, hence to develop his eclectic fashion style. Satisfying the imagination and the phantasies that he treasures inside of himself, that is, building the characters and the story based on a particular concept represents his drive and motivation. Even though Alexis follows own ambitions and tries to reinvent himself with every new collection that he puts out there, he admits that if

somebody approached him for a commercial collection he would also engage in it. He doesn't care that most of the people can't really follow his fashion design, because they don't understand the complexity behind. As already mentioned he designs for himself and for people who are open enough to comprehend his endeavor.

When it comes to everyday dress, Alexis himself appreciates the simple and comfortable look; nothing sophisticated or disturbing. He has a preference for black and white cloths, leather jackets and comfortable sneakers. His main purpose or objective is to surround himself with premium quality things and ideas. Not the obvious thing, he says, but better than that. Alexis explains that what he looks for when creating a new collection is food for thought. Something that is different from previous or already known trends and styles. One has to try different things in life out in order to find her or his true destiny. He dislikes the fashion business machinery which is all about sales, and loses its personality via this definition. It is the main reason why he wants to distinguish himself from what already exists out there by putting his heart and soul into every piece that he designs, in order to fill it with life and to reach people's emotion, thus not analytical demands. Beauty is not in sale charts but only in something that has been given a personality. He criticizes the fact that a lot of people usually reply with an image on the question about beauty, due to the way they have been socially and culturally educated. But for Alexis beauty can be anything, without being subjected to a shape or gender. It can be memories or a smile or anything that fulfills one in a particular moment. At the same time he acknowledges that he could however also design according to demands but not for a long time, as it would kill his true passion and vocation. Bringing out a collection every season is more related to discipline than to anything else for Alexis. He needs this challenge that enforces him to look for new ideas, new details and new questions.

The conclusion about Alexis' fashion design that I came up with after investigating on his collections was that he could be at the same time a documentary film maker when taking a closer

look at his approach to fashion. The writing of the script is manifested through the drawing and the painting of the pattern on the fabrics that the cloths were conveying. The building of the characters takes place through the application of textile and garment on the body, while the person wearing it accounts for the story telling. The feelings and emotions that are communicated through the fashion designs appeal to the people who understand the messages that are communicated. Finally the soundtrack, containing of his poetry and music, is finishing the film concept. Even though it may appear very utopic at first glance, Alexis tries to create a different world than the one which is already prevailing outside. It is his hidden goal to challenge society and its destiny which is visible in the symbolic capital that distinguishes him from other contemporary Catalan fashion designers.

5.2.3 Impact of fashion design on the body

The only thing that Alexis wants to maintain via his work is his dedication to true, pure and natural things that are not turned into ridiculous or changed bodies, pictures or objects. He also admits at the same time that he likes to dress young bodies, as they are still genuine and uncorrupted in shape. This is not surprising since androgynous bodies can rather be related to his non gender-specific fashion design than explicit feminine or masculine bodies. According to him the body is revealing one's true personality via the body language. But reading from the body is not something that we are taught to do on a regular basis and it requires certain skills to do so.

The garment that is wrapped around the body plays a decisive part in the whole process, due to the shape that it conceals. He acknowledges that usually people in his *métier* design fashion for the body. But for him the body is not centric to the action because in the end it is all about the surface or the outside world and not about the inside. I was a bit in a mist by this answer, especially because he applies so many philosophical approaches to everything that are mainly concerned with the inner world of a person, and because he detests the superficial world, which is exclusively concerned with appearance. But I also guess that this view is very much related to his superficial profession of a

fashion designer that rubs off on the ones involved.

For Alexis designing a new piece of garment is like any other process that one has to live up to and follow in order to have a decent and satisfactory result in the end. It is like writing a song, a book or an article. It all starts with the research, followed by the exchange of ideas, the revision and the altering. In the end the main focus remains on the fabrics that one applies according to him. Alexis mentions equally the combination of the body, the fabric, and the technics, in order to achieve a certain result. Like a painter painting or a chef cooking.

Alexis used to design for both sexes, but his focus was more on men's wear in the beginning. To apply for a MA in Womenswear was partially initiated by an inner drive and a new challenge that he was seeking. Fashion design should be genderless for him. It should be more about fashion for everyone who feels comfortable enough wearing it. In his last fall/winter 2012/2013 collection that he presented at the 080Barcelona fashion event, and which was a women's collection, he also included two male models, emphasizing on the genderless aspect of his cloths. Alexis is not trying to shock or to upset anyone. He is just trying to use all the tools he has been given along his path and apply them in the most efficient way. It's about challenging oneself on a regular basis and discerning all the possibilities that surround one. The only boundary he experiences is freedom itself.

Peculiar is the fact that he can't really explain his fashion designs to others as he can't even explain them to himself. He does whatever drives him and needs to be satisfied in a specific moment or during a certain period of time. Consequences included. He doesn't like to be pigeonholed and neither to be called somebody who swims against the flow. For the time being, since one never knows how far or how close the end of a career is, he would like to continue in fashion and see where it might lead him. It is more than clear to him that he will pursue his path as a fashion designer for as long as it will be possible for him. Whether it is his T-shirts, mini-skirts, leggings or

transparent dresses that explain the individual body or the dresses for men and suits with ties for women describing the social body, or finally the coats or uniform like costumes displaying the body politic, Alexis manages to transmit unconsciously all three body dimensions from the theory into practice. Besides the unique fashion design that he is creating has lead him to take up the decisive position in the field of action, accounting for his exceptional symbolic capital that he developed so far.

5.2.4 Entrepreneurship

Alexis is not somebody who cares so much about sustainability or tries to build his company around this newest trend or tendency. He is more of a lonely wolf who is following his own path. He is purchasing textiles mostly from Italian and French suppliers, while the manufacturing takes place in Barcelona. Alexis used to cooperate with companies in the city of Terrassa for a special finishing as well as with a painter. Terrassa held an important strategic position in textile production and distribution in and outside of Spain until the last century. Nowadays Alexis works with ateliers, due to his sophisticated fashion design and to the time constraint of six months for a new collection that he has. In the past he used to sew small collections with the help of an assistant that he had for a while. Alexis also mentions a small project of ten pieces for an ecological brand that he was working on lately. But not due to own interests, but more in order to try new things out and to merchandise his brand.

At the moment the only kind of cooperation or collaboration Alexis might look for is one that would simplify his life. Besides he would look for a new challenge with somebody who is not famous but rather the opposite. Alexis mentions that it is easier to maintain relationships with fashion designers from the same generation who share similar interests. At the same time he emphasizes that he doesn't have more than “Hi&Bye” relationships to other Catalan fashion designers. This is basically due to the fact that their perspective on fashion is quite different than his. Even though the social

capital, which also plays a decisive part in establishing one's position in the field, is the hardest to assess, it relies in Alexis' case on a mix of relationships from inside and outside the fashion business, gathered via his vocational experience. The social capital, in combination with his cultural capital, could partially be converted into economic capital, which can be derived from his collaborations with successful people from the entertainment business, to whom he sold his collections, as shown in a previous chapter.

The fashion business is one of the businesses where envy is more than obvious. The only negative experience that he made so far until now was during the latest 080Barcelona fashion event, where he won the award for the best fall/winter collection 2012/2013. Somebody claimed that he won the award due to the fact that he wasn't only a fashion designer but also a jury member, thus influencing the result. Alexis was mortally offended by this statement which was simply false, since one cannot be in the jury and present his collection at the same time. Gossip is very widespread in the scene and it can leave its marks on somebody's career.

Eventually I would account from what Alexis told me that success is for him not much more different than for other individuals who dedicate their lives at something that rewards them in the end with a certain personal satisfaction, acceptance, and recognition in general. Besides it is most of all about challenging oneself on a continuous basis so that one can find new and sophisticated ways to work with. On the one hand there is recognition from the outside world, leading to outside success, and on the other hand there is own success, which is more about self-realizing own goals and dreams and about achieving satisfaction for oneself. The own success can be a bigger project, as it can be a smaller undertaking, like getting up from bed on an awful day and managing to get through it, according to Alexis. In the end it is a lot about experimenting, risking, and finding out what suits oneself best. Success may also come from a weakness that one is trying to improve or eliminate. However, in the end success is always the result of one's own efforts in life.

5.3 Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso

Fashion incorporates change on a very diverse basis. It is constantly thriving for improvement which serves the customer first and foremost. A new era has already started and is about to become the bearer of hope of the current century. Contemporary textiles are smarter than ever, helping one to not only feel more comfortable but at the same time to communicate and even save our lives. Intelligent technologies have already been applied for decades in the army as well as in hospitals. By now those technologies have spread over to the fashion world providing new and improved technologies that emerged from various laboratories. Collaborations between dreamers and dreamweavers! Most of the textiles that comprise these new technologies are synthetic fibers like polymers, which are molecules based on carbon and linked in long chains. Polymers do not lose their capacity when melted or deformed unlike cotton or other natural fibers. Synthetic fibers allow at the same time also more variety and flexibility for every kind of finishing. Anyhow the combination of new technologies with electronics and improved fabrics has already gained ground in the present and will shape decisively the future fashion world. But even though some of the best textiles with the most advanced features are elaborated in laboratories, nature should not be underestimated. Spiders for instance have always produced high-impact materials right before our eyes, the same as silkworms. Thus societies should never cease to learn from nature (Newman 2003: 414-418).

I have chosen this short theoretical introduction, because it describes the best the aim of Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso, a technology based fashion business, which will be introduced in more detail during the next subchapters.

5.3.1 Personal data

Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso is a small, independent family run fashion company and brand. The business exists already for 6 years and is exclusively run by the sisters Morata. Laura Morata is the managing director, Carolina the design manager, and Diana the communication manager. I found the company by accident while being at a pop art and design event in Barcelona. I established contact to Laura and explained to her my undertaking. She was extremely friendly and co-operative from the very first beginning, so that I could conduct two decisive partially structured but mostly unstructured interviews with her.

The name Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso, which will be used from now on only in the short form Madre Mía, is one of those catchy buzzwords that are often used in Spain in order to enunciate something that is surprising and amazing. It is very typical for the Spanish speaking society and it is something that also people from abroad know about. Laura also admits that it is part of the marketing strategy that they are using, that is intended to shock a bit but most of all to raise attention. Phonetically it is a catchy phrase that is commonly liked by many, no matter if acquainted with its signification or not. It is something that can be related to many different things and that makes one curious to discover what actually lays behind it.

What makes Madre Mía so special is the fact that they unite new technologies and fashion design by using knowledge from different creative disciplines. Their goal is to combine “design and innovation in a single product, carefully crafting each dress, mixing textures, colors, lines and aromas with knowledge and professionalism, adapting to the female form and making every woman feel beautiful, elegant and secure in the moment she desires”.¹² Madre Mía basically focusses on two fashion lines: Urban Chic and Brides, hence applying only to women. I suggest taking a look at the website in order to get a better impression of the different fashion designs. However a small

¹² URL: <http://www.madre-mia.com/> [20. December 2011].

selection of pictures is enclosed to the appendix. The most interesting aspect about Madre Mía is the fact that the family run business has its focus on sustainability, meaning, it respects the environment, the economy and the society in the most effective way possible. Besides they are using exclusively natural fabrics, purchased from Catalan producers. At the same time they apply modern and sophisticated technologies to the garment, in order to raise the efficiency for the wearer, while also trying to influence one's behavior of purchase and satisfying demands on a long term basis.

The urban chic and brides design are perfectly reflected in Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' specification of the social body and the body politic; both transmitting predominating values of Western societies that are connected to a certain prestigious position within the society. The whole business concept furthermore demonstrates the solid cultural and economic capital of the three sisters that forms its fundament. The impact of the resulting symbolic capital will be illustrated during the next subchapters.

5.3.2 Fashion and the fashion designer

Designing a dress is a very individual process which is basically created around a main goal or objective. Every single dress has a different goal and thus different necessities. Madre Mía doesn't create various collections but rather timeless fashion designs. The already existing fashion designs are updated on a regular basis, that is to say, every quarter. Laura also mentions that by not being forced to put out there new collections they can allow themselves to depend on inspiration which doesn't come on a regular basis and which needs quality time in order to grow and develop.

In order to open the business and implement the fashion design years of research had to be conducted in advance. Thus not only research in terms of new technologies but also investigations on women's necessities had to proceed. Madre Mía's aim lies especially on solving all kinds of issues that might arise during festive acts or reunions, i.e. stains from drinks and food or body odor

amongst others. Many facets that might make one feel uncomfortable are included in their problem solving process. However the techniques and technologies are regarded as an additional tool, while the fashion design remains the most decisive part.

Especially the aroma-therapy accounts for its psychological aspect of making one feel comfortable during all kinds of situations. Its positive features are directed very fast via the olfactory center to the brain, therefore influencing mind and body at the same time. In case of the aroma essences Madre Mía basically chooses the textiles and applies the paraffin micro-capsules as a finishing. For instance, in case of the brides collection vanilla, jasmine or meadow flowers are the most applied essences.

Their philosophy is also translated into the new shop that is about to be opened in Eixample. It is supposed to remind more of a house or a flat, referring to its cozy atmosphere that should invite its visitors to have a unique experience. The human touch towards the clientele is a very decisive aspect. Laura refers to girlfriends and not to clients when mentioning the customers. An online shop will be elaborated slowly by slowly in addition to the local sales. Even though Carolina is the designing manager the ideas of all three are considered and embedded in the fashion designs. The process of creating a dress is very intense as the demands of the customer have to be implemented in the most effective way into the final dress. Besides there is always the dilemma that the customer wants something that doesn't represent Madre Mía's philosophy.

According to Laura the dresses sold via the online store are just a slightly bit different than the ones in the actual store. However they all include the mentioned technologies. The online store is basically used as an additional tool in order to promote the business and its philosophy and also to reach customers on an international basis. But still the direct contact to the customer is essential for Madre Mía. If somebody requests a special design, she will have to come to the main store, so that the final product can be granted according to Madre Mía's philosophy and to the customer's

satisfaction. Laura suggests that it is also advisable to come to the store in order to achieve the best outcome possible in fashion, as bodies are very different and with different needs. In addition she also mentions the idea of opening a shop in London, in order to have a closer relationship to the customers. But this would also mean for the creative trio to split up on a long term basis, which is regarded as contra-productive for the business.

Another dilemma that the fashion sector is confronted with in general is the superficial way of spending money on fashion, argues Laura. A lot of customers engage in a quantitative rather than a qualitative way of buying fashion. What is most of all required is a change in people's mentality. Purchases should be made on a sustainable basis and the objects purchased should be appreciated, taken care of, especially when timeless in aging. It is equal to wearing a dress with dignity. One should also become more aware of the certain ways in manufacturing cloths. The origin of cotton production, its processing and the circumstances of manufacturing the final product are all part of a vast, not sustainable, inefficient, and inhuman machinery, that is most of all supported by meaningless purchase actions of Western customers directed to the price war prevailing. Furthermore she also mentions the fact that nowadays everybody is dressed alike due to the big fashion companies like Zara and H&M, which basically dictate the trends. It is also part of the fast-paced living style that predominates in Western societies.

Even though Madre Mía has to face these obstacles, it tries to focus on sustainability and on fair-minded ways of purchasing fabrics, colors, and technologies in Barcelona and Catalonia. Especially as a small company Madre Mía has to deal with the financial aspect of not being in the position of purchasing vast amounts of fabric or other materials and therefore not in a position of negotiating. The only solution out of this bottleneck would require a change in the customer's behavior, that is, spending money on a more sustainable product would slow down the demand for cheap ways of production. Madre Mía tries to find gaps in their sectors that can be improved. Like for instance

ecological clothing that until now comes only in beige and in unfeminine styles. And especially because what one wears is also part of one's identity. So, the main object for Madre Mía is always to create first of all a dress that will be liked, appreciated, and that makes one feel good about oneself especially when some issues may arise in difficult moments.

During a while they have been working with different technological centers and universities. Laura emphasizes at the same time on the developed industry in Catalonia when it comes to new technologies. Besides the new technologies have to apply to a wider variety of cloths. It takes approximately one year in order to research on a new technological aspect of the textile. But the most difficult part in the chain is to find companies that have the tools to apply the technologies to the fabric directly. This is still a new sector in its infancy which is gaining a lot of attention lately. Madre Mía purchases first the textiles and applies the technologies as a finishing for the time being. Laura explains the difficulty that a regular fashion show would impose on their technology enhanced fashion design. Especially that it is all about the technologies that cannot be seen but smelled or felt, the fashion show that Laura has in mind cannot be a regular one, but one that is more like a fair where the visitors can come and experience the special fashion design with all their senses.

Laura doesn't see herself as a fashion victim because she relates negative aspects with the term. She doesn't want to dependent on any kind of tendencies. This is also the main reason why Madre Mía is not releasing collections every season. Dependency kills creativity and inspiration, and thus has a negative impact on one's character and personality. Laura has a strong connection to fashion, but she wants to distinguish herself with the business from the mass and offer a more sustainable fashion design to the customers. Particularly the cultural and the economic capital of the Morata sisters that stands at the base of Madre Mía, can clearly be recognized in the sophisticated philosophy the company upholds. It contributes to the symbolic capital and the important position

in the field that distinguishes Madre Mía from other Catalan fashion designers.

5.3.3 Impact of fashion design on the body

Laura emphasizes how important it is for their business to take into consideration not only the different roles that one plays during the day and in different occasions, but most of all the different bodies. That's why she says that Madre Mía doesn't necessarily see the collections, but more concrete objects that help to accomplish the body mix, thus to embed the distinct requirements into their fashion designs. As already mentioned I would rather link their sophisticated and technology based fashion design to what is the best expressed via the social body and the body politic in theory. She continues telling about the niche that they are trying to fit in, that is to say, developing a product that is already known but that has been improved not only via the technologies applied but also via the unique timeless style. Madre Mía appeals clearly to the upper middle class with its fashion design, thus to successful women in management positions. Women who appreciate what they wear and are not only looking for meaningless exchanges of dresses.

The colors and fabrics applied mainly depend on what new ideas the sisters want to implement. It is all about creativity, inspiration, and passion for a product that should solve an issue in the best way possible and in addition provide the customer with a unique experience for mind and body. The fabrics are also carefully selected and attuned to necessities and demands, but without abstracting away from the sustainable aspect. Laura tells me also about the strategic position of the city of Terrassa and about its past importance in textile manufacturing on an international basis. Nowadays it lost its position due to the free market economy and especially due to the price competition from Asian manufacturers.

Beauty is elegance for Laura. It is not related to appearance but more to the whole body language and to posture. Beauty lies within. Wise persons who have something to say and who transmit thoughtful messages are a source of inspiration, regardless of the discipline the person is in.

Inspiration can also be gained from things, like in Laura's case from textiles. Textiles inspire her and she absorbs new ideas from their surface.

Laura perceives the textiles first and then the person's body and attitude. As people and their bodies are very different, Madre Mía tries to apply the textiles to the person's individuality and body language so that the match can be made perfect. It is a very individual process. And besides she asserts that she has an eye for what might fit the person well. The emphasis is on equilibrium between the body and the garment.

The skirts are Laura's favorite pieces within any of the collections. They convey freedom due to the volume that they provide. She speaks about a sexier and more passionate appearance and a distinct expression of oneself. In conclusion it can be said that as Madre Mía's fashion design basically appeals to the upper middle class, with respect to women in middle and upper management positions but also to brides, the characteristics of the social body, based on certain norms and values, as well as the body politic's features of power and recognition are clearly represented and transmitted here.

5.3.4 Entrepreneurship

Working in and with fashion has been Laura's destiny. She can't remember not wanting it ever in her life. Having two creative parents the dedication to fashion was only a step away from it. Support is experienced from the whole family. Madre Mía is basically the realization of a dream the three sisters had. It is still not complete but they face every challenge along their path. In addition Laura doesn't perceive fashion only as dress, but to her fashion is more related to a societal and economic phenomenon. It is thus not only about nice cloths and aesthetics but more about creating valuable objects. Madre Mía stands therefore more for a mix between the aspect of fashion and the world of objects. As already mentioned, the technology that Madre Mía applies can be embodied in various ways. First it can be exercised as a casual tool of solving issues on a wider scale, like the mosquito

protection, or the stain and odor control. Second it can be combined with festive dresses or high-class fashion.

Besides Laura always mentions the business aspect that also lies in between, reflecting her educational background of business studies and studies of design. She also emphasizes on the necessity of enriching present disciplines with details from other studies, in order to develop skills and knowledge, that is to say, broaden one's horizon and help to focus on more items and necessities than before. Innovation remains a key element because of its sustainable character. It supports change. Change in the way we think and act most of all. It is a lifelong learning process. There is almost no discipline from which one cannot learn something in addition. In order to understand the whole business with all its characteristics one has to learn from scratch about it.

Success comes also from within. It is important to know one and to be satisfied with what one is doing. Regarding the business Laura mentions the fundament as the carrier of the business, therefore the personal touch towards the several departments and towards the product. Caring about your staff in the best way possible so that the company can grow and thrive is a decisive aspect. This way of thinking should be transferred to all actions, emphasizes Laura. Nine people in total are forming Madre Mía. Most of the departments are flexible and do not depend on a fix working place. That is to say, that the people work as free lancers from all around the world or Spain. She considers this way of working as more enriching and viable due to its flat hierarchy. The staff's inspiration is kept alive by the free movement that is provided. The flow of distinct ideas is enforced. Especially the marketing and the creative design departments are completely external. Cooperation is given with fashion designers from all around the world. Different associations for design form part of the most important contacts for Madre Mía. With them Madre Mía cooperates on a national and international basis, helping to launch the brand and to raise the degree of brand awareness. The associations, which account for the social capital of Madre Mía along with the other collaborations,

are primarily supporting small enterprises.

Most of the fashion designers Madre Mía cooperates with design male fashion. Thus cannot be considered as competition, according to Laura. She describes the relations in fashion as not very close due to its emotional and competitive features. However she tries to cooperate more with designers from various disciplines, and to avoid to becoming too narrow minded. She mentions the 080Barcelona fashion event as one of the most competitive and individual events in Barcelona. But at the same time she also refers to the success that fashion designers who present collections at the 080Barcelona fashion event, experience.

To find inner rest is the most important thing for Laura in life, and to be satisfied with one's achievements. Concerning Madre Mía she wants to see the company growing and being appreciated by the outside world. Diana, the communication manager at Madre Mía, works also as a public relations agent in the film business and therefore can easily promote the brand Madre Mía to known actresses or entertainment people. To become famous via one's work and transmit one's philosophy to a wider audience describes the powerful position that the company strives for. Success is therefore about achieving everything one desires in life for Laura. It is all about being happy, being successful in her business and selling a lot of dresses. Thriving at the same time personally as professionally, but without sacrificing one for another. The philosophy of Madre Mía should reach as many people as possible and at the same time initiate change. The cultural capital, described by the solid educational background of the three sisters, the economic capital, provided partially by the family and by the success of the business, the social capital, due to the manifold and interdisciplinary cooperations and collaborations, result in the symbolic capital that Madre Mía already reached in a respective field, and that is strengthened and developed on a continuous basis. Furthermore their fashion design underlines the social body and the body politic in theory.

6 Analyzing fashion designs in theory and practice

Even though the three introduced fashion designers could not be more distinct in terms of how they approach fashion and fashion design in general, they also manifest some things in common, for instance their desire and aspiration for improving the society and its currently dominating values via the messages that their fashion design and the brand itself transmit.

The following subchapters are an attempt to combine the empiric data from the fieldwork with the applied and existing theory about fashion in general, the body, the impact of dress on the body, the identity, the gender and representation, that is to say, as far as interrelations can be revealed.

6.1 Fashion system

Understanding the fashion system or the fashion business requires as much time investment and knowledge acquisition as any other effort. Therefore I would like to remark that my knowledge about the fashion system in general, and in Barcelona in particular, has been certainly expanded during my ethnographic investigation, but at the same time still necessitates years of practice in order to be on an expert level. Besides the fashion business turns out to be more sophisticated, multi-layered and highly competitive on a creative and intellectual level than I have expected it to be.

Therefore it can be affirmed that successful fashion companies not only understand the market and the demand of their customers, but that they constantly develop and wisely adjust their strategies for new trends, styles, tendencies. In regard to the fashion designers and their businesses that I investigated on no determined market strategy could be observed. Neither Alexis Reyna nor Aloma Lafontana conducts any kind of specific fieldwork or investigations on trends or tendencies prior to designing cloths or a collection. Madre Mía's focus is also much more directed towards new

technologies for fashion than towards fashion itself. However the sales aspect should not be underestimated as the actual end product plays an important role for all three. Alexis Reyna emphasizes on his successful eclectic approach which certainly arose from the numerous disciplines and work experience that he already concentrated on. Aloma Lafontana's unique fashion design was also influenced by her previous studies in Fine Arts and Costume Design. Madre Mía's idea for a technology enhanced fashion design relies equally on previous experience in business and design.

Anyhow fashion is and remains a sophisticated construct of cultural values and norms. A proper definition of the term fashion has not been elaborated yet, due to its manifold system and habits of dressing the body in Western and non-Western societies. To establish a determined definition would always put the term at risk to promote a certain ethno- and eurocentrism. The only thing that can be considered as granted is the fact that fashion emerges from within a certain class of the society. Fashion and especially fashion trends are therefore no longer subject to the upper class but rather to all classes of a society. Fashion portrays prevailing standards and social, economic, and political circumstances of the concerned society. Its main characteristics are marked by a fast-paced and continuous style, hence constant change. This significant change occurred due to historical and technological circumstances, referring to the development of an industry of production and consumption (Entwistle 2002: 63-67).

It is more than self-evident that fashion has always played a crucial role in our lives. At every level of the society people are concerned with their look, which respectively has an effect on their self-esteem and on how they are perceived by the outside world. It is true that we all try to dress primarily according to our own style, while at the same time consciously or unconsciously engage in dressing practices that are conform to caring about what one is wearing. To keep up with the newest fashion style is not an easy pursuit, due to its temporary character. As with any other consumer good one look becomes obsolete when enough people have already accepted and worn it.

And consequently as everything evolves in a certain kind of way the consumer's demand also becomes more and more sophisticated.

The European cloth manufacturing apparatus which mainly began along with the industrialization age lead to the fact that prosperous countries altered the dynamics of style and thus the dynamics of fashion, which in turn lead to a rocketing demand for cloths. The history of industrialization, of which the textile and fashion industry has been the driving force, is strongly linked to the colonial exploitation abroad and at the same time the exploitation in the own country. However Appadurai once demonstrated that economic exchange creates value at the same time. The goods that are exchanged comprise certain value and the link between exchange and value depends on the politics and their influence on the market factors. At the same time Appadurai speaks of the social life of things, referring to the life cycle every commodity has. The demand for the good is equally connected to a combination of desire and need for the respective commodity. Furthermore it can be assumed that demand can also be subject to social definition and control, especially when consumption itself is regulated by external forces. Fashion has a rapid turnover and its short life cycle is prone to be overestimated especially by those who fall victim to it. The institutions that control fashion and good taste in Western societies are at the same time responsible for limiting social mobility, while maneuvering its participants towards targets that are set by taste makers and their affiliated experts who represent the top of society. Thus it can be concluded that contemporary consumers are the victims of the speed of fashion, as the demand for the respective goods is controlled by the people behind the machinery (Appadurai 1986: 3, 29-32; Entwistle 2002: 255-260; Schneider 1987: 432-436).

Gilbert suggests taking a look at Appadurai's concept, which he partially named as the finance-scape of global flows on money and capital, in order to understand the fashion world centers. Furthermore one has to consider also other factors, which are related to the fashion industry itself,

like historical development for instance. In fact colonialism also contributed to the ideological context of fashion, as already mentioned. The exotic elements have been partially added to the fashion system but only up to a certain percentage so that the imperial powers remained placed at the center and the colonized at the margins. Schneider asserts that during the peak of the globalization process, which mainly occurred during the 20th century, Western artists, intellectuals and fashion designers have started to pay more attention to aesthetic and cultural values of formerly colonized peoples and embed those into own creations. These new approaches have fallen on flourishing ground and became a true success. The various boutiques and tourist outlets through which third world textiles arrived to the Western consumers are not only a well-known phenomenon in every big city but also an evidence for its success (Gilbert 2000: 180-181; Schneider 1987: 436-437).

It is more than obvious that fashion is as much a global phenomenon as it is primarily Western. Popular understanding about the meaning of fashion can be found in any fashion magazine, newspaper or channel. It has also been reflected upon by many scientists from diverse disciplines. Niessen affirms that fashion has been defined first of all as a Western phenomenon. In addition fashion has been ascribed a function of power relations and thus has been equated with societal, economic and political development. Consequently societies outside the West were rather considered static, traditional, and stable. Blumer states that fashion is rarely found in settled societies, such as primitive tribes, peasant societies or caste societies. Simmel explored also the impact of fashion on society, as it will be visualized later, and affirms that fashion worn by an upper class is desired by a lower class, especially when trying to ascend the social ladder (Blumer 1968 in Niessen 2003: 106; Niessen 2003: 105-107; Simmel 1904 in Niessen 2003: 108).

One of the main questions that arise is basically related to how do fashion designers know what kind of style or look to promote? Chapman explains that worldwide trend services, that take a look

at economic and cultural developments, are involved in the process. The people in charge are on the look-out for all kinds of new fabrics, colors, art and ideas that might make up for a new future trend. Past aspects are also taken into account as many times they are embedded into new and improved fashion designs. But also current events and the media are important input providers. In the end a cross-selection between several trend services is made by the fashion designer, in order to select the most appealing fashion design or idea. The internet accounts also for the most decisive part of research as it offers a large variety of information on a 24/7 basis. Computer-aided design (CAD) is the new future in fashion design and allows a more flexible and innovative design. It has also been integrated as a crucial tool in the studies of design (Chapman 2002: 352-354, 356).

Welters illustrates three main categories that account for the fashion design concept, as follows: the fabric, the fashion design as well as its manufacturing, and the retailing. Marketing, that is to say, advertising and sales, is the gear that the notion relies on and applies at all levels. The fabric is the most essential raw material that is needed in fashion design and which often gives birth to new ideas in fashion design. Most of the fashion designers I spoke to get their inspiration from the textile itself and its characteristics. This accounts for Madre Mía's as well as for Aloma Lafontana's and Alexis Reyna's fashion designs. The chosen textiles and final dresses, which shape, enhance or conceal the body, are considered among all three fashion designers as even more decisive than the body itself. However leather, fur, accessorizes, and cosmetics complement the whole fashion concept and should not be underestimated. Appadurai explains that some fashion items can also be regarded as luxury goods due to their ascribed characteristics, i.e. fabrics, sophisticated patterns, applied techniques, amongst others. Furthermore textiles are subject to constant performance and safety standards. Besides more and more intelligent technologies are researched and embedded into the fabric resulting in a more sustainable and robust product. Madre Mía's collaboration with technology enhanced textile manufacturers sets a good example here. Their embedded technologies

which improve one's well-being during festive acts via their features can be mentioned in this regard (Appadurai 1986: 38; Welters 2007: 349-350).

However one cannot write about fashion without mentioning the most decisive fashion centers. China still controls the silk trade, India is one of the world's oldest cotton grower, and Australia is the source for merino wool. Europe and Japan have in general a strong reputation for producing precious fashion fabrics that are popular all around the world. And yet, fact is that Italy is still leading the way in fashion styles and looks. China became one of the main suppliers of fabrics for the Italian market, as it offers a huge resource of low cost skilled workers and artisans. The raw materials stock that China is providing puts the country in an important strategic position for the worldwide fashion market. But it is in the end European countries like Italy which convert the raw goods into products with a high added value. The silk industry is one of the most famous examples in this matter, as the final premium good is produced in Italy. Another crucial development in the whole fashion business is its cultural aspect. It is also one of the reasons why fashion designers nowadays are seeking a way towards implementing a mix between local cultural fashion styles and globalized standards of high-fashion. Alexis Reyna's fall/winter collection 2012/2013 would be a perfect example here, as he understands it remarkably well to unite the most powerful parts of his extensive educational and professional experience in his work. What occurs here can be related to product development. The focus lies on the product and the brand itself which carries its features. The buyer plays a decisive role in the whole process because in the end it depends on her or him to accept or to reject a fashion design. Even though marketing tools are designed to manipulate and control one's taste, it is often impossible to adjust these tools to the fast changing needs of the clients. Hence the power lies in the customer's hands to purchase a certain good. However all the efforts that are undertaken in order to establish trends or looks are in vain, if it doesn't appeal to a wider audience which sees a scope in following and adopting the new style, at least for a certain

period of time. But as in every other business fashion can thrive or fail depending on its ability to meet preferences and satisfy needs. Due to its very fast paced characteristics fashion has to deal with a high frustration and boredom rate just like other businesses of goods (Abrahamson 1996: 264, 271; Reinach 2005: 383-385).

Agins claims that consumer values changed over the course of time concerning fashion. Exclusive high-fashion designs are no longer necessarily seen as such, especially as the most contemporary looks are copied just-in-time at affordable prices by various famous fashion chain stores. Fact is that women and men are equally interested in fashion. Most women and men want attractive clothes that work well in the real world without making one feel uncomfortable. Regarding these attributes the fashion designs of Aloma Lafontana and Madre Mía can be mentioned, which basically are the result of long-term and continuous research on the necessities and the comfort of women. And still in the end fashion is all about creating a certain image, a process of which the form is as manifold as the fashion industry itself. Finally it can be concluded that the fashion designers who understand to reinvent themselves and create a genuine etiquette via their work, that is at the same time flexible enough to adjust whenever needed, will gain the 21st century's consumer acceptance on a long-term basis, according to Agins (Agins 1999: 404-408).

Simmel argued once that the turnover in fashion styles and trends happened at the point the lower classes began to copy the designs of the upper class. Fashion used to be a platform where social classes distinguished each other and displayed their wealth and origin. As climbing up the social ladder was regarded as a desirable goal in life during past centuries, the ones who had not reached the top yet were more prone to imitate the fashion styles of the upper class than vice versa. It can be perceived as an attempt to pretend to be in a better social position than the current one. Abrahamson emphasizes that dressing up is a subjective undertaking that can be perceived as increased social freedom in life. Imitation can also be regarded as a method of not standing alone in the mass. At the

same time it manifests a certain loss of freedom as the choices made are not individual but more applicable to the group one identifies with the most. However one's social background was more visible back to Simmel's time of research than nowadays when assimilation takes place. Change in fashion is obvious, but class distinction is no longer perceivable via fashion today (Abrahamson 1996: 272; Simmel 1957: 541-545). Hence Simmel's thesis should be taken with a pinch of salt because what could have been valid a century ago is more than obsolete nowadays, especially in terms of fashion. Fashion is no longer a phenomenon that arises among the rich and famous but that rather became entirely equalized and where all social classes come together mingle and give rise to new styles and looks that can be worn by all, with a few exceptions.

However fashion has always been and will still remain one of the most decisive social manifestations to show the borders between the past and the present. Its transitory features do not reduce its meaning but rather stands for its gain. There are no doubts about the fact that fashion controls and sometimes manipulates every field in which it performs. Blumer argues that the styles, practices, and preoccupations in art, literature, entertainment, philosophy, business, and science may be affected deeply by fashion. Fashion is leading the way in many sectors of the society; while simultaneously imposing sanctions on what is right or wrong, respectively denying access to certain institutions. The new wave in fashion is what is considered to be right to follow and the old is the odd part which should be left aside, no matter how many old influences are visible in the new trend and have contributed to its look. However fashion has to be understood in order to not only be considered as some kind of irrational social happening. And fashion is by far no longer a mean by which different societal classes distinguish themselves via the dress, as Simmel used to demonstrate once. Fashion in general has always been and will continue to be a vital part that disseminates innovation and emulation. Nevertheless Simmel was right stating that fashion requires a certain type of society in which to take place. Furthermore he proved correctly that the aspect of power, prestige

and continuous change are natural characteristics of fashion (Blumer 1969: 276-278; Simmel 1957: 547).

One cannot speak of fashion without referring also to the media apparatus. The media still remains the main promoter of the fashion industry and at the same time it communicates the beauty myth as a new religion. Appadurai emphasizes that the media apparatus, respectively the advertising sector, describes the most powerful relation between knowledge and control of demand. Change within one society is initiated above all via the media. Especially when a small entity interacts with a larger one a selection between knowledge, and thus the control of the information flow, takes place. It is now that some things will become established while some others will be hindered in movement. According to Appadurai politics, that characterize a society, is the institution which links value and exchange in the social life of commodities, due to its powerful aspects (Appadurai 1988: 55-57; Wolf 2002: 44, 86).

Fashion is so volatile due to its fast development that requires change. Simmel asserted that because fashion is so prone to regular change its nature can assimilate many diverse contents. Hence any given form of clothing, art, idea can become fashionable. The assumed flexibility makes the whole business look like a huge playground where the only borders set are to one's power of imagination. Fashion trends in general are a much neglected object of study. Collective taste and the direction certain trends and styles point at, is an important societal phenomenon of modernity. Actually fashion is always modern as it responds to own developments in fabrics and ornamentation as well as to societal events that catch public attention, such as the emancipation of women or the rise of the certain cults of youth. Taste has a manifold character that can be explained as a sensitive selector which is based on acceptance and rejection. There is no doubt that it is an entirely subjective tool applied by the individual in order to orientate her- or himself in a world full of experience (Blumer 1969: 282-284, 286; Simmel 1957: 557).

Society and culture in general has not only been influenced but above all revolutionized by all kinds of fads that occurred and still continue to occur. Theories on fashion have frequently concentrated on the subject from an aesthetic perspective conveying rather subjective meanings. Fashion itself is a rapid phenomenon which contains numerous life cycles of various trends and styles. It affects each and everyone within every society or culture no matter how engaged that person might be in the topic. Fashion cannot be comprehended as a rational entity. Even though it is on the one hand the result of extensional calculations it can be at the same time a fad that appears overnight due to trend setters and their followers. Thus it can be concluded that fashions can emerge spontaneously, while at the same time they may evolve as the result of managerial actions in sales and marketing (Abrahamson 1996: 254, 256, 263).

Art is also a phenomenon which is very much related to fashion. But one has to be cautious with this comparison as art is still art and fashion still remains an industry. Besides the latter is an industry that is supported by an enormous amount of addicted followers. It contains of thousands of people who make their living from it and millions more who just like to shop. But still the industry is highly interconnected with the art scene. Especially because of the speed with which fashion embeds whatever is new, fashion often reflects or even predicts a common desire, a longing for change seen, for instance, in Alexis Reyna's eclectic fashion design. It is nostalgia for a glorious past and at the same time a necessity for a new and improved future described by Madre Mía's or Aloma Lafontana's attempt in fashion (Boodro 1990: 256-257).

One of the best known examples where art and fashion met and formed a certain symbiosis was between the Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli and her Surrealist collaborator Salvador Dalí. Elsa Schiaparelli was one of the most prominent persons in fashion next to Coco Chanel at the beginning of the 20th century. The masterpiece that emerged from the Schiaparelli-Dalí cooperation is the hat in the shape of a high-heeled shoe and also the textile that Schiaparelli created the “Tear

Dress” with, which became a huge success in 1936.¹³ However even if the tie between art and fashion has grown closer, the differences between the two still remain insuperable. Art can be considered on the one hand private as it is mostly dedicated to the creation of an individual, whereas fashion is a public phenomenon and relies on the cooperation between fashion designer, manufacturer, and wearer. But what art and fashion demonstrate equally is the creation of certain moments in various surprising ways. At the same time one has to consider the fact that most of us are neither artists nor fashion connoisseurs. Thus it is up to us to create our own exhibition according to individual tastes. Dressing is all about expressing oneself physically and visually, while at the same time adding color to our daily lives. Boodro underlines that fashion designers not only understand this interplay but simultaneously give us the chance to invent ourselves. Furthermore he claims that fashion designers would never compare themselves to artists especially because art is regarded as lasting, while fashion is condemned to momentariness (Boodro 1990: 259-260).

Fashion and art have ever since been two disciplines that were compared to each other. In an interview Norman Norell, one of America's most prominent fashion designers of the past century, defines art in fashion as elegance and quality. Quality has in so far always been an attribute for fashion for him as he likes to see fashion rather as a durable manifestation than a fast-paced one.¹⁴

Irene Sharaff, who used to be one of America's most successful costume designers, agrees that fashion is art. She explains that it is a demonstration of the development of its times, thus its psychological, social, political and visual experiences. She compares her metier with writing history and she clearly sees a parallel between movies, theater, life and art. Clothes became in general costumes for her. Besides she thinks that man by nature is a collector who likes to keep things and combine them. She speaks of using “the past to exist in the present”.¹⁵ Alwin Nikolais, who was a

13 URL:http://www.philamuseum.org/micro_sites/exhibitions/schiaparelli/kids/schiap-pack.pdf [20. Mai 2012].

14 URL:<http://library.newschool.edu/speccoll/fashionhistory/norell.php> [05. Mai 2012].

15 URL:<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-irene-sharaff-1463219.html> [05. Mai 2012].

famous American choreographer, is not of the opinion that fashion is an art, since women or people in general depend too much on others to design them. For him dress embodies rather the fashion designer's individuality than the one of the wearer. He suggests that man should learn to design himself and play an active part in the whole process. He should experiment with motion, sound, color and action and reinvent himself and what surrounds him. It is all about feeling who we are. Besides Nikolais perceives textiles in general as a useful tool to shape and sculpture the body.¹⁶ Hollander admits that fashion and art can doubtlessly be interconnected or find inspiration in each other, even though art is fundamentally serious, whereas fashion is frivolous and concerned with social and sexual substance and not mere aesthetic issues. The design of fashion like the design of any other good can be perceived as an interesting creative endeavor. The success of the respective piece can be determined by how appealing it will be to its audience whose taste is socially and culturally educated. Nowadays fashion can be considered not only an aesthetic but also an economic affair that accounts for a big market share. It is fundamental to the modern world and a serious manifestation in our all lives, similar to the facial tattooing of the Maoris or the feather mantles for the Aztecs, recognizes Hollander correctly (Hollander 2005: 27-28; Nikolais 1967: 136-137; Norell 1967: 130; Sharaff 1967: 135).

Finally one cannot analyze the fashion system without mentioning the various forces directed at the body that interact. It is more than obvious to Polhemus that nowadays a lot of styles which emanate on the street corner have a way of ending up on the backs of top models and thus on the world's most prestigious fashion catwalks. As already mentioned fashion is all about change and progress. Change due to the fleeting life cycle of fashion trends and progress, because the new is at the same time expected to be better and improved. Contemporary fashion designers seek inspiration in many kind of ways and do not apply only rigid fashion theory to their styles. It is more about a certain mix in fashion trends that they follow and therefore about combining and mingling what is

16 URL: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/415254/Alwin-Nikolais> [05. Mai 2012].

personally liked and appears interesting. The street value and the fashion style that originates there is not to be underestimated. Especially Alexis Reyna's eclectic fashion design, which certainly appeals more to connoisseurs or subgroups, reflects these traits. When it comes to fashion and adopting fashion trends there doesn't seem to be a fix process going on, as a new look can emanate almost everywhere at almost any time. Fashion is at the same time some kind of preparation for the future. It shapes the future via the ideas that the fashion designers tries to communicate. Fashion nurtures and shapes a body of common sensitivity and taste. It is part of a discourse that reflects the current modern world with all its experience that revolutionizes the body, while at the same time makes development more than obvious (Blumer 1969: 29; Polhemus 1994 in Hansen 2004: 372; Polhemus 1994: 327, 330-331).

6.2 Fashion and the body

Human bodies are in Western as in non-Western societies dressed bodies. In many social situations nakedness is regarded as inappropriate. Anthropologists affirm that all people dress the body in one way or another and that no culture leaves the body unadorned. We are required to appear dressed in almost all social situations, even though dress has various meanings depending on the culture of origin. Embellishment, enhancement or decorations are only a few attributes that explain the established standards of dressing the body. There might be certain circumstances like the private sphere where the naked body is tolerated, but to enter the public arena one has to dress appropriately. Bodies are made social and meaningful by giving them an identity through the dress and the adornment. It is obvious that getting dressed is an ongoing process and that it necessitates certain knowledge, techniques and skills. Most of all, dress is the way in which individuals learn to live in their bodies and feel as comfortable as if they were at home, according to Entwistle. She also claims that dressing the body is connected to moral codes that prevail. If we dress inappropriate, we

feel uncomfortable about ourselves as much as we may risk being socially condemned. Even the ones among us who appear to not care about their appearance are still dressing well enough in order to not be exposed to social censure. The dress, the body and the self cannot be separated from each other, due to their existent relationship. Bodies are socially and culturally constructed as already mentioned via Lock's and Scheper-Hughes theory of the mindful body. The dressing process is the outcome of individual practices destined towards the body. The different ways of dressing evoke questions about the origin of this meaningful process that the individual encounters every day in order to become an object of attention for others. The flux of timeliness, in regard to applied colors and trends to the body, is socially and temporally constructed. Depending on the context there are certain degrees of self-images applied, i.e. going to a wedding or to the groceries store. Goffman argues that being seen by society as a good person involves dressing in accordance with the moral code imposed by the society one lives in. If we fail to live up to these standards we risk to face disapproval or even expulsion from a certain group. The choices we make when dressing our bodies are not only a form of expressing our intentions, but it is at the same time the insignia that is seen and interpreted by the outside world, and which we in turn use to interpret others. It is the representation of our body self, which may make us feel uncomfortable about ourselves, if dressed inappropriately (Entwistle 2002: 5-11, Goffman 1972 in Entwistle 2002: 48-53).

Another crucial manifestation is that about the body image people in Western cultures have. Bruch claims that the body image is responsible for the body structure. Furthermore she believes that the created images are a reflection of various psychological constructions. The way one has been treated as a child or later in life, due to her or his body shape, is extremely significant for the way this person is going to view her or his body. Therefore social attitudes towards the body are rooted in psychological and interpersonal experiences in life. Very decisive are here as well the attitudes of parents towards their children which are part of one's own perception of the body. Blood argues that

the notion of body image is based on fundamental epistemological conclusions about the nature of the mind, the body, the individual and the society. The thin body media image, which is promoted in Western societies, affects women differently. The fact that women are still judged by society in many destructive kind of ways, among which the body image is one, makes it difficult for them to accept their bodies as they are. Consequently disturbances in body image persist in normal and anorexic women equally. Aloma Lafontana's successful dress from her summer collection 2011, which is designed to fit all types of female bodies and at the same time communicates beauty and comfort to the wearer as well as to the public, is certainly a wise attempt to challenge predominating beauty and body images. Besides the psychological construct of body image results from the interconnectedness of body and mind. It is more than obvious that our mind has a powerful impact on the body and thus on how we interpret our appearance or on how we deal with positive and negative experience (Blood 2005: 2, 20-23; Bruch 1973/1997: 212, 221).

The body is rather to be seen as a tie between personal resistance and action. At the same time the core reactions of the embodied self can become as mad, as hysterical, and as destructive as any other part of us, according to Mageo. It highly depends on our psychological and social environment that we grow up in and in which we later choose to spend our lives. Douglas asserts that the social body restricts the way in which the physical body is perceived. This statement implies at the same time that the body becomes a constrained instrument of expression. In addition Lock and Scheper-Hughes propose otherwise that emotions not only affect the way in which the body is experienced but are also responsible for the main connection between mind and body, therefore the individual, the social, and the body politic. Blacking agrees that feelings mediate between the body and the mind and that they are substantial for the size of commitment to action. It is also more than obvious to him that the mind cannot be separated from the body, and if a separation occurs both parts suffer. He also goes to such lengths and assumes that the human mind

is basically an expression of the emotions of the social body. Thus emotions are connected closely to the body as well as emotional attitudes towards the body stand for a reflection of the social value system. Overall it can be adhered to the fact that the body is never mere corporeality. Depending on time, place and culture the body represents the aspects of cultural ideologies. Language is consequently only one way of communication, and it may become very problematic and imprecise when describing emotions. Hence one needs in addition the body which functions like a compass, helping us to orient ourselves in our or other's society, because most things that one human feels can be felt by others too, and because human behavior and action are extensions of capabilities that are already in the body. Eventually it is more than obvious that women do identify more with their bodies than men, thus leading to a different experience of the body and to the development of a major body conscience, and therefore a kind of identity that men never experience. This is also basically the fact why Aloma Lafontana and Madre Mía put so much emphasize on women's necessities and on creating fashion designs that provide effective solutions, while Alexis Reyna rather speaks of genderless fashion or images (Blacking 1977: 4-6, 9, 11, 17-18; Bruch 1973/1997: 221; Douglas 1971/2004: 9-13; Entwistle 2002: 47; Lock/Scheper-Hughes 1987: 6-8, 28-30; Mageo 2002: 6-7).

When speaking about fashion and the body it is essential to mention also the models in this business. It was in the 1970s that models started to become superstars and to be well-paid international jet-setters. Supermodels not only have to fulfill certain criteria, but they also have to develop a certain trademark in their work. Even though some of the models have a respectable earning power, their income is of temporary duration. They get chosen for jobs depending on the type in demand. Their bodies automatically become an all-consuming obsession as they are judged on the perfection of their bodies, while at the same time considered unintelligent because of it. It is a fact that the majority of models are still white. Only a few supermodels have different looks and

ethnicities. Successful models adhere to a disciplined regime of body rituals containing constant dieting, exercise, massage, saunas etc. However the majority of models find themselves trapped into a vicious circle of being chronically dissatisfied with their looks, despite the tremendous investment in their bodies and looks. And yet the model fantasy is the most widespread contemporary dream shared by young women of all backgrounds. Furthermore it is models that women usually think of when confronted with the beauty myth. Besides it is a fact that women do earn more from selling their bodies than their skills. Ten years is the maximum career span of a model. Afterwards several options related to fashion design, photography, entertainment business or the like remain available to them. However the most lucrative deal for models is an exclusive contract with one of the leading cosmetics or fashion companies. Models embody certain techniques of how to wear their bodies. These techniques are the product of beauty, gender, fashion and movement. Capturing the eye of the viewer via a bodily expression is the essence of the modeling business. It is still a fact that women's visibility depends on their beauty and that it vanishes as soon as the contrary occurs. Stating that men die once while women die twice, once with their beauty and once with their bodies, is not so far away from reality. Furthermore it can be stated that beauty is highly intertwined within one's psyche, where sexuality mixes with self-esteem. Wolf underlines that calling a woman ugly can make her feel and act ugly, while on the other hand feeling beautiful keeps her whole. However the beautiful heroine is a contradiction in terms, because heroism is about the ever changing individuality, thus dynamic, while beauty itself is generic and inert, hence static. I was positively surprised when I found out that all three fashion designers didn't relate a certain type of person to beauty. Aloma Lafontana underlines the love that one has for oneself, which is responsible for one's beauty image. Alexis Reyna spoke of moments, emotions, experiences that may occur to one and in which beauty occurs for him. Madre Mía links a certain elegance and status to beauty without referring to body features. Consequently, even though all three fashion designers are involved in the

fashion business that deals with and tags certain attributes of the appearance to beauty, they refrained from perceiving beauty as such (Craik 1994: 282-285; Wolf 2002: 4, 34, 36, 50, 59, 61, 103).

Laver affirms that the obvious purpose of fashion is to make women beautiful, which is basically the objective of Aloma Lafontana and Madre Mía. But a dress that is regarded as beautiful accounts only for its contemporary context. In this regard Madre Mía is trying to preserve the best of past fashion designs while only slightly improving or altering them. Hence the goal is to create timeless dresses that are appreciated on a long-term basis. In his research Laver compares fashion with art and beauty analyzing different beauty ideals that predominated over the centuries. According to him the female body can be regarded as attractive within certain limits. It is very much connected to fashion in general that embeds in every change that it undertakes a new beauty ideal, with respect to the body. It varies depending on what hasn't been consumed yet. For instance in one season the focus might be on the waist, while in another on the shoulders, or on the legs. Laver asserts that fashion can be perceived as “a game of hide and seek, played between seduction and modesty, with moves so rapid that, from one minute to another, no one can tell which or who it is”. He furthermore explains that fashions in general are audacious because they draw the attention every season to a part of our body that hasn't been accentuated so far. But as with every prevailing trend the beauty ideal gets saturated after a certain period, demanding for replacement (Laver 1967: 117-119).

Beauty is one of the most attached phenomena to fashion. It is a cultural construct, which has always been imposed more on women than on men. At the same time the prevailing beauty standards are the one's which caused some of the most widespread maladies that are connected to all kinds of eating disorders. Hand in hand with eating disorders goes the fast growing cosmetic surgery department. Wolf even goes to such lengths stating that nowadays women would rather

engage more in losing a few pounds than in achieving any other goals. I agree with her that beauty is regarded more like a currency system equal to the gold standard, even though she writes from an American perspective that suggests an obsessive gaze towards appearance and the body. Beauty is the result of predominating politics and at the same time the last bastion that keeps male dominance intact, according to her. It is not connected to evolution as its ideals change more rapidly than the evolution of human kind. Featherstone asserts that the body is constantly exposed and undergoes increased work processes, like physical exercise, diet, make-up, cosmetic surgery etc. Hence there is a general tendency to perceive the body as an unfinished part of one's self that is open to revision, change, and transformation. The care about the body in terms of feeling good or being happy is furthermore connected to contemporary prevailing standards of health and body. During previous times and in various non-Western tribes women's beauty played a decisive role as a form of currency and barter among men. Beauty was perceived during a long time as wealth and as a powerful aspect. It has often been used in order to debilitate women's advancement, not only socially but also professionally. The unequal wages for women and men with an equal educational background and in equal position is unjust evidence that we still encounter in our society. It is a fact that women work harder than men, whether they are Eastern, Western, housewives or jobholders, while at the same time paid less than men. In addition the glass ceiling is still more than visible among many upper-management positions (Featherstone 1991 in Entwistle 2002: 19; Wolf 2002: 10, 12-13, 20, 23, 55).

Gilman remarks that wanting to become a better version of who we already are, whether by adorning our bodies with jewelry, tattoos, body piercings, fashion, haircuts etc, causes in the end judgmental perceptions of ourselves and others. Surgery is viewed nowadays by many as a medical tool that allows fixing the uncorrectable. This attempt to change the unchangeable, above all the psyche of the respective person, solely masks the reality and in the end causes more harm. Gilman

affirms that society causes unhappiness of many women and provides a cure via the hand of the surgeon. I find this statement a bit harsh and a distorted perception of reality, especially when dealing with such complex content. One should be cautious when it comes to generalizations, as they are often not representative and valid for an entire population. In the end it is up to every woman or man to decide freely on how to treat their bodies. Every action has a cause and most of the cases are too difficult to be understood or to be judged upon so easily. In the end it is a choice that can be considered by everyone who feels the need to strive for it. The same is valid for stating that aesthetic surgery was the result of women's low self-esteem and their obsessive concern with physical appearance. Vanity is indeed not related to the biological sex as it affects women and men equally. Lawton claims that exercise and diet are too much linked to hard work in our fast moving Western society. Cosmetic surgery became a technology through which the body is normalized, homogenized and enhanced in order to live up to a certain standard. With regard to Lawton, I do not fully agree with her affirming that exercise and diet require too much efforts and that nowadays people move towards plastic surgery in order to fix physical dissatisfaction. The trend towards conscious nutrition or to use a bike and to go to the gym after work has never been more obvious than today. Besides the numerous fitness centers and spa chains account for the fact that a certain demand must predominate, supporting the health and beauty system, next to “going under the knife”. However prevailing beauty ideals are still stronger imposed on women than on men. It is a fact that men with tanned, leathery skin or graying temples are seen as physically active or authoritative, while women with comparable features are simply regarded as old and unattractive (Gilman 2001: 3, 25, 31, 33-35; Hogle 2005: 705-706; Lawton 2004: 248).

Gremillion argues about body size and its socially and culturally imposed boundaries. She refers to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in this matter explaining the embodied experiences of normalization which are embedded in everyday practices. Gremillion admits that body size and the embodiment of

power account for each other, especially in cultures where thinness is not perceived as a beauty factor. In her analysis she also mentions the predominating body discipline which is very typical for the Western consumer culture, and which is rather associated with controlling and manipulating the body and respectively the body size. Contrariwise the fatal thing about aesthetic surgery is its subtle message underlining that symmetry is equal to beauty, health and happiness. Happiness is a condition of the mind that is enforced via continuous practice and effort. Fact is that no matter how much aesthetic surgery one undertakes, the face will still show one's mental condition. By altering our bodies or our lives we will not cure what is hidden within our soul. And as long as one continues to look upon and judge over others, hence composing visual categories with meaning, one will never be capable of facing oneself and one's inner conflicts (Gilman 2001: 152, 168, 315, 330, 334; Gremillion 2005: 15, 20).

Anthropologists have as is well-known dedicated a huge amount of time to investigate on the phenomenon of the body and its role and association among entities of distinct cultures and societies. They have tried to find answers to various questions that deal with the individual, the society and how bodily capabilities are seen. Especially when it comes to aging, societies interpret the phenomenon very differently. Some societies accept aging as a normal social and biological process, while others perceive it as pathology to be overcome. The old may be comprehended as a burden on Western societies, which gave rise to a whole industry dedicated to preserve or create youthfulness. Anthropologists investigated also on the modern forms of power, which operate through bodily disciplines and modifications; technologies of the self involve constant processes of self-monitoring and self-mastery of which the majority act on the mind and body via medical means. The prevalent consumer culture of Western societies evolved driven by images of youth, beauty, luxury, and fun. To take care of the body for social and aesthetic reasons can be identified as one of the main rules. Neglect is perceived as laziness, low self-esteem, and even moral failure. As

a result self-identity is constructed via the body (Hogle 2005: 701-702).

In the end it depends on the predominating values and norms of the respective society that influence our behavior, perception, judgment and way of thinking about others. It is based on invisible laws made by man that can be challenged and altered only by him.

6.3 Impact of garment on the body

Anthropologists believe that all human societies are modifying the body through a form of dressing or adorning. It has also been emphasized on by various scientists like Barnard 1996, Davis 1992, Wilson 1985 that certain communication is taking place through the dress. The garment is explaining the purpose of fashion in modern societies, thus the reasons why we dress. The reasons are mainly related to the expressive ways of a community that are translated into the habits to dress and adorn the body. I consider the adornment of the body as a more powerful endeavor as simply dressing it, due to its stronger relation to costumes. In this regard Alexis Reyna's fashion design would perfectly apply to this concept. He mentioned several times that his purpose is to build characters. Characters of a brand new world that is so much more colorful, lively and honest than the current one. Thus his characters are telling a story that is transmitted via the adorned body, respectively the dress, as I could clearly detect during my investigation process. Even though he is prone to almost completely hide the body underneath the amount of fabric, face, and body painting that he is using, the transmitted messages clearly communicate feelings and emotions of all kind. The whole scenery reminds one of a screenplay. His philosophy to turn society upside down is more than obvious. And this applies to old as to new collections that may appear distinct on the first glance but which have all the same base in common. Madre Mía's bridal collection that features embedded technologies, like the aroma-therapy, may also apply to the concept of adorning the body. A bridal dress can be regarded as some kind of an uniform that is worn during a special occasion,

and which initiates a change in the status of a respective woman for the rest of her life. It is a decisive step towards a new future. Entwistle remarks correctly that the main problem encountered in previous readings on fashion, dress or the body is their one-dimensional approach, meaning that they are mainly focusing only on one aspect. What is needed is an account of fashion, dress, and body which looks at their interrelation. Fact is that most theoretical studies are almost entirely based on other texts and not necessarily on practical studies. The reasons are mainly due to its easiness and also due to the matter that the body and the dress in theory are presenting a more aesthetic, clean, and more general image than in reality (Entwistle 2002: 88-95).

Contrary to other disciplines from the social sciences arena anthropology has paid more attention to the dress especially because it associates universal characteristics of human culture with it. It addresses questions like why do we wear a dress, why does a system of fashion exist, why is fashion exposed to a continuous change, or why does fashion distinguishes between women and men?

Malinowski posited that all human beings have basic needs like dressing and protecting the body in order to cover one's private parts. Not hiding the private parts is rather directed to raise sexual attention. Aloma Lafontana as well as Alexis Reyna is partially very keen to dress the body with very thick textiles that appear to not only cover the body but at the same time protect it. Especially Aloma Lafontana emphasizes on designing dresses that make women feel and look beautiful without exposing the naked body. But also Madre Mía's technology enhanced fashion design can account for that. Madre Mía for instance uses exclusively organic and natural fabrics which are carefully crafted and finished via the techniques and technologies used. Hence it depends also a lot on the applied approach how the piece of clothing will look in the end. Contrariwise to covering the body Aloma Lafontana and Alexis Reyna also add pieces of fashion or art to their collections that expose the body, referring to Aloma's peacock dress or Alexis' transparent dress from the fall/winter

collection 2012/2013. Veblen investigated on dress and its power related aspects, and asserts on the one hand that fashion is connected to one's financial background, as it is reflected in the distinct ways of dressing oneself. The rapid change occurs also due to the fact that as fashion trends pass on to the different social classes, distinction between the classes is wanted. On the other hand the differences in styles concerning the gender are mostly related to power and powerful positions within the economy. Dress codes for women in these positions are strongly oriented at what already prevails (Malinowski 1920 in Entwistle 2002: 77-79; Veblen 1953 in Entwistle 2002: 80-81).

Barthes is one of the few scientists who directed his gaze at several aspects of dress and body, and their interplay. First he emphasizes that clothing can be perceived as some kind of discourse which is projected on the body. Second he adds photography and representation to the whole construct. He speaks about the written clothing and the image clothing that differ in substance and relation one from another as they transmit diverse messages. The real garment which can be comprehended as a third component is in the end the one which delivers the information, according to Barthes. The written and the image clothing would also very well refer to Alexis Reyna's fashion design. His previous career in photography and poetry, but also his approach to painting, do play a decisive part in his entire designing concept. In his previous spring/summer 2011/2012 fashion show entitled "Unleashed" he even used to run around on the catwalk in a piece of cloth from his collection, taking pictures of the models, while at the same time representing the fashion design and the models. Thus fashion in general relies in large parts on an activity of transformation. Transformation occurs via the different meanings embedded in body and garment which is communicated through language, image, and the real clothing. Language depends in turn on the respective culture, the image of the representation that emanates from the photography, the real clothing, and from the distinct ways that it can be worn (Barthes 1993/2003: 87-88; Entwistle 2002: 40).

Schneider investigated on the anthropology of cloth and asserts that cloths comprise numerous categories of human aspirations and necessities. Depending on how the piece of clothing has been conceived and manufactured, it supports different meanings. It communicates cultural and social meaning and indicates artistic taste. Hence norms and values are communicated via the piece of garment. Those messages are the best understood among people who share the same culture and identify as one people. Elites, classes, gender or ethnic subgroups as well as cities and institutions are constantly developing in order to distinguish from each other and signalize their belonging to a certain community. Hollander claims that everyone is following with her or his style some public image or figure found in art, films, or advertising. Cloths may also be worn to impress, deceive, or confuse, and at the same time be misjudged by observers. Consciously or unconsciously we all look like the group within the society to which we aspire. Predilections, social roles, and loyalties are usually visible in one's dressing. Dress often exposes accurate information about the individual's social background, ethnic identification, sexuality, and political affiliation. Cloths are therefore not only playing an important role during our most crucial times in life, i.e. birth, marriage, death, but also during every step that we take along our unique paths. Our bodies and the dress that we chose to wear embodies and indicates our social origin whether we are aware of it or not (Hollander 1982 in Miller 2005: 14, 16-17; Schneider 1987: 409-416).

People wear dress and respectively their individual or social bodies or their body politic in distinct kind of ways as they ascribe explicit meaning to them. This applies in the field while taking up one's position. Polhemus underlines that changing appearance is not only a matter of dressing the body. Certain techniques that are applied to the body account for one's *habitus* and position in the field. It is true that certain clothes convey certain messages but it depends on the bodily expression and the individual's self-esteem what they will transmit in the end. The meaning can vary according to our socially and culturally educated eye and mind. But what is obvious in case of a dress is that it

should at the same time signalize one's individuality and differentness. It is all about the presentation of the self, whether it happens consciously or unconsciously. The message is, as follows: "I am here! Look at me!". Even though fashion is important in order to define certain styles that last during a specified period of time, one should not forget that those styles are liable to constraints like the social class, the gender, the ethnicity, the age, the profession, the shape of the body. Eventually the *habitus* can be regarded as very useful in order to comprehend in which way the different styles to dress or to adorn the body are interconnected with the gender and how it gets actively reproduced through the clothing (Bourdieu 1984; Entwistle 2002: 68-73; Polhemus 1998: 409-410).

Miller strengthens that clothing has political significance because it affects the relationship among citizens. It is obvious that dress is used as a main tool to present oneself and to be seen by others. And this is mainly also the point why fashion is at some point related to politics. Although neither of the fashion designers saw or wanted to see at first a link to politics, they all mentioned women's emancipation and democratic values to have been important to the development of fashion nowadays. But I understand that their major concern, when hearing the word politics, was influenced by its negative connotation in times of crisis. Getting back to the theory it can be stated that fashion can be partially seen as a supporter of democratic action, but it should not underestimate the fact that it embodies also a lot of anarchy. At the same time fashion conveys the attribute to adjust citizen's attitudes toward themselves, i.e. fashion can express respect toward others and strengthen ties with them. Hence when fashion designates membership and respect for members of both the group and the larger community, the relationship it sustains can be regarded as democratic, according to Miller. Fashion may support dialogue about social and political matters, which in turn is part of a democratic culture. At the basis of all lies respect, which consists of good will, interest in, and sensitivity toward the opinions of others. A dress culture that lacks a certain

mix of different values, including respect most of all, may easily be lead into an anti-democratic direction. Especially Madre Mia's sustainable business concept that is most of all build on respect for the environment and the society, with an emphasis on women, can be mentioned in this case, but also Aloma Lafontana's concept of celebrating femininity. It is all about appreciating whatever surrounds us and taking good care of it so that it can be of use on a long term basis. The message behind it is to improve by inclusion and not by exclusion. In conclusion it can be said that fashion does stand for a democratic culture where citizens conceal through clothes their social and political beliefs along with feelings of solidarity and respect. Respectful dressing is something that has to be learned. It implies a lot of sensitivity toward one's potential audience. Especially in multicultural societies people should be aware of how different people are viewed. It is important to work together towards more inclusion of various groups and styles which are applied on the body. Every community needs a certain level of unity in order to thrive, but that unity should not be achieved exclusively through dress (Miller 2005: 3, 5-6, 9, 13, 19, 21).

However, nowadays it became much easier to conceal one's real descent through the selection of clothes and styles that became available to everyone through the rise of many textile companies that copy and mass-produce the latest trends in elitist fashion. The once established hierarchy of trends and fashion styles lost its meaning, as most of the trends in fashion nowadays arise on the streets and among young subcultures instead of behind closed doors of a certain elite. But in order to be up to date one has to be capable of reading the hidden signs that are communicated through the textiles and the body. The style of dressing, the tastes in fashion, as well as the way one wears and combines the cloths are as important as the way one wears the body. The body itself is the most decisive transmitter of social prestige, not only for how it is dressed and adorned, but most of all for how it moves, walks and talks. Bourdieu is referring to the natural conduct of the body that we get familiar with and learn about through our unique position within the field due to our family

background and societal class. In all classes there are certain barriers that only its members know about. It is similar with being a member of a subculture that involves a concrete knowledge and a certain form of being, similar to a second skin of the body (Bourdieu 1984; Entwistle 2002: 164-171).

In conclusion it can be stated that no matter how different the characters or the worlds might be, that all three fashion designers aspire to build via their fashion designs, their choice of dress and the impact on the body clearly reveal their actual position in the field, thus their symbolic capital. Alexis Reyna remains the successful rockstar, who manages to unite all three body dimensions via his fashion design, as much as Aloma remains the unpretentious artist who hopes to be discovered one day, and focuses rather on the individual and social body, or Laura, the struggling business woman, who is on her way to self-actualization with Madre Mía's fashion design that applies to the social body and the body politic.

6.4 Fashion and identity

Every culture establishes, maintains and develops its agencies, practices and performances on a more or less regular basis. Consumption and our consumption behavior varies from culture to culture and is part of the process that constructs identity. Clothes are still among our most personal possessions and they are perceived as an important commodity at the same time. They are produced, exported, imported and vended all over the world, no matter if in Western department stores or on open-air urban markets in developing countries. Hansen emphasizes that their accessibility not only influences and diversifies tastes but at the same time constructs our individuality. The once Western hegemony of fashion is slowly but surely to decline and to become a stylistic innovation of various cultural influences in fashion. Alexis Reyna's latest fall/winter collection 2012/2013 entitled "Hot Shade" provides a very good example of this mix of cultural

influences. The dresses are long, colorful, powerful, and heavy, containing a respectable amount of fabrics. The faces of the models are painted, reminding of hunters that are on the prowl. The clothing is very unusual and may even appear disturbing, reflecting perfectly his eclectic style. Tribes from the Far East might be the closest one would associate the outfits with. But this is what makes Alexis Reyna so special. He seeks new, extravagant challenges and not old ones. He wants to break rules and to establish new trends (Hansen 2004: 370, 373).

Simmel illustrated once that fashion expresses a certain tension between uniformity and differentiation. On the one hand there is this irresistible need in each and every one of us to belong to a certain group but at the same time to stand out in order to assert one's individuality. Adopting new sometimes even shrill styles of dressing is a way of distinguishing from others. Fashion can be helpful in order to lend more importance to an individual, but it doesn't account for one's personality. Besides fashion has always been regarded as an outside phenomenon and apart from one's being. There are certainly parameters within the fashion system that apply to certain standards. But at the same time there are many varieties of dressing which depend on the manifold social structures. In contemporary Western society the bodies are not solely transmitters of a certain social class and thus subject to distinction. They are more and more embodying the self, signifying one's individuality and authenticity. Besides one shouldn't forget about the dissemination to a wider audience via the media which takes also place and which directs trends and influences tastes (Entwistle 2002: 84-88, 97; Lang&Lang 2007: 84; Simmel 1957: 552).

Evans remarked that in times when the self seems to experience rapid shifts, fashion itself can play a leading role in constructing images and meanings. Fashion is then articulating anxieties and ideals. It helps to construct an identity and at the same time it can be experienced as fashion at the edge. That is to say a hysterical version of what is understood as fashion because it may feature symptoms of alienation, loss, instability and change amongst others. The notion of ambiguity

underlines an important presumption that there is an intimate connection between opposites such as beauty and horror or fashion and morality. Simultaneously it is the fashion designer who includes and experiments with fragments of the past transforming them into something new and contemporary that will echo into the future (Ewans 2007:111-115). As already specified Alexis Reyna's latest collection can be regarded as a practical example in this matter. The combination of historical influences with contemporary fashion design is more than visible in his costume like collection. At the same time I would consider Madre Mía's sustainable approach to fashion as an example in terms of innovation. The attempt to preserve timeless looks from the past and to enhance them via particular technologies from the present is likely to thrive in the future.

The clothes that we chose to wear are a certain form of expressing our social origin and belonging. At the same time one can read from it by identifying and interpreting certain signs. But as the garment doesn't speak itself and the appearance is sometimes treacherous it may be exposed to wrong or false interpretation. Besides we often apply a series of strategies in order to present the best of us. Fashion and the chosen dress are the most important aspects, followed by several strategies directed to health and body. The ways in which we realize our identity are strongly related to our position in the world, representing a certain societal and cultural community. We are using taste to indicate the subjective preferences for which there are no objective standards. The clothes that we are wearing represent a certain compromise between our origin and our individual desires. Even though the dress indicates values, ideas and morals that we share, we don't want to be seen as dressed clones by our entourage. However it remains impossible to speak of positions and of competition without referring to classes. Lang & Lang detected that during the entire 20th century the different social classes were visible due to uniforms and distinct ways of dressing. Hence dress can mark certain barriers between the various groups and subgroups of a society, especially among subcultures of youngsters. Besides in this age of rapid communication the adoption of new styles

spreads over very fast and helps to make the new look familiar to a wider range of people. However modernity depends on distinction and differentiation that becomes obsolete and disapproved once that it has been replicated universally. The fashion industry focuses thus on creating new collections not only every season but also in between seasons. Thus fashion can be regarded as a process by which the taste of a mass of people is collectively redefined (Entwistle 2002: 141-147; Lang&Lang 2007: 85-86).

But how much authenticity regarding one's real identity is transmitted via the chosen cloths remains still one of the most complex things to be assessed, in theory as in practice. There might be individuals who adopt a certain style of disguise that they intentionally wear like some kind of a protection veil. Thus it is hard to look behind some curtains, unless one gets to know the person better. This is the case with subcultures like, the hippies, the punks, the gays, who basically represent noise, compared to prevailing standards within the society, which are rather considered as well-balanced. The signifying power that emanates from those subcultures is not to be linked only to potential anarchy but is rather stirring up rigid aspects of fashion. Besides it applies exclusively in the leisure sphere. Furthermore it can be said that the development of the plastic culture Western societies live in today is responsible for the equalization of dress and one's character. Furthermore it can be stated that as soon as the body differs from the norm, in terms of proportion, movement or symmetry, exclusion from certain groups can often not be avoided. The physical appearance became therefore very decisive over the years in order to assure a certain position within the society (Entwistle 2002: 151-155; Hebdige 1979: 152, 154).

Eventually it is essential to take into account that when one speaks of individuality, identity, and the role applied to fashion and dress, one refers to the social meaning of this identity that is never universal. Identities are as manifold as individuals. Hence the individual itself will always follow own paths within a defined group, in order to distinguish from peers even within those defined

boundaries.

6.5 Fashion and gender

Gender is a cultural construct that is also reproduced in dress, especially dress codes. It should be mentioned that the notions of sex and gender are perceived as two different concepts in Western societies. Sex refers hereby to the biological or natural characteristics, whereas gender relates to the cultural or societal traits of sex. In addition fashion is rather associated with femininity and the woman is regarded as the subject or the object of fashion. Consequently a woman's appearance is exposed to greater moral concern than a men's.

Fashion is indeed obsessed with gender. Alexis Reyna or Aloma Lafontana are both convinced that nowadays the boundaries between female and male fashion are fading, but they have not vanished yet. Even though Alexis Reyna is more than dedicated to implement a fact that is still visible via his latest fashion design, referring to long dresses for men and suits with ties for women, society has still not fully accepted the transition. But I would dare to say that it is only a question of time until it will become assimilated. For the time being the borderline between the genders is still visible via the clothing. The dress defines one's sex in the most obvious way and is often used to emphasize on certain societal roles, i.e. uniforms or dress codes. This process begins already as soon as we are born. Our parents choose then in turn the colors, the fabrics, and styles for us that have already been pre-defined by society. Through the dress of the baby, the sex is being announced. To see is to believe. Callahan & Paoletti investigated on infants clothing and found out that as infants clothing became more sex-typed, certain colors were also attached to gender symbolism. The most obvious example nowadays is the color blue for boys and pink for girls. However fact is that pink and blue were associated with gender as early as 1910 but at the same time the colors have been used interchangeably until the WWII. The social construct of gender is grounded on the view that at birth a baby has the potential to develop in various ways. Limits are set by its genetic heritage and

equally rely on the environmental influences that will shape its experiences and will be responsible for a comparatively advantageous or disadvantageous development. The most important aspects of this growth emanate in early childhood. Later in life our choices are controlled by external factors like class, gender, status, age etc. Styles of dress are therefore also adjusted to predominating trends. Thus what we see in cloths is the sole aspect of gender that is supposed to justify a certain sex in a specified society. Additionally dress is the most immediate way of imposing gender on the female and male bodies. It is at the same time supposed to offer an explanation about how to differentiate between woman or man and therefore to define femininity and masculinity. Even though pants obtained unisex status, many pants outfits continued to be strongly distinguished via pattern and color (Callahan&Paoletti 1999: 128; Entwistle 2002: 173-175; Wilson 2003: 207).

McRobbie researched on a wider scale on the topic, including the entire supply chain to her analysis. She illustrates that sewing and dressmaking was perceived as useful skills in some cases until nowadays, and that they were passed on to the daughters. They should be able to manufacture the cloths and dresses that they wanted but could not afford. Her investigation also proved that most young women and men of so-called ethnic origin and who study fashion design in art schools originate from families where the mother or other women in the house sewed. Aloma Lafontana's grandmother from whom she got her inspiration in fashion design is a perfect example in practice, as she was a costume designer herself. But also the fact that at least one parent was a performing artist or otherwise engaged in any other kind of artistic job may apply to the profession their offspring may consider later in life. Alexis Reyna's father has a degree from a famous arts school, as previously mentioned, as well as Laura Morata's parents have an artistic background, thus both influenced their children's later profession. In this regard, the economic capital as well as the cultural capital of all three fashion designers, which accounts for their current professional dedication, can be mentioned as an empirical proof. In addition it can be stated that fashion is an

almost entirely feminized business. Apart from a few men at the top, it can be considered as a female sphere of production and consumption. All three fashion designers design mostly for women, which illustrates also the demand for fashion design in general. The vast majority of the participants of the 080Barcelona fashion event presented women collections, which I regard as another indicator for the feminized business. McRobbie emphasizes that for this reason alone fashion is a feminist issue. In addition dress is part of a system of symbols that has been established in order to signalize affiliation and to distinguish gender. The symbols are subject to change contrary to the messages about gender and sex that are monolithic. Furthermore dress and its association with certain seductive, exhibitionistic, and provocative aspects are more often negatively imposed on women than men. Especially its provocative capacities in cases of rape are frequently used against women. However the scale and the power of the huge multi-nationals, which are responsible for the conditions of the consumer culture in Western societies, makes it difficult to see a political light at the end of the tunnel (Entwistle 2002: 176-186; McRobbie 1997: 82, 84, 85).

Women do also care more than men about cloths and their appearance putting them at the same time in a repressive position. Besides certain styles of female dress should be reconsidered before wearing them, especially when they convey sexuality and invite sexual harassment. Wilson argues that high-heels for instance make women vulnerable, as they prevent women from running away from a rapist or to catch a bus, aside from making them feel uncomfortable. However the overgeneralization of uncomfortable dress and its connection with the suppression of women should be applied with caution. It is true that fashion needs a constant challenge due to its volatile character, but at the same time it is all about enforcing standards. It is therefore up to women to challenge these prevailing norms and to find an attractive dress that will avoid the worst pitfalls of extravagance or self-objectification amongst others. She claims that the logic of this view is

function utility for clothing. Aloma Lafontana's and also Madre Mía's fashion design would perfectly describe the function utility. The dresses designed by Aloma Lafontana promote beauty and comfort for all kinds of female body shapes, while Madre Mía emphasizes on solving the most frequently occurring issues during festive acts but without disregarding the aspect of beauty and comfort. Eventually it can be affirmed that we live in socially constructed worlds and are therefore not exclusively directed by instinct. But we can at least engage in promoting the kind of values and norms that do not offend others while putting them in ominous positions due to their dress (Wilson 2003: 205-206, 210).

Hollander claims equally that fashion itself was considered basically feminine for a long period of time. She links the progress in general esteem to the development in esteem for women, and relates at the same time the right to vote and other rights that strengthen women's full citizenship to it. The new opportunities in women's life gave rise to new ways of expression, including dress design. Hollander also emphasizes that for centuries male potency was featured in vividly imaginative clothing, and female charm was exhibited in much simpler and modest clothing. Hence copying men became a standard provocative move in women's fashion, which basically put its emphasis on the large dimension of female sexuality. It was not about becoming more like them but rather about inclusion, while still remaining different (Hollander 2005: 28-29).

However, clothes do reflect the social differences between the sexes, assigning to women a more restricted public life as well as physical attractiveness as the measure of a woman's value, and to men the need to project authority. Even when women entered positions that formerly were restricted to men, they had to adapt to a dominating masculine style. But dressing styles are not only the consequence of certain factors like gender. They also change more often and are more dynamic. Women experience a much larger range of choices in fashion than men, including personal styles drawn from men's clothing. It is a fact that women have embedded almost every conceivable

masculine element into their dress, but for men to acquire feminine symbols raises questions about their masculinity. The major change in fashion that took place in history was manifested during the 20th century, due to numerous social, economic, and political advancements. Even though the pants became a part of every woman's wardrobe during the 20th century, the skirt never gained enough acceptance in men's world, at least not outside the music business. As already mentioned Alexis Reyna's latest fall/winter collection that happens to disregard the gender aspect may be considered as a wise attempt to overcome this barrier. However in the end it still remains an attempt, especially that Alexis Reyna doesn't promote his fashion design on a large scale (Entwistle 2002: 205-206; Paoletti & Kidwell 1989: 133-134).

One of the main achievements for women's liberation in fashion history has been the abolishment of the corset. Ruark describes “the popular waist-cinching, bust-lifting contraption that put up to eighty pounds of pressure on every square inch of a woman's torso, squeezing her rib cage in and up and pressing mercilessly on her internal organs” as one of the most contested garments of all times, equally compared to the Chinese foot-binding. Doctors who disapproved the corset saw a threat for women's natural role as child bearers, apart from indigestion. The ones who supported the corset did this mainly because they thought that it would reenforce the woman's weak body. However opinions were manifold and the topic remains highly controversial. Until nowadays feminist dress reformers blame the corsets for debilitating women's strength and keeping them from achieving equality with men. Fact is that fashions like the corset, the Chinese foot-binding, high heels, and the beauty ideals of thinness and permanent youth, are still seen as dangerous to women's health (Miller 2005: 4; Ruark 2001: 232-234).

Furthermore Wolf asserts that the sexual revolution cannot be perceived as some kind of achievement in terms of gender equity, as in terms of diet, surgery and looks it sells women the most vicious version of the beauty myth money can buy. At the same time it is ironical that the myth

that drives women apart also binds them together, since many women nowadays are still raised to be mostly competitors for beauty. Women are hence women's worst enemy since they engage in that beauty competition against each other. Aspects that account for beauty and which are related to confidence, sexuality, and a healthy individuality have nothing to do with beauty and are accessible to women at all times. But many women in Western societies seem to forget about them. To be a beautiful woman is a phenomenon that is exported from West to East and from rich to poor equally, and it is something that is far beyond experiencing freedom or equal opportunities in life. Women should challenge the existing system of beauty and not let hunger, nausea or plastic surgery threaten their lives. The thriving system is more likely to be compared to political torture than to anything else. When a class of people is denied food, forced to vomit regularly or repeatedly cut open and stitched together to no medical purpose, one is describing and referring to torture, according to Wolf (Wolf 2002: 69, 75, 80, 257, 284-285).

Even though fashion is more widely related to women I would suggest to take a look at current and past facts which support different opinions. Fact is that men do not seem to have or ever had less interest in their appearance when looking at the history of dress. Men also dedicate a respectable amount of their time to prepare themselves. Nowadays this phenomenon is more than obvious in terms of metrosexuality, which contains a lot of exhibitionistic and erotic aspects in itself. People sometimes adopt certain fashion trends in order to escape from the nothingness and unseemliness of past fashion styles. Apart from that each trend has a certain lifecycle that terminates the process through rejection, which applies to women and men equally, as previously illustrated.

In conclusion the suggestion can be made that women need to start to aspire to pleasure. Tolerate and respect each other's choices. Break through and change the rules so that beauty can't be shaken. Women should start to accept that beauty is within each and every one of us and that it is more related to the love one has for oneself than to any physical features, as Aloma Lafontana declares.

As already mentioned gender is not connected to the body but it is rather a societal concept that is applied to it. Femininity and masculinity are neither products of the body of women and men nor is there any natural connexion between women and femininity or men and masculinity. Sex can rather be considered as a product of our ideas about sexuality, as well as gender can be interpreted as responsible for explaining the biological sex within different societies. Consequently dress should also be comprehended as a construct of the society we live in that can be challenged and improved at any time, even though it has already some established pillars.

6.6 Fashion and representation

The adorned body on fashion catwalks, beauty pageants or in fashion magazines offers also a rich platform for topics like representation, gender construction, or politics amongst others. Hansen illustrates that fashion and beauty events in Western societies are not only responsible for establishing Western styles. It is at the same time a complicated process of negotiation which takes place and where norms of beauty, gender and sexuality are challenged and rethought. The dress itself remains crucial in this negotiation process. To be dressed according to “*le dernier cri*” which might defer depending on the culture one resides in, is pursued by many. The notion of fashion and style come together on the dressed body while at the same time creating our identity. Even though it might enforce the role that we chose to play at a particular moment, it reflects parts from our personality and the position that we represent in the field (Hansen 2004: 383-385, 387).

Meskill perceives the body as primarily concerned with posture, gesture, costume, sexuality and representation. Furthermore she sees the body as an artifact representing sets of bodies of larger social entities that are interacting and negotiating with each other on a regular basis. Evans and Thornton argue that there are two main aspects when considering fashion and representation. One is

related to fashion's traditional identification with femininity and the second is the body's role within the clothing system. They furthermore assert that if fashion itself is comprehended as an arena where the representation of the female body gains significance, it is due to the fact how the respective culture constructs femininity and how it approaches that representation to women. The notion of the body is something that is culturally and socially constructed and which is consequently exposed to change in fashion, too. Thus it can be stated that the cultural perception about femininity can also be challenged and changed at the same time. When considering fashion, adornment or the body it is indispensable not referring also to sexuality. The modern sexuality has its origin in our bodies. The dress and accessorizes we embellish our bodies with do carry a potential sexual message. The naked body might appear interesting at some point but the dressed one transmits the mystery of the body, which makes the body even more interesting and provocative. Using one's imagination is a crucial component of sexuality and the dress on the body can stimulate the fantasy and augment the sexual desire. The garment and the ornaments applied to the body are part of a vocabulary that we use in order to signalize desires as well as express ourselves, and thus to speak to others. We represent ourselves, our unique world of values, morals and beliefs; in every choice we make when dressing the body and exposing it to others. And by dressing the body all types of ornamentation that can be applied to the body are included, i.e. jewelry, cosmetics, piercings, tattoos as well as the role that one chooses to play, which in turn communicates one's sexual standpoint. Even though all three fashion designers abandoned the idea of seeing the body first before engaging in further fashion design, they however saw the final product on the shape of a body. This proves that the representation of the garment on the body however plays a major role in the whole concept and that even though the prototype is designed on the torso of a mannequin, it still represents the shape of the body of a human being (Entwistle 2002: 219-221; Evans & Thornton 1991: 48-49; Meskell 1998 in Joyce 2005: 151).

It is indispensable to speak about representation in fashion and not to refer also to its features of power. Foucault links the concept of power to knowledge. To him knowledge is viewed as an essential aspect that results from power relations. Discourse which conveys power gives also meaning to the world. Furthermore he accentuates that it is the body that provides the space where the micro-physics of power work. It is at the same time like a battlefield for different power and knowledge regimes, where new forms of thinking, meaning and possibilities of resistance arise (Foucault 1972/1977 in Blood 2005: 48-50).

Entwistle spent also a respectable amount of time investigating on the power aspect that is conveyed in dress. She addressed questions like how the feminine body is created in the discourse about power in dress. The outcome of her study states that the power aspect in dress focuses mainly on controlling sexuality in order to achieve authority, respect and a powerful position in the working environment. Therefore the dress codes that prevail in the business world are still regarded nowadays as some kind of a uniform, consisting of dark colors for both sexes and a feminine counterpart around the neck. At the same time it is also the dress that is used in order to impress. But it should be mentioned that women once again have to be more aware than men of the subliminal transmission of sexual aspects that occurs through some styles of dress. Depending on the pattern applied, women still risk that their bodies are being more associated with sexuality due to the cultural way of thinking. Tight cloths that accentuate the feminine body parts are more often associated by the viewer with sexuality in general to the socially trained eye than fashion that refrains from showing the body shape clearly. This cultural association of women with sexuality is one of the major obstacles women encounter in their role, authority, and position in the working world, but also outside. However to state that dressing up puts women at more risk to be harassed and raped due to their feminine appearance is a bit of an exaggerated statement for a civilized world. Aloma Lafontana's particular dress that emphasizes on the respective female parts, thus the

breasts and the waist ,is a perfect example of elegance that can be worn by a large variety of women, without exposing them to any kind of risk. The festive and classy dresses of Madre Mía do not less than that put an emphasis on the feminine parts without necessarily inviting any kind of molesting act. Finally neither Alexis Reyna's prior collections that were literally cut on the body, i.e. “Unleashed” or “Nairobi”, would put the wearer in an awkward position (Entwistle 2002: 226-231). Furthermore one should also consider related disciplines like archaeology when investigating on the body, in order to have a more representable variety of comparison. Joyce explains that archaeologists do identify two well-established senses of the body: on the one hand the physical one, which describes perfectly the diet, health, life span, and physical activities. On the other hand the consideration of representations through which cultural ideas of masculinity and femininity are constructed and exposed. Representation became part of the discipline in order to support interpretations of idealized beauty, social signs of age, status, and gender, and other aspects of embodiment. Thus archaeologists view the body as a concrete, material structure of flesh, organs, nerves, and skeletal elements which harmonize through physical and social inscription of the body's surface. Apart from that Joyce explains that specific costumes correspond to different categories of the person in the past, meaning that a person's social background can be read off the body. Similar to costumes can be tattoos perceived, which are basically inscriptions of a history on the body. Tattoos and various other body practices create permanent marks, unlike the use of garment or other accessorizes which are prone to be exchanged more rapidly and easily. Body decoration is seen as part of a representational formulation of the body that communicates ideas and meanings (Joyce 2005: 140-142, 145).

Another feature of fashion which explains representation is fashion photography. It creates an image that entirely exceeds the sole fashion design, providing the possibility of creating new meaning to the entire concept. It becomes more flexible and adaptable, and thus more open to interpretation.

Zahm perceives photography as a vampiric form of representation as it conveys the power to assimilate, integrate and mingle with all kinds of types of references. The vampirism of fashion photography is the most powerful state of representation today, even though it is prone to distortions. Distortion of the body is very likely to occur because it disappears behind the paradoxical system of technological tools of improvement. This is basically the reason why commercial fashion photography has to be regarded with caution as it displays ambiguous and inaccurate meaning. At the same time it can be considered as the crossroads of advertising and pornography. Advertising transmits certain subliminal messages, while pornography is embedded in photography in order to express sexual desire and the relation to the body aestheticizing the sexual act (Breward 2003: 278-281; Zahm 2003: 263, 266-267, 269).

Fortunately not all commercial photography is condemned. The few independent art and culture magazines, i.e. *Dazed and Confused* or *i-D*, are more than eager for showing new ways of expression via fashion photography. The focus lies here on more than just the promotion of picture perfect fashion designs. The challenge and the inclusion of various known and unknown approaches to fashion can be retrieved here. The same is valid for some of the well-respected photographers of the past and the current century, i.e. Jan Saudek, Bruce Weber, Herb Ritts, Helmut Newton, Steven Meisel, Wolfgang Tillmans, Corinne Day, Man Ray, Jürgen Teller, amongst others. It is true that some use certain tools to improve the result, but they rather play with color and shadow and not with the actual bodies. The point is more about transforming the vampirism of fashion photography or photography in general into a form of coexistence that transports messages and experiences that are not prone to censorship.

7 Conclusion

Fashion designers and their fashion designs have been discussed in detail throughout the thesis, based on my ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted in Barcelona and the respective theoretical background. I have tried to scrutinize the philosophy of three Catalan fashion designers in regard to several aspects that are connected to their philosophy in fashion design, and respectively the interaction of fashion on the body. As an anthropologist I have utilized a range of qualitative methodologies, i.e. observation, interviews, discussions, in order to have the best outcome possible on my subject of interest. The theoretical background was provided on the one hand by Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' threefold dimension of the mindful body, and on the other hand partially by Bourdieu and his *habitus* and capital concepts. The purpose of my investigative undertaking was to verify to what extent the fashion designer's philosophy in practice applies to the representation or interplay between the actual fashion design and the body in theory. It is clear that in order to add weight to the whole project some introduction to other topics related to fashion, i.e. fashion system, identity, gender, representation, amongst others, had to be provided. I also had the idea of combining the two theories in order to scrutinize how much the peculiarities of the different capitals of the fashion designer are reflected in the bodily expression and representation of their fashion design on the body. But in the end I refrained from it, due to the fact that it would have gone beyond the scope of a master thesis.

However the empiric data that I collected was verified according to the applied theories. The outcome of the study, that is to say, the verification of the theory in practice, could be mostly proven. In case of Lock's and Scheper-Hughes' mindful body, a combination of at least two bodies, if not more, could be illustrated. Bourdieu's capital concept was also perfectly applicable to the fashion designer's *habitus* and her or his philosophy in fashion. Aloma Lafontana's dress from the summer 2011 collection, but also her remaining fashion design, harmonized with the individual and

the social body, while Madre Mía's fashion concept related to the social body and the body politic. A combination of all three body dimensions could also be found. In this case Alexis Reyna's collections would perfectly describe the unity of all three body phenomenons in fashion design, thus visualizing the equilibrium between several entities. At the same time it was also Alexis Reyna's symbolic capital that outweighed the most and distinguished itself from the other ones, without underestimating their symbolic capital. This could also be connected to his already known and famous position in the field of interest and to his success as a fashion designer in general. His unique but certainly misunderstood eclectic fashion style reflects prestige and recognition, as well as self-realization. The worlds that he depicts and tries to build are an utopic form of what our modern Western society stands for. This is also basically the fact why many people feel rather disturbed by what they see instead of recognizing the beauty in it. Just because something that we perceive is outside of an already defined context it doesn't mean that it cannot be real. The artistic domain is an abstract field where numerous ideas, desires and wishes come together in order to find a way of expression. Our imagination is the only tool that boundaries cannot be claimed upon. At the same time it is also an instrument that can and should be applied to the possibilities one has in the modern world, in order to improve, enhance or simply satisfy needs.

Finally it can be concluded that fashion and dress incorporate the body in culture. It is fashion that produces discourses on the body and on the way how it is dressed, no matter how contradictory or individual it may be. The garment is the translation of fashion in daily practice conveying also one's personality, as it could be shown. The discourse on fashion and its practice on the body makes the body social and identifiable among various cultures. This construction of the body through the garment is of considerable importance in regard to the development of modern society and should be paid more attention in theory as in practice, in order to estimate its powerful aspects on a wider scale.

8 Bibliography

8.1 Monographs and articles from journals and collections

ABRAHAMSON, Eric. 1996. Management Fashion. In: *The Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 1996), pp. 254-285.

ABRAHAMSON, Eric/FAIRCHILD, Gregory. 1999. Management Fashion: Lifecycles, Triggers, and Collective Learning Processes. In: *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 1999), pp. 708-740.

APPADURAI, Arjun. 1988. Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. In APPADURAI, Arjun (ed.): *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne/Sydney. pp. 3-64.

ADAMS, Frederick/AIZAWA, Kenneth. 2008. *The Bounds of Cognition*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.. Oxford/Malden/Victoria.

AGINS, Teri. 2007. What happened to Fashion? In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 404-408.

ANDREWS, John. 2004. Business sense: It takes a lot more than Individual Flair to stay at the Top. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 357-360.

BARTHES, Roland. 2007. Written Clothing. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 87-89.

BAUDOT, Francois. 2011. *Moda y surrealismo*. H. Kliczkowski-Onlybook, SL. Madrid.

BETENSKY, Carolyn. 2000. The Prestige of the Oppressed: Symbolic Capital in a Guilt Economy. In BROWN Nicholas/SZEMAN Imre (eds.): *Pierre Bourdieu. Fieldwork in Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. New York/Oxford. pp. 207-214.

BLOMMAERT, Jan/JIE, Dong. 2010. *Ethnographic Fieldwork. Multilingual Matters*. Bristol/

Buffalo/Toronto.

BLOOD, Sylvia K. 2005. *Body Work. The Social Construction of Women's Body Image*. Routledge. London/New York.

BLUMER, Herbert. 1969. Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection. In: *The Sociological Quarterly*. Vol. 10, No. 3 (Summer 1969), pp. 275-291.

BOLTON, Andrew. 2007. Viktor&Rolf. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 270-271.

BONNEY, Thérèse/BONNEY, Louise. 2007. The Dressmaking World. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 319-320.

BOODRO, Michael. 2007. Art and Fashion. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 256-260.

BORDO, Susan. 2007. "Material Girl": Madonna as Postmodern Heroine. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 244-247.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1985. The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups. In: *Theory and Society*. Vol. 14, No. 6 (Nov. 1985), pp. 723-744.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1986. The Forms of Capital. In RICHARDSON J. E. (ed.): *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*. Greenwood Press. New York. pp. 46-58.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1987. The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic. In: *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 46, Analytic Aesthetics (1987), pp. 201-210.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1989. Social Space and Symbolic Power. In: *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 7, No.

1 (Spring 1989), pp. 14-25.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Polity Press. Cambridge/UK.

BREWARD, Christopher. 2007. Fashion on the Page. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 278-281.

CALLAHAN, Colleen R./PAOLETTI, Jo B. 2007. Is it a Boy or a Girl? Gender Identity and Children's Clothing. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 125-128.

CHAPMAN, Katy. 2007. Inside design – A look at the method behind the madness. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 352-356.

COLE, Shaun. 2007. Invisible Men? In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 146-151.

CRAIK, Jennifer. 2007. Supermodels and Super Bodies. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 282-286.

D'ANDRADE, Roy G. 1992. Schemas and Motivation. In D'ANDRADE Roy/STRAUSS Claudia (eds.): *Human Motives and Cultural Models*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge/New York, Melbourne/Sydney. pp. 23-44.

DelGAUDIO, Sybil. 2007. Dressing the Part: Sternberg, Dietrich, and Costume. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 293-298.

GILMAN, Sander L. 2001. *Making the Body Beautiful. A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery*. Princeton University Press. Princeton/Oxford.

GUILLORY, John. 2000. Bourdieu's Refusal. In BROWN Nicholas/SZEMAN Imre (eds.): *Pierre Bourdieu. Fieldwork in Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. New York/Oxford. pp. 19-

EKELUND, Bo G. 2000. Space, Time, and John Gardner. In BROWN Nicholas/SZEMAN Imre (eds.): Pierre Bourdieu. Fieldwork in Culture. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. New York/Oxford. pp. 215-240.

ENTWISTLE, Joanne. 2002. El cuerpo y la moda. Una visión sociológica. Paídos: Barcelona/Buenos Aires/México.

ENTWISTLE, Joanna. 2007. The Dressed Body. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): The Fashion Reader. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 93-104.

EWANS, Caroline. 2007. Fashion at the Edge. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): The Fashion Reader. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 111-117.

EVANS, Caroline/THORNTON, Minna. 1991. Fashion, Representation, Femininity. In: *Feminist Review*. No. 38 (Summer 1991), pp. 48-66.

FIGUERAS, Josefina. 2003. Moda española. Una historia de sueños y realidades. Ediciones Internacionales Universitarias, S.A. Madrid.

GILBERT, David. 2007. World Cities of Fashion. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): The Fashion Reader. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 179-184.

GREMILLION, Helen. 2005. The Cultural Politics of Body Size. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 34 (2005), pp. 13-32.

GUDEMAN, Stephen. 2001. The Anthropology of Economy. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford/Malden.

HALTTUNEN, Karen. 2007. Sentimental Culture and the Problem of fashion. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): The Fashion Reader. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 129-132.

HANKS, William F. 2005. Pierre Bourdieu and the Practices of Language. In: *Annual Review of*

Anthropology. Vol. 34 (2005), pp. 67-83.

HEBDIGE, Dick. 1979. Subculture: The unnatural break. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 152-158.

HOGLE, Linda F. 2005. Enhancement Technologies of the Body. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 34 (2005), pp. 695-716.

HOLLANDER, Anne. 1992. The Modernization of Fashion. In: *Design Quarterly*. No. 154 (Winter 1992), pp. 27-33.

HOLLANDER, Anne. 2007. When Worth was King. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 314-318.

HOLTON, Robert. 2000. Bourdieu and Common Sense. In BROWN Nicholas/SZEMAN Imre (eds.): *Pierre Bourdieu. Fieldwork in Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. New York/Oxford. pp. 87-99.

JACKSON, Peter. 2007. Local Consumption Cultures in a Globalizing World. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 212-215.

KING, Anthony. 2000. Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A “Practical” Critique of the Habitus. In: *Sociological Theory*. Vol. 18, No. 3 (Nov. 2000), pp. 417-433.

KÖNIG, Anna. 2007. Sex and the City in the British Fashion Press. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 299-301.

KOPYTOFF, Igor. 1988. The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. In APPADURAI, Arjun (ed.): *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne/Sydney. pp. 64-94.

LANG, Kurt/LANG, Gladys Engel. 2007. The Power of Fashion. In WELTERS

- Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 83-86.
- LAWTON, Graham. 2007. Extreme surgery. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 248-249.
- LAVER, James. 1967. Fashion, Art, and Beauty. In: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*. New Series, Vol. 26, No. 3 (November 1967), pp. 117- 128.
- LECOMPTE, Margaret D./SCHENSUL, Jean J. 1999. *Designing & Conducting Ethnographic Research*. Altamira Press: Walnut Creek/London/New Delhi.
- LEE, Michelle. 2007. McFashion is Entertaining. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 374-377.
- LUTZ, Catherine. 1992. Motivated Models. In D'ANDRADE Roy/STRAUSS Claudia (eds.): *Human Motives and Cultural Models*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne/Sydney. pp. 181-190.
- MARTIN, Richard. 2007. Fashion rendering. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford, New York. pp. 261-262.
- McCRACKEN, Grant. 2007. The Fashion System. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 90-92.
- McINTYRE, Richard/RAMSTAD, Yngve. 2007. Not only Nike's doing it: "Sweatin" and the Contemporary Labor Market. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 219-224.
- McROBBIE, Angela. 2007. Secondhand Dresses and the Role of the Ragmarket. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 332-342.
- McROBBIE, Angela. 1997. Bridging the Gap: Feminism, Fashion, and Consumption. In: *Feminist*

Review. No. 55, Consuming cultures (Spring 1997), pp. 73-89.

MEAD, Arthur C. 2007. Made in China. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 419-424.

MILLER, Joshua I. 2005. Fashion and Democratic Relationship. In: *Polity*. Vol. 37, No.1, Fashion for Democracy (2005), pp. 3-23.

NEWMAN, Cathy. 2007. Dreamweavers: Weaving the Future. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 414-418.

NIESSEN, Sandra. 2007. Re-orienting Fashion Theory. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 105-110.

NORELL, Norman et. al. 1967. Is Fashion an Art? In: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*. New Series. Vol. 26, No. 3 (November 1967), pp. 129-140.

PAOLETTI, Jo B./KIDWELL, Claudia Brush. 2007. Men and Women: Dressing the Part. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 133-135.

PIZANIAS, Caterina. 2000. Habitus Revisited: Notes and Queries from the Field. In BROWN Nicholas/SZEMAN Imre (eds.): *Pierre Bourdieu. Fieldwork in Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. New York/Oxford. pp. 145-164.

POLHEMUS, Ted. 2007. Trickle down, bubble up. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 327-331.

POLHEMUS, Ted. 2007. Implications for the Appearance-Alteration Industries. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 409-410.

REISCHER, Erica/KOO, Kathryn S. 2004. The Body Beautiful: Symbolism and Agency in the Social World. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 33 (2004), pp. 297-317.

- RIVOLI, Pietra. 2007. "Two for a Penny". In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 392-396.
- ROBINSON, Dwight E. 1961. The Economics of Fashion Demand. In: *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (August 1961), pp. 376-398.
- RUARK, Jennifer. 2007. A second look at the big squeeze. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 232-236.
- SCHNEIDER, Jane. 1987. The Anthropology of Cloth. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 16 (1987), pp. 409-489.
- SCHOR, Juliet B. 2007. Born to buy. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 411-413.
- SEGRE REINACH, Simona. 2007. Four Models of Fashion Relationships. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 383-386.
- SHWEDER, Richard A. 1992. Ghost Busters in Anthropology. In D'ANDRADE Roy/STRAUSS Claudia (eds.): *Human Motives and Cultural Models*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne/Sydney. pp. 45-58.
- SIMMEL, George. 1957. Fashion. In: *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 62, No. 6 (May 1957), pp. 541-558.
- STRAUSS, Claudia. 1992. Models and Motives. In D'ANDRADE Roy/STRAUSS Claudia (eds.): *Human Motives and Cultural Models*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne/Sydney. pp. 1-20.
- STANFILL, Sonnet. 2007. Punks and Pirates: The Costiff Collection of Vivienne Westwood. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 339-342.

TRANBERG HANSEN, Karen. 2004. The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion and Culture. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 33 (2004), pp. 369-392.

WEBBER-HANCHETT, Tiffany. 2007. Dorothy Shaver: Promoter of “The American Look”. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 369-373.

WILSON, Elisabeth. Feminism and Fashion. 2003. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 203-211.

WOLF, Naomi. 2002. *The Beauty Myth. How Images of Beauty are used against Women*. Perennial. An Imprint of Haper Collins Publishers. New York.

ZAHM, Olivier. 2007. On the marked Change in Fashion Photography. In WELTERS Linda/LILLETHUN Abby (eds.): *The Fashion Reader*. Berg Publishers. Oxford/New York. pp. 263-269.

8.2 Internet links:

URL:<http://modauniversidadempresa.com/> [09. January 2012].

URL:<http://www.080barcelonafashion.com/ca/home> [09. January 2012].

URL:<http://www.thebrandery.com/> [12. January 2012].

URL:<http://www.euc2c.com/graphics/en/pdfs/mod9/Case,%20Textile%20Catalonia%20vF.pdf> [01. March 2012].

URL:http://elpais.com/diario/2000/03/09/catalunya/952567667_850215.html [07. January 2012]

URL:<http://www.esdi.es/index.php?llengua=3> [05. December 2011].

URL:<http://www.ied.es/barcelona/home> [05. December 2011].

URL:http://www.fdmoda.com/en?set_language=en [15. February 2012].

URL:[http://www.idep.es/estudios/moda/\(area\)/fashion_area](http://www.idep.es/estudios/moda/(area)/fashion_area) [15. February 2012].

URL:<http://www.oslobarcelona.com/> [05. October 2011].

URL:<http://chalayan.com/> [05. December 2011].

URL:http://www.alexandermcqueen.eu/alexandermcqueen/en_GB [05. December 2011].

URL:<http://alomalafontana.com/> [05. October 2011].

URL:<http://rafelforga.com/> [09. March 2012].

URL:<http://alomalafontana.com/11thoughts.html> [29. April 2012].

URL:<http://alexisreyna.com/> [01. February 2012].

URL:<http://alexisreyna.com/collections/unleashed/index.html> [01. February 2012].

URL:<http://alexisreyna.com/collections/autumnwinter2012/index.html> [01. February 2012].

URL:<http://www.madre-mia.com/> [20. December 2011].

URL:http://www.philamuseum.org/micro_sites/exhibitions/schiaparelli/kids/schiap-pack.pdf [20. May 2012].

URL:<http://library.newschool.edu/speccoll/fashionhistory/norell.php> [05. May 2012]

URL:<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-irene-sharaff-1463219.html> [05. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/415254/Alwin-Nikolais> [05. May 2012].

URL:<http://vistetequevienencurvas.blogspot.com/2011/11/proxima-parada-fashion-circuit-20.html> [15. November 2011].

URL:<http://www.cookedinbarcelona.com/> [03. November 2011].

URL:<http://www.ravalnet.org/files/dossier%20diseñadores%20y%20artesanos%20Mercat%20Raval.pdf> [03. November 2011].

URL:<http://combativecouture.com/> [03. November 2011].

URL:<http://www.pipadegirasol.com/about> [03. November 2011].

URL:<http://www.laveintinueve.com/> [13. November 2011].

URL:<http://www.modauniversidadempresa.com/> [23. November 2011]

URL:<http://www.saudek.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.bruceweber.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.herbritts.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.helmutnewton.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://tillmans.co.uk/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.corinneday.co.uk/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.manraytrust.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://juergenteller.tumblr.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://steven-meisel.tumblr.com/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.flickr.com/photos/53035820@N02/sets/72157625263588504/> [03. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.fashionmodeldirectory.com/designers/norman-norell/> [05. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.courreges.com/modeles.html> [05. May 2012].

URL:<http://www.dazeddigital.com/fashion> [03. January 2012].

URL:<http://www.id-mag.com/> [03. January 2012].

8.3 Appendix

8.3.1 Alexis Reyna's fashion design



**Illustration 1: Alexis Reyna's "Hot Shade"
autumn/winter 2012/2013 collection**



**Illustration 2: Alexis Reyna's "Unleashed"
spring/summer 2011 collection**

8.3.2 Aloma Lafontana's fashion design and art projects



Illustration 3: OSLO shop in Torrent D'Olla/Gràcia/Barcelona

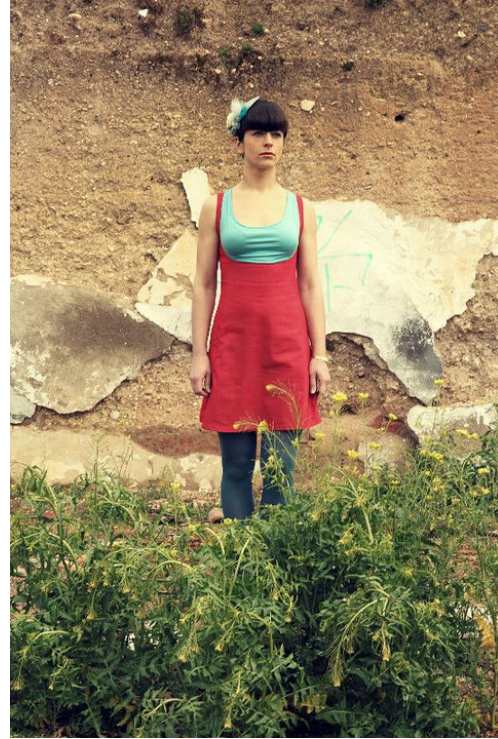


Illustration 4: Aloma Lafontana's successful dress from the summer 2011 collection



Illustration 5: Parts of Aloma Lafontana's "11 thoughts" art project

8.3.3 Madre Mía del Amor Hermoso's fashion design

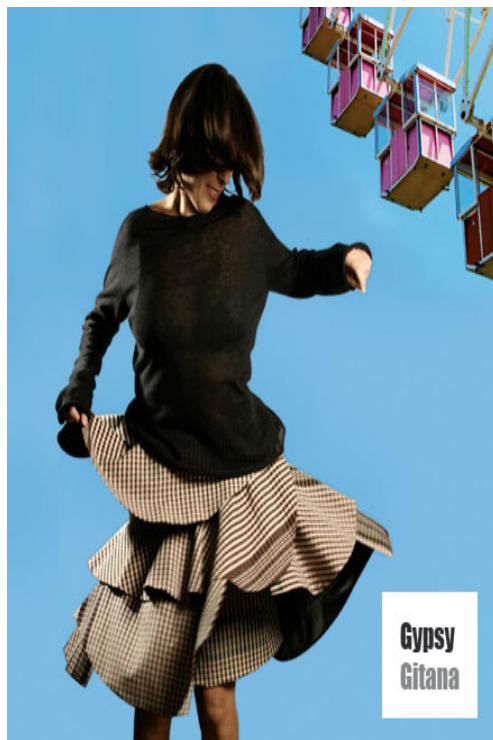


Illustration 6: Madre Mía's "Urban Chic" fashion design



Illustration 7: Madre Mía's "Brides" fashion design

8.3.4 Abstract

Fashion is the mirror in which societies and cultures are recognizing and identifying themselves. Even though fashion conveys a rather aesthetic character, it implies at the same time an ethical aspect. Furthermore it reaches out to a whole new dimension on an anthropological level, which serves the individual within the society utmost. It protects the individual's intimacy, reflecting the human dignity and creating an environment of serenity and equilibrium within the society.

It is clear that fashion in itself is very divers. Different waves at its core reflect consumeristic, hedonistic or subjectivistic inclinations. At the same time fashion plays an essential part in our construction and representation of a social identity, a social class system, sexuality, age, ethnicity, gender, as well as cultural preferences.

However this substantial paper is the outcome of private interests on the topic that is going to be investigated from an anthropological angle. As an anthropologist I conducted my ethnographical fieldwork among young, vibrant, meaningful but still not mainstream fashion designers and their fashion designs in Barcelona. I regard the study of the fashion designer's philosophy expressed in the investigated fashion design, as well as the interconnectedness between body and garment, as crucial. The thesis is thus partially dedicated to the study of fashion and body.

As an anthropologists I will try to scrutinize the *habitus* of the concerned fashion designers, who maintain a certain position in the field of interest. Thus Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* and capital concepts will take effect here. The interaction of the clothing with the body of the individual and the kind of emanating power, is another major focal point in my thesis. In this regard I decided to apply and verify the theory based on Margaret Lock's and Nancy Scheper-Hughes' article "The mindful body".

Eventually the research question is thus to some extent oriented to illuminate how the fashion designer's trajectory, thus her or his philosophy and *habitus*, is reflected in her or his design and ambition in fashion. In addition I will dedicate a substantial amount of time in order to go one step

further and to assess carefully the interaction between the body and the dress that emanates from the investigated fashion patterns and designs.

Die Mode ist das Spiegelbild einer Gesellschaft oder Kultur. Sie disponiert nicht nur über einen ästhetischen Charakter, sondern ebenso über einen ethischen. Des Weiteren gewinnt Mode vor allem in der Anthropologie an Bedeutung dadurch, dass sie dem Individuum innerhalb der Gesellschaft am meisten zu Gute kommt. Sie schützt die Intimität der Person, spiegelt Menschenwürde wieder und schafft eine heitere und ausgeglichene Umwelt in der Gesellschaft.

Es ist selbsterklärend, dass Mode an sich sehr vielfältig ist. Sie vereint verschiedenste Neigungen, die entweder konsumorientiert, hedonistisch oder subjektivistisch sind. Andererseits spielt sie eine entscheidende Rolle in der Konstruktion und Repräsentation einer sozialen Identität sowie eines sozialen Klassensystems, Sexualität, Alters, Ethnizität, Genders und einer kulturellen Präferenz.

Nichtsdestotrotz ist die vorliegende Arbeit das Ergebnis privater Interessen am Thema, welches von einem anthropologischen Blickwinkel durchleuchtet wird. Als Anthropologin habe ich meine Feldforschung im Kreise von jungen, dynamischen, bedeutungsvollen aber noch nicht kommerziellen Modedesignern und deren Modedesigns in Barcelona durchgeführt. Für mich war es wesentlich die Philosophie der Modedesigner und deren Modedesign, sowie auch die Interaktion zwischen Körper und Bekleidung zu untersuchen. Die Masterarbeit widmet sich somit größtenteils der Analyse von Mode und Körper zu.

Ich werde darüber hinaus versuchen den *Habitus* der respektiven ModedesignerInnen in ihrem Feld näher zu erforschen. Somit werden Pierre Bourdieus *Habitus* und Kapitalformen hier das Fundament legen. Das Zusammenspiel zwischen Bekleidung und Körper ist ein weiterer Schwerpunkt dieser Arbeit. Hierbei wird Margaret Lock's und Nancy Scheper-Hughes' wissenschaftlicher Artikel „The mindful body“ genauer ergründet werden.

Letztendlich wird die Forschungsfrage teilweise die Verlaufsbahn der/s ModesignerIn zu erfahren suchen und in diesem Zusammenhang die Reflexion dieser im eigentlichen Modedesign untersuchen. Zugleich werde ich einen Schritt weitergehen um die Wechselbeziehung zwischen Körper und Kleid im untersuchen Modedesign zu analysieren.

8.3.5 Outcome of the study

Theories/Fashion Designer	Alexis Reyna	Aloma Lafontana	MMDAH
Individual Body	t-shirts, short skirts, transparent dresses, leggings, colorful “Unleashed” collection spring/summer 2011	skirts, t-shirts, dresses	
Social Body	elegant skirts for men, wide suits with ties for women	successful dress from the summer 2011 collection	“Urban Chic” collection
Body Politic	coats, costume-like fashion design		“Brides” collection
Cultural Capital	Studies of Photography, Social and Economic Sciences, Literature, Fashion Design; worked for various national and international fashion designers and fashion companies; runs his own business and brand	Studies of Fine Arts and Costume Design; worked with local artists from the entertainment business; runs her own business and brand	Studies of Business Administration and Design; runs own business and brand
Economic Capital	combination of family's background and own achievements through successful sales of own fashion design strengthened the transfer of cultural capital into economic capital; respectively the promotion of the company and the brand management	combination of family's background and own achievements through sales of own fashion design strengthened the transfer of cultural capital into economic capital; respectively the promotion of the company and the brand management	combination of family's background and own achievements through successful sales of own fashion design strengthened the transfer of cultural capital into economic capital; respectively the promotion of the technology enhanced fashion design company and the brand management
Social Capital	academic and professional social network that facilitated the convertibility of social capital into economic capital through sales	academic and professional social network that helped to strengthen the economic capital through sales	co-operations and collaborations with other fashion designers, institutions and organizations in the academic as well as in the professional field

Symbolic Capital			that facilitated the convertibility of social capital into economic capital through sales
	current recognition, success, prestige as a fashion designer due to interplay of cultural, economic and social capital in the respective field /world of fashion on a national as on an international level; accounts for his outstanding position in the field and can be perceived in the <i>habitus</i>	current success as a fashion designer due to interplay of cultural, economic and social capital in the respective field /world of fashion on a national as on an international level; accounts for her position in the field as a fashion designer and an artist to be; can be perceived in the <i>habitus</i>	current recognition, success, prestige as a fashion designer due to interplay of cultural, economic and social capital in the respective field /world of fashion on a national as on an international level; accounts for the company's position in the field and can be perceived in Laura's <i>habitus</i>

8.3.6 Questionnaire

University of Vienna/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Department for Social and Cultural Anthropology



universität
wien

Questionnaire on Fashion, Fashion Design, Impact of Garment on the Body and the Fashion Designer's Philosophy

This survey is part of the analysis which I conduct within the scope of my master thesis at the Department for Social and Cultural Anthropology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The participation is not mandatory but advisable and will serve to assess in a more proper way the topic. At the same time it will help me to contribute my skills and knowledge and at the same time develop them.

The collected data will only be used for own purpose, i.e. help to conduct my fieldwork and gather the information needed to proof the theoretical background. In addition the data will be handled confidential according to privacy laws.

In case of questions please contact:

E-Mail: emanuelaholder@gmx.de

In the following I will ask for some general personal data. (helps to gain insight into the person's background and also maybe to draw further conclusions from the answers given during the interview; in addition it may be relevant regarding further findings on the habitus)

- Your name:

- Please state your birth cohort:

- Sex:

☐ female ☐ male

- Marital status:

☐ single

☐ other: _____

☐ partnership

☐ married

- Your highest education

☐ high-school degree

☐ apprenticeship

☐ university

☐ other: _____

- Please state in short your previous educational background?

- Since when are you involved in the fashion business?

- Is the fashion business what you always wanted to do?

Motives to identify and work with fashion, to design certain patterns and clothes, interaction of body and garment, entrepreneurship, current private and professional circumstances.

1. Fashion & the fashion designer (*helps to assess the person's experience, thus the skills and knowledge acquired as well as the individual's talent, philosophy, drive etc. – cultural & economic capital*)

- When did you first realize that fashion is not only a passion but also a possible career?

- How old were you when you designed your first piece of garment?

- Are you a fashion victim? State certain attributes!

- What is your signature design?

- How would you describe your work in terms of job satisfaction, passion personal & professional growth?

- Can fashion have a political ambition, e.g. to issue a statement, to influence, to provoke & rebel, to cause a change and why would you make use of it?

- How have your own experiences (private & professional) affected your work as a designer – choices made for fashion designs are the consequence of previous actions/experience?

- What/who has/had the greatest influence on your career?

- What is the most important lesson that you have been taught so far?

- What's your philosophy?

- What is your definition of beauty?

- What is your ultimate goal in life and fashion?

2. **The impact of a certain design pattern/garment on the body** (*very important in order to assess Lock's threefold dimension of the body, hence the individual body, the social body and the body politic*)

- Your fashion designs embed certain technologies (aromatherapy, anti-stress, stainless fabrics, body heat regulation). What inspires/d you to create certain fashion designs? What's the message?

- You create timeless designs – pure emotions of the moment. What styles do you apply?

- How often do you have visions about new designs?

- What kind of fieldwork do you conduct in order to gain some new thoughts/inspiration?

- What kind of people inspire you to create new designs? And why?

- What do you first see when you start creating? The body or the garment?

- How important is a certain symbiosis between body and garment for you?

- Who do you have in mind when you design?

- What do your fashion designs/patterns express/represent?

- What kind of fabric and colors do you chose for your design? And why?

- Which borderline are you trying to transgress with your fashion designs? Why?

- What is your favorite piece from any of your collections? And why?

3. **Entrepreneurship** (*helps to gain insight of how the business is run and to assess the goals of the business, i.e. further growth ambitions – also relevant for assessing the economic, social and symbolic capital*)

- How do you run your business?

- How many people are employed in your business?

- What are the main tasks of everyone involved in your business?

- How often do you interact/co-operate with other fashion designers or artists?

- Do you approach these fashion designers and artists?

- How are the relationships among each other in the fashion scene?

- At which fairs, festivals have you already presented your fashion designs?

- How were the reactions/critics (peers and colleagues, journalists, business people) that you experienced?

- How would you describe success?

Thank you for your time, interest and participation!

9 Curriculum Vitae

Emanuela Holder

Avenida Meridiana 225-227 3.3./08027 BARCELONA

CELL-PHONE +34/622214594

E-MAIL emanulaholder@gmx.de

EDUCATION

Studies of CREOLE (Master Programme)	02/2010 - present
<i>University of Vienna/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona</i>	
<i>Vienna, Austria & Barcelona, Spain</i>	
Studies of International Business & Economics	10/2003 – 02/2009
<i>Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg</i>	
<i>Nuremberg, Germany</i>	
Studies of International Business & Economics	08/2005 - 06/2006
<i>Corvinus University of Budapest</i>	
<i>ERASMUS Exchange-Student</i>	
<i>Budapest, Hungary</i>	
Studies of Chemistry	10/2002 - 09/2003
<i>University of Regensburg</i>	
<i>Regensburg, Germany</i>	
Abitur (approximately equivalent to high school diploma)	06/2000
<i>Sankt Marien Gymnasium Regensburg</i>	
<i>Regensburg, Germany</i>	

WORK EXPERIENCE

Working place as a HR-Specialist, New Yorker	09/2012 – present
<i>Barcelona, Spain</i>	
• <i>in-charge of all HR-assignments related to several kinds of alterations of contracts, according to Spanish labor legislation</i> • <i>recruiting & selecting of new personnel for New Yorker stores in Spain & Portugal</i> • <i>co-operating with the German headquarter in various international HR-projects</i> • <i>training & development projects in HR</i> • <i>constant team-working on projects with other departments in the Spanish subsidiary</i>	

Working place as a customer service representative, BioWare <i>Barcelona, Spain</i>	12/2011 – 08/2012
• <i>took income customer calls and inquiries via telephone, email or chat, and provided efficient solutions to the customers</i> • <i>maintained and developed service, product knowledge, and expertise associated with customer's demands</i> • <i>worked on additional tasks advised by the team manager connected to keeping up the service performance, quality, and customer's satisfaction</i>	
Working place as a sports consultant, Interport Eybl <i>Vienna, Austria</i>	01/2011 - 07/2011
• <i>consultancy at the p.o.s. of the women's fitness department for diverse brands</i> • <i>visual merchandising</i>	
Working place as an intern in HR, Infineon Technologies AG <i>Regensburg, Germany</i>	04/2008 - 09/2008
• <i>supported department manager to co-ordinate HR-assignments in training & development as well as recruiting & selection</i> • <i>co-operated actively in several assignments dealing with German trainees and apprentices placed abroad for an estimated period of time</i> • <i>provided administrative support: correspondence; created PowerPoint slides and Excel sheets for informative and statistical purpose; wrote references for interns and temporary student employees; data look-up via SAP-HR</i> • <i>researched on certain assigned topics and developed new concepts, by means of improving existing and in-progress programs for interns and temporary student employees</i>	
Working place in the Food Hall, Selfridges&Co. Retail Ltd. <i>London, United Kingdom</i>	02/2001 - 07/2001
• <i>assisted several international food counters, in order to satisfy the needs of the customers</i> • <i>supported Food-Hall manager</i> • <i>co-operated actively at the counter, according to rules & regulations</i>	
Working place in promotional activities in Sales&Marketing <i>Germany, Austria & Liechtenstein</i>	08/2000 – 09/2011
• <i>consultancy at p.o.s. for diverse brands</i> • <i>visual merchandising</i> • <i>(e.g. Bayerischer Rundfunk, Yahoo, Deutsche Post, Weihenstephan, Pocket Coffee, Chio Chips, Deutsche Telekom, BMW, Lotto Totto, Warsteiner, Vero Moda, ODLO, Esprit Merchandising, Reebok)</i>	

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Languages:

- **German** *native language*
- **English** *excellent command of spoken & written English*
- **Romanian** *good command*
- **Spanish** *good command*
- **French** *basic communication skills*

Computer skills:

- *Proficient in Microsoft Office, particularly Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, TUPEL*
- *Very good knowledge of MacOS X*
- *Good knowledge of SAP-HR, particularly GMDS & Pollux*
- *Good knowledge of Photoshop*

INTERESTS & ACTIVITIES

- **Sports:** *running (charity), in-line-skating, mountain-biking (French Way in 2008), walking, skiing*
- **Literature:** *classic, non-fiction*
- **Traveling:** *North- & South-America, Asia-Pacific Region*
- **Music:** *Electro, House, Indie, Pop, Salsa & Merengue*

10 Declaration

I affirm that I have prepared this master thesis without assistance and using only the specified sources. I further declare that the master thesis has not been submitted either in the same or in a similar form to any other examination authority.

All statements taken from other sources, whether literally or in gist, have been indicated as such. Furthermore I hereby assure that all the pictures that have been displayed in this thesis have obtained approval of the owners. However, should any infringement of property rights emerge, I request to contact me via email.

Date/Place of Submission

Signature