

# **ANTIRACIST DESIGN A Decolonial Feminist Approach to Fashion Pedagogy**

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There is a large body of literature that shows how fashion design can often “Other” marginalized and non-Western groups through stereotyping, exoticization, and orientalism. Academic studies in fashion design have identified how certain design approaches that borrow in a decontextualized and ahistorical way result in the privileging of Anglo-European cultures. In the context of globalization and rapidly diversifying undergraduate fashion design student cohorts, it is becoming increasingly necessary to teach students to think critically about how they draw inspiration from different cultures. However, there is currently no empirical research in fashion design education that helps educators understand how these processes work in practice. This gap in the current literature needs to be addressed for at least two key reasons. Firstly, to understand how the fashion ideation process may contribute to the reproducing of cultural hierarchies; and secondly, to consider the role that education systems can play in countering racial inequalities and thereby helping to create a more just society.

This chapter outlines a decolonial, feminist, practice-based approach used to develop an antiracist and anti-capitalist fashion design pedagogy. It will show the value of Black feminist scholarship that calls for the decolonization of pedagogy through the application of nondualist conceptions of design. I will suggest how academic Chandra Mohanty’s idea of the local as a relationally constructed

site, rather than a bounded and fixed one, could be taken up by fashion educators to help encourage students to explore points of connection and disconnection between different cultures and histories. Mohanty's notion of the relational space could also be utilized to foster students' active awareness of how local and global cultures and histories might be more creatively interwoven to create a design process that resists stereotyping, appropriation, and racist forms of representation, and so contribute to developing new strategies and resources for fashion educators that can help challenge racial inequalities.

1. See "All Walks Beyond the Catwalk," [www.allwalks.org](http://www.allwalks.org).

2. Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

3. Tony Fry and Eleni Kalantidou, *Design in the Borderlands* (London: Routledge, 2015).

## Introduction

Having taught fashion design in the UK for the last fifteen years, I have seen firsthand the exponential growth of this sector. This expansion has resulted in increasing numbers of students of color, both local and international, enrolling in undergraduate fashion programs. However, current undergraduate fashion design studies in the UK tend to underplay issues related to cultural diversity<sup>1</sup> and, worse, their largely Eurocentric curricula, dominated by expert-driven, market-centered, and industry-led capitalist models, can foster – and even encourage – racist and sexist forms of fashion design. Therefore, the question of how to educate fashion design students in this complex environment is a pressing one that remains both under-theorized and under-researched.

Integrating and foregrounding neglected and marginalized fashion perspectives into fashion design education is one approach that could help students rethink and relink the dichotomies between Western/non-Western, male/female, and body/mind. This chapter outlines such an approach that I piloted with undergraduate fashion design students in the UK. The class foregrounded nondualist and noncolonialist<sup>2</sup> concepts to develop "contra-Western understandings of design."<sup>3</sup>

This chapter begins by examining how racist currents are constructed in fashion design to illustrate how structures of Eurocentrism have, over many years, been maintained and embedded through cultural hierarchies

4. Linda Tuwahaï-Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 2.

5. Tansy Hoskins, Chapter 20 in *Stitched-Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion* (London: Pluto, 2014).

6. Sandra Niessen, Ann Marie Leshkovich, and Carla Jones, *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

7. Richard Fung, "Working Through Appropriation," *Fuse* 16, nos. 5–6 (Summer 1993), 16–24, [www.richardfung.ca/index.php?/articles/working-through-appropriation-1993/](http://www.richardfung.ca/index.php?/articles/working-through-appropriation-1993/) (accessed March 1, 2015); Julia aka Garçonnière, "the critical fashion lover's (basic) guide to cultural appropriation," *à l'allure garçonnière* (blog), April 15, 2010, [alagarconniere.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/critical-fashion-lovers-basic-guide-to.html](http://alagarconniere.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/critical-fashion-lovers-basic-guide-to.html) (accessed March 30, 2015).

8. Sarah Cheang, "To the Ends of the Earth: Fashion and Ethnicity in the Vogue Fashion Shoot," in Djurdja Bartlett, Shaun Cole, and Agnes Rocamora, eds., *Fashion Media Past and Present* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 46–58.

9. Elke Gaugele, ed., *Aesthetic Politics in Fashion* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014); Ruby Sircar, "Dressing the Tiger: Decolonization and Style Racism in South-Asian Fashion," in Gaugele.

in fashion design cultures. I then outline how rethinking fashion *away* from industry and *toward* people's lived experiences can encourage a more relational approach: designing *with* difference to subvert the conventional fashion design process (a process that usually begins with fantasy narratives and experimentation on mannequins). This decolonial feminist approach offers, I will argue, the potential for resisting dominant Eurocentric and racist thinking in fashion design by exposing the "struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other."<sup>4</sup>

## Identifying Racist Currents in Fashion Design

Racism in fashion design is a topic that can raise unsettling feelings. However, it is also a topic that is gaining more and more attention, particularly in magazines and on social media.<sup>5</sup> In academia, there is increasing recognition of the problematic nature of dominant fashion narratives that maintain that the West has fashion and the non-West does not.<sup>6</sup> This has resulted in a greater focus on how fashion produces racism – for example, through designs that culturally appropriate different cultures; through the exclusion of nonwhite bodies from the fashion media and catwalk shows; and through the global dominance of European and Anglo-American fashion designs.<sup>7</sup>

Fashion scholars have specifically analyzed contemporary structures of race and racism in fashion.<sup>8</sup> Further studies analyzing the academic discipline of fashion history itself have linked key writings on fashion by early scholars to colonial and racist thinking.<sup>9</sup> Elke Gaugele and Monica Titton, for example, argue that some of the early influential work on fashion by Georg Simmel from 1904 is dominated by a "colonial-racist theorization" which has established a

colonially biased, modern fashion theory in which, for example, Georg Simmel's understanding of fashion had at that point been limited to a "higher civilization." Based on a colonial-racist theorization, Simmel wrote about "savages," "primitive races," or "primitive conditions of life" who would

be afraid of “anything new” that they could “not understand” or “not assign to a familiar category.”<sup>10</sup>

Simmel’s writing, from over a century ago, establishes fashion as a subject linked with modernity, progress, and the West. Gaugele and Tilton argue that this problematic foundation of fashion history needs to be exposed and that one way to do this could be by expanding alternative histories of fashion, such as those from India, and thus challenging hegemonic Global North narratives.

The fashion academic Sandra Niessen adds to this debate through an in-depth analysis of fashion from Asia.<sup>11</sup> Niessen claims that non-Anglo-European fashion and clothing styles have been subject to colonialist thinking which continues to affect designers in both the Global North and the Global South. She suggests that deeply entrenched ideas of what does and does not constitute fashion represent the dilemmas in fashion design cultures today: the way hegemonic Anglo-European fashion attempts to claim legitimate participation in the field and how it appropriates different cultural signs and symbols. This claim is supported by the findings of a series of interviews conducted by Lisa Skov with fashion designers based in Hong Kong, which highlight the tensions experienced by fashion designers who feel that to be successful they need to produce designs that draw on “traditional Chinese” motifs instead of developing their own signature styles.<sup>12</sup>

This dominant conception of fashion as an Anglo-European construct raises several important issues and challenges for contemporary fashion design education. There is a need, for example, to identify how Anglo-European narratives dominate in fashion design project briefs; to examine how cultural differences are used in the fashion design process; and how fashion design students reproduce forms of Othering in their work. However, existing academic studies on fashion design education tend to focus on other areas, such as the role of technology.<sup>13</sup>

Racism is an ongoing global issue that continues to be challenged through the work of social movements and legislation. However, racism remains pervasive in contemporary popular culture – including in fashion and in how the fashion industry works. For this reason, it is imperative

10. Elke Gaugele and Monica Tilton, “Aesthetic Politics in Fashion: An Introduction,” in Gaugele, *Aesthetic Politics in Fashion*, 10–17.

11. Sandra Niessen, afterword to Niessen, Leshkovich, and Jones, *Re-Orienting Fashion*.

12. Lisa Skov, “Fashion-Nation: A Japanese Globalization Experience and a Hong Kong Dilemma,” in Niessen, Leshkovich, and Jones, *Re-Orienting Fashion*.

13. See, for example, the *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*.

14. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress* (London: Routledge, 1994).

15. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 2008 [1952]).

16. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Penguin, 2006 [1958]).

17. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003 [1978]).

18. hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 202.

19. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 241.

to expose and challenge asymmetrical power dynamics in the fashion design education process and to seek new ways of addressing racial inequities. The next section of this chapter will discuss a class I ran with undergraduate students that proposed an alternative approach to fashion design: decolonial fashion.

## Decolonial Fashion

One approach to challenging racial inequality that has been taken up by a number of Black feminists including bell hooks, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Heidi Safia Mirza, and others, calls for the decolonization of “our minds and our imaginations.”<sup>14</sup> Theories of decolonization emerged from critiques of colonialism written by scholars including Frantz Fanon,<sup>15</sup> Chinua Achebe,<sup>16</sup> and Edward Said.<sup>17</sup> These theories problematize and interrogate the different ways in which Western colonialism exerts its global power both today and in the past. By exposing historical power structures, processes of decolonization attempt to revive and expose hidden epistemologies. hooks argues that a decolonial approach has the potential to establish “a politics of representation which could both critique and integrate ideals of personal beauty and desirability informed by racist standards, a system of valuation that would embrace a diversity of black looks.”<sup>18</sup>

Fashion’s reliance on aesthetics underpinned by racist currents means that a decolonial approach to thinking about fashion design potentially offers a broader agenda that exposes structural inequalities and also ways of resisting them.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, drawing on the seminal work on Frantz Fanon, details the decolonization project as involving “profound transformations of the self, community and governance structures.”<sup>19</sup> Mohanty calls on those practicing decolonization to actively withdraw and resist structures of “psychic and social domination” through “self-reflexive collective practice.” Is this what decolonial fashion might look like? Mohanty proposes a pedagogical strategy called “the feminist solidarity or comparative studies model.” This strategy, I suggest, has the potential

to be taken up by fashion educators to help encourage students to explore points of connection and disconnection between different cultures and histories. This approach could, for example, help educators challenge the uncritical spaces currently being produced as a result of the disengagement of fashion design education from socio-cultural contexts. Mohanty elaborates:

This curricular strategy is based on the premise that the local and the global are not defined in terms of physical geography or territory but exist simultaneously and constitute each other. It is then the links between the local and the global that are foregrounded, and these links are conceptual, material, temporal, contextual, and so on.<sup>20</sup>

Mohanty's notion of the relational also has the potential to be utilized to foster students' active awareness of how local and global cultures and histories might be more creatively interwoven, to create a design process that resists stereotyping, appropriation, and racist forms of representation. Mohanty argues that this pedagogical model "moves away from the 'separate but equal' (or different) perspective to the co-implication/solidarity one. ... Thus it suggests organizing syllabi around social and economic processes and histories of various communities of women."<sup>21</sup>

Adopting this approach in fashion design education, instead of abstract ahistorical approaches, orients educational experiences on historical and biographical specificities and differences. Mohanty emphasizes how this approach looks for points of disconnection between communities, as well as connections, in order to locate points of struggle and resistance.

Drawing on theories of decolonization, such as the one outlined by Mohanty, has the potential to encourage an alternative design process. The aim is to enable fashion educators and students to understand that fashion is not a politically neutral process. In what further ways might "the feminist solidarity or comparative studies model" be translated into the context of fashion design education?

22. Arturo Escobar, *Designs for the Pluriverse* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

23. Angela McRobbie, *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* (London: Routledge, 1998), 52.

24. Tibor Kalman and Maria Kalman, *(Un)Fashion* (London: Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2007).

25. See Mukulika Bannerjee and Daniel Miller, *The Sari* (Oxford: Berg, 2008).

26. See "Jean Paul Gaultier's latest collection reimagines sarees as 'winter sports wear,' because why not?," *Inuth* (website), November 16, 2017, [www.inuth.com/lifestyle/fashion/jean-paul-gaultiers-latest-collection-reimagines-sarees-as-winter-sports-wear-because-why-not/](http://www.inuth.com/lifestyle/fashion/jean-paul-gaultiers-latest-collection-reimagines-sarees-as-winter-sports-wear-because-why-not/) (accessed June 10, 2019).

## Recentering Global Perspectives in Fashion: Running a Sari Workshop

In an attempt to recenter subaltern forms of knowledge in fashion design education, I used the sari as a starting point – firstly, because it is a garment I have grown up with, my parents having been born in India; and secondly, because I wanted to stress how fashion design is “pluriversal,”<sup>22</sup> comprising multiple ways of dressing bodies. Adopting a decolonial, feminist pedagogical methodology resulted in me drawing on my own biography as a strategy for contextualizing the sari and for opening debates about the racialized and gendered hierarchies in fashion design curricula that dictate what is and is not considered fashion. In addition, this strategy resulted in sharing with the class not just any saris, but saris belonging to my mother. This approach would, I hoped, have two results: firstly, to disrupt “fantasy” discourses in fashion design education through the physical presence of real garments;<sup>23</sup> and secondly, to enable students to experience, through wearing and “embodying” my mother’s saris, a connection to everyday fashion cultures.<sup>24</sup>

A key question for me was whether the scope of a workshop activity had the potential to disrupt and resist some of the dominant ideologies of fashion that can promote racial inequalities.

Choosing this precolonial garment provided an example of a vernacular form of fashion in the form of unstitched cloth. Originating from the Global South, the sari remains marginalized in hegemonic fashion design epistemologies and practices as well as in fashion design education in the UK. Although knowledge about the sari can be found in most fashion design Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and although the libraries of these institutions will usually have books on the topic,<sup>25</sup> the sari tends to be used as a form of inspiration in explicitly antihistoricist terms.<sup>26</sup>

Instead, this class aimed to re-present and challenge the problematic stereotypes in which the sari is steeped, especially concerning notions of the “primitive,” cultural traditions, and gendered passivity. The class drew inspiration from many sources, including the London-based campaign group Sari Squad, a group of women,

mainly of South Asian origin, who wore saris as a form of visible protest against far-right racist groups in the UK in the 1980s;<sup>27</sup> and the fashion label Not Sari, set up by the Canada-based designer Pranavi Suthagar.<sup>28</sup>

To give agency to a garment from the Global South in the fashion design process also involved experimentation with alternative ways to devise and initiate a fashion design process. To do this, a counter-hegemonic fashion narrative to dominant “fantasy scenarios” was adopted to develop a ideation process that centered on praxis (working with garments), collaboration (between students), participation (between educator and student), and experiential learning (working directly on the human body). Furthermore, the ideation process with saris inverted the usual fashion ideation process that sees fashion designers “take” inspiration from non-European sources.

To begin the class, I opened a large bag that contained thirty of my mother’s neatly folded saris. The group gathered around, and I instructed them to pick up and feel the saris and ask any questions they might have. Students asked about the age of the saris, what material they were made from, and from what area of the world they originated. I noticed how tactile the students were, curious to unfold the saris and cautiously requesting permission to open them out. As students continued to ask questions, such as the length of the sari, I noticed how one student of Indian heritage (student 1) began to explain to others in the group that the *pallu* is the most decorated part of the sari, which can be draped in various ways according to taste and custom. As student 1 continued speaking she spontaneously gave a demonstration of how a *pallu* might be worn, and a subgroup of students formed around her as she interacted with the garment. Within this subgroup other students began to hold the saris against themselves and mimic the actions of student 1, using the *pallu* to cover their heads and shoulders too.

I gathered the students back to their chairs, leaving the saris in a disheveled heap on a table, and asked the whole group a direct question: “Is the sari fashion?” I wanted to find out how students articulated the West/non-West binary in relation to their role as fashion designers. A silence followed. I purposefully acknowledged

27. Alice Welton, “Sari Squad: The Afia Begum Campaign,” *The Spectacle Blog*, July 29, 2016, [www.spectacle.co.uk/spectacleblog/despote-tv/sari-squad-the-afia-begum-campaign/](http://www.spectacle.co.uk/spectacleblog/despote-tv/sari-squad-the-afia-begum-campaign/) (accessed February 15, 2019).

28. See [www.notsari.com/about](http://www.notsari.com/about).



the silence and waited for students to respond, rather than help facilitate a group discussion by using prompts and further questions. Most striking in the silence was that I sensed a feeling of unease with my questioning and discomfort with the lack of responses. I knew that my asking this question as a South Asian tutor with Indian heritage would further compound the complexities of how to answer: what might be my response if a student were to say “no”? Finally, the lengthy pause was interrupted when another student of Indian heritage (student 2) raised her hand and replied “yes”; she added that she wore saris in India and she thought saris were fashionable. However, she then added that several of her peers in India think of the sari as something that their grandmother wore and wanted to disassociate themselves from that. Significantly, nobody else contributed to this discussion, so next I asked the students to raise their hands if they had ever worn a sari. Student 1 and student 2 raised their hands, two further South Asian students also replied that they had worn saris to religious festivals and weddings, and one white British student said she had worn a sari to an Indian wedding.

This last admission was not a surprise to me. Indeed, interracial marriage within the diasporic UK Indian community that I come from means that it is not uncommon to see white women wearing saris at community gatherings. Furthermore, the media often shows British politicians and international dignitaries wearing saris on official occasions, such as on tours of India or when visiting a religious site or Indian community in the UK. However, as the student observed, when white women wear saris it tends only to happen on occasions such as weddings, not in everyday settings.

The next series of PowerPoint slides I showed the class presented various ways in which a sari can be worn:

- photographs showing saris worn by my mother in the UK during the 1970s;
- photographs showing saris worn by my great grandmother in India during the 1960s;
- images of regional variations in India, such as the sari worn with pleats towards the back of the body, rather than the more common form of front

pleating;  
images of saris transformed into other garments  
such as the *sarini* (bikini sari), *sarong sari*, *gown sari*,  
and *divided trouser sari*;  
images of saris worn by *hijras*, members of the  
third-sex community in India;  
and YouTube instructional videos demonstrating  
different ways to put on a sari.

I also spent some time offering personal anecdotes about the types of saris my mother had worn, using the saris that I had brought along. I highlighted one sari: it originates from the 1960s, is made of nylon and adorned with bold pink, purple, and blue swirling abstract colors and could be described as looking “psychedelic.” Although my mother wore this sari through the 1960s and early 1970s and it can be seen in many family photographs from that time, I have never seen her wear this sari in my adult life. I asked her about this before I brought the saris along to the class and she told me that this sari’s nylon fabric felt “modern” when she had bought it in the late 1960s, but today it looked cheap and “old-fashioned” to her. She also added that she felt that the pattern on the sari was for someone younger than her and consequently she felt “too old” to wear the sari today.

Following this PowerPoint presentation and general discussion about my mother’s saris, students were asked to self-organize into groups of three or four and work together to test out variations of how the sari could be worn using either their own bodies or working on each other’s bodies. Inspired by some of the examples they had been shown, students began to cocreate different possibilities from my mother’s sari (a selection of both evening and work sari’s made of a variety of materials, from silk and cotton to nylon and polyester).

Each group was asked to use their mobile phone to photograph each of their experiments throughout this process of experimentation. As they captured the variety of outcomes, I asked the students to upload the photographs onto Facebook, directly onto a page that had been set up by their course leader specifically for this student year group. The Facebook page was shown in real-time on the

projection screen so that all students could see what each group was posting, thus enabling a process of transparency within the classroom. I noticed that this process was enthusiastically welcomed because students laughed and watched the screen with interest as they saw each other's magnified images appear on the projection screen. There was also concentrated interest in each other's experiments.

As students began to unravel my mother's saris and explore draping, pleating, tying, knotting, and other forms of fabric manipulation around each other's bodies, there were two groups whose experiments stood out to me.

**Group 1:** The first group was noticeable because they were the only group disrupting the gender binary by using a male student as a model and tying the sari around his body; however, to put this in context, within the class of forty-seven students there were only two male students. I noticed that the other male student in the class did not experiment with trying on the sari. This male student, in contrast, appeared extroverted and was comfortable gaining attention from four other female students who were enveloping him in several saris at once. While this male student appeared to enjoy the attention he received from being the model, there was a sense of laughter from all the members of the groups as this happened and I wondered whether the male student was being mocked during this exercise or not. In response to the group's increasing laughter, it seemed to me, he began to "perform" each time his photograph was taken, playfully covering his face with the *pallu* in a dramatic way.

**Group 2:** A second group began to show an especially sophisticated approach to the task, working with specific pleating techniques. This was developed by one member of the group who told me she came from Thailand. This student said that she was experienced in tying a *sarong* – a length of fabric wrapped around the waist, worn in Southeast Asia and many other parts of the Global South – and she began to show the rest of the group the different ways a sarong can be tied. As I came over to speak, the student included me in this tutorial and showed that there were multiple ways of working a pleat into the fabric. I did not know these methods and tried them out myself using a sari, while other members of the group did the same.

As I walked around the room, a further two key issues were raised by several of the student groups. The first issue centered on the relationship between pattern cutting – the process of making and cutting patterns, usually from paper or card, for tracing a design onto fabric – and unstitched cloth: one group asked me how a paper pattern could be developed from this experiment with unstitched cloth, and how such a design could be further developed and reproduced for different sizes? This question made me realize how the experiment reversed the conventional fashion ideation process, in which paper patterns are developed *before* being constructed in fabric. These questions appeared to stem from the students’ main fashion practice classes, which demand technical illustrations and a file of paper patterns for each final garment idea.

The second issue raised by many of the students was that they would never have considered designing a sari at undergraduate level because in terms of fashion technique a sari is just a length of fabric – this despite our discussion that a sari is constituted of different elements such as the *palhu*. This led to further questioning about whether unstitched cloth could warrant the status of a fashion design because it was a garment lacking in technical precision or mastery. This point was raised by every group I spoke to and highlighted the complexity of the original question: “Is the sari fashion?”

The pilot workshop aimed to open debates about both Eurocentrism and market-driven short-termist fashion. Reflecting on how capitalist structures in education support racism,<sup>29</sup> I wanted to expose fashion design’s constant drive for new garment designs and profit. This contrasts with a sari, which can be reconfigured in multiple ways and so is arguably more sustainable. Not only did this workshop successfully highlight certain tensions in dominant Anglo-Eurocentric approaches to fashion design, but it also sparked an alternative fashion ideation process, one rooted in decolonial approaches to design praxis.

The next stage of this phase of research will be to assess to what extent a decolonial approach to fashion design can be further implemented in fashion education. Evaluating this pilot class will be necessary for understanding how a class using collaborative exercises can

29. Peter McClaren, “Unthinking Whiteness, Rearticulating Diasporic Practice,” in Peter Pericles Trifonas, ed., *Revolutionary Pedagogies: Cultural Politics, Instituting Education, and the Discourse of Theory* (London: Routledge, 2000), 167–84.

30. Reena Bhavnani, Heidi Safia Mirza, and Veena Meeto, *Tackling the Roots of Racism: Lessons for Success* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2005).

31. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (London: Routledge, 1990), 2.

operate within neoliberal structures based on individual assessment; and how fashion design classes can assess open-ended practices that do not produce a final garment outcome. Thus, such interventions raise questions about what pedagogical strategies will be most effective when it comes to disrupting dominant fashion cultures.

## Conclusion

This chapter has set out to explore the potential of adopting a decolonial approach to teaching fashion design in the UK and the extent to which this approach could offer opportunities to challenge racist currents in fashion design education. Despite the limitations of the research undertaken so far, the study shows the value of cultural interventions which expose structural, social, and economic issues.<sup>30</sup> These classes were theory-based but also incorporated a fashion practice element and thus respond to calls to bring theory and practice together.<sup>31</sup>

The class showed how centering a garment from the Global South with undergraduate fashion students in the UK is not enough on its own; the fashion ideation process also needs to shift from a market-led capitalist logic and subvert the conventional fashion ideation process to expose how Eurocentrism is uncritically reproduced. Such a process requires less focus on individual student experimentation to enable more space for collaboration between students as well as between the students and their tutor. The role of technology is important here in empowering students to share their experimentation amongst themselves and make the ideation process more inclusive. Thus, adopting a decolonial feminist approach that emphasizes the role of personal everyday experience provides a valuable contribution to countering dominant Eurocentric narratives.

The urgent need for more a social-justice-oriented and pluralistic fashion design education has precedents. In her most recent book, *Be Creative*, Angela McRobbie asserts that through the postwar years, fashion design education in the UK was underpinned by social democratic and radical values, for example through “radical political

perspectives such as antiracism, multiculturalism, feminism, antipoverty issues, etc.”<sup>32</sup> Drawing inspiration from these contexts, the next step in this research will now be to experiment further with Mohanty’s framework and to continue to develop strategies for more inclusive and antiracist forms of fashion design education.

32. Angela McRobbie, *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016), 161.



Class experimentation with draping and knotting my mother’s sari around a student’s body. Photo: Irati Fonseca (student).

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