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Mainstreaming the Perception and Practice of Ethical Fashion in Montreal

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A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Geography, Planning, and Environment

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Abstract

Mainstreaming the Perception and Practice of Ethical Fashion in Montreal

Ryan J. Craven

A growing body of literature in geography has been problematizing an emerging trend in contemporary economics characterized as 'alternative'. Most of this literature has focused on the food sector, and the turn to 'quality' within this sector as a means of differentiation from the 'mainstream'. Whereas the mainstream sector is characterized by the large, global scale and corporate context, the alternative food sector is associated with the small, local scale and the independent context. This thesis takes the exploration of alternative economics to the realm of fashion, with an investigation of the ethical fashion industry in Montréal, Canada. This investigation takes the form of a case study, based on 38 semi-structured interviews with designers, retailers and intermediaries of the Montréal industry. The results of this case study explore the dynamic and evolving relations implicated in the promotional strategies of Montréal's ethical fashion industry. My findings highlight the limits to the alternative/mainstream dichotomy. Strategic tactics on the part of ethical fashion producers and retailers, whereby both 'ethical' and 'non-ethical' imagery and products are deployed, suggest that alternative economic processes are more likely to be situated along an alternative-mainstream continuum and that the points of alternative/mainstream convergence merit further investigation from a theoretical and policy standpoint.

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I dedicate this work to Chloe Brynn.

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Introduction

Just in time to celebrate Earth Day in style, Barbie® introduces a collection of eco-friendly accessories for girls with the debut of Barbie™ BCause. The playful and on-trend Barbie™ BCause collection repurposes excess fabric and trimmings from other Barbie® doll fashions and products which would otherwise be discarded, offering eco-conscious girls a way to make an environmentally-friendly fashion statement with cool, patchwork-style accessories...“Barbie is always a reflection of current cultural trends and issues, and girls are increasingly aware of making a green statement,” said Richard Dickson, Senior Vice President of Marketing, Media and Entertainment, Worldwide, Mattel Brands. “Barbie BCause is for eco-conscious girls who believe that being environmentally-friendly is the right thing to do, and we are thrilled to give extra meaning and extra style to what was once just extra Barbie doll fabric.” (<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20080403005056/en>)

The presence of ethical fashion in the realm of the mainstream is now impossible to deny. In the UK alone, the consumption of ethical fashion¹ increased from 52 to 89 million pounds from 2006 to 2007, an increase of 71% (Ethical Consumer Report, 2008). This rapidly growing and evolving sector of the economy has managed to remain largely below the radar of academic scrutiny, however this is beginning to change. In the context of fashion theory, scholars have begun to consider the ambiguities and contexts, which define this emerging and ‘alternative’ sector of the economy (See, for example, the special Issue of *Fashion Theory*, 2008, volume 12, Issue 4).

The various terms that form the lexicon of ethical fashion include “fair trade,” “organic,” “natural,” “green,” “sustainable,” “sweat-shop free,” “recycled,”

and even “second-hand” or “vintage” (Beard, 2008, Thomas, 2008). Beard (2008: 450) notes that although there are multiple trade associations that monitor and encourage ethical practices, (e.g. Ethical Trading Initiative in the UK, Fair Wear in Australia, Clean Clothes Campaign in the Netherlands, Fair Labor Association in the USA, and La Coalition québécoise contre les ateliers de misère in Quebec) no single organization exists which regulates the “ethics” of the fashion industry as a whole (450). In other words, a unified certification process, such as organic or fair trade, does not exist for ethical fashion, which makes it difficult to define and therefore study.

In the context of geography, studies of ethical *trade* have considered fashion but only in the context of large-scale industry, evaluating the process and ability of large-scale manufacturers and retailers to incorporate ‘ethical’ codes of conduct to their pre-established (and presumably unethical) production practices (e.g. Hale 2000, Hughes 2001, 2006, 2007). Although commonalities clearly exist, the work of these scholars differs greatly from this work in terms of the scale and context that is analyzed. Whereas the works of Hale (2000) and Hughes (2001, 2006) consider the large/global scale and corporate context, this work is focused on the small/local scale and the *independent* context. In order to orient a study of this nature, we must turn to a body of work focused on economic processes identified as ‘alternative’ (small/local/independent) to the ‘mainstream’ (large/global/corporate). The majority of this work has considered *food* and the recent turn towards ‘quality’ – a contextual and relational concept grounded in organic and fair trade certification and generally associated with the

equally ambiguous concept of the 'local' (Murdoch et al, 2000, Goodman 2003, Mardsen et al 1999). Needless to say, this work is in its early stages of development and is therefore exploratory in nature. Although its meaning and significance may be clear, research in alternative economics continues to seek for coherence and direction.

This thesis takes the exploration of alternative economics to the realm of fashion, with an investigation of the ethical fashion industry in Montreal, Canada. This investigation takes the form of a case study, based on 38 semi-structured interviews with designers, retailers and intermediaries of the Montreal industry. The city of Montreal provides a particularly interesting case study for this type of industry analysis due to its high concentration of independent, local retailers and designers. This unique situation is largely a product of Montreal's general affordability as well as greater government support for the cultural industries in the province of Quebec. Furthermore, the emergence of *Modethik*, Montreal's annual ethical fashion fair in 2006 has solidified the industry's presence in the city. I will begin with an introduction of the theoretical foundations of alternative economics, going back to the work of Karl Polanyi (1944). I will continue the literature review by discussing the more recent works of geographers on the 'new' food economy, posited as 'alternative' to the mainstream, which is characterized as standardized, globalized and corporate. I will then introduce the commodity chain, a key analytical tool in this investigation to better understand contemporary trends in apparel and the ascendance of ethical fashion, more specifically. Following a brief description of methodology, I will

highlight the results of this case study, which explore the dynamic and evolving relations implicated in the promotional strategies of Montreal's ethical fashion industry. A key aim of this case study is to work towards producing an article, thus, not all the findings are presented here.¹ The emphasis of the findings here is on exposing the limits to the alternative/mainstream dichotomy. Strategic tactics on the part of ethical fashion producers and retailers, whereby both 'ethical' and 'non-ethical' imagery and products are deployed, suggest that alternative economic processes are more likely to be situated along an alternative-mainstream continuum and that the points of alternative/mainstream convergence merit further investigation from a theoretical and policy standpoint.

¹ A report of the key findings is being developed for industry actors and the City of Montreal fashion commissioner.

CHAPTER I

Literature Review

PART I - The [Dis]Embedded Economy

Karl Polanyi's (1944) theory of social embeddedness provides the foundational framework upon which arguments concerning economic 'alternatives' to the neoliberal hegemony are formed. In the *Great Transformation*, Polanyi (1944) outlines a history of the ascendance of the self-regulating market (SRM) as a challenge to its traditionally utopian framing by revealing its true and, as Polanyi contends, fundamentally flawed nature. Polanyi (1944) makes a distinction between *markets*, i.e. places or networks in which goods are bought and sold involving human interactions organized by price, quality, and quantity of traded goods and servicesⁱⁱ and the *self-regulating market* (SRM), a society wide system of markets whereby the organization of production and distribution is regulated by prices rather than institutions (e.g. governments or social ties). Polanyi argued that market based exchange represents only one component of the "substantive economy" which includes three "modes of economic integration." Beyond *market exchange* (i.e. the mode that characterizes SRM), the "substantive economy" consists of *reciprocity* – kinship or community based obligations (sharing) and *redistribution* – centralized collection and distribution of resources. Therefore the ascendance of the SRM came at the cost

of the more socially oriented modes of economic integration (reciprocity and redistribution); which in turn led to a disassociation (or “disembedding”) of the economy from society (this, in fact, Polanyi describes as the “discovery of society”). The consequence of freeing economic activity from the limits imposed by society was increasing economic prosperity on the one hand and social disparity on the other. Therefore Polanyi describes the introduction of institutions of social protection (e.g. laws limiting the amount of hours children can work) as a spontaneous and natural counter movement in response to the social consequences resulting from the whims of the SRM. This is what he refers to as the “double movement,” that of the self-regulating market (free-market capitalism) on the one hand and institutions of social protection (socialism) on the other. It is within this framework that we can begin to conceptualize the economy as a dynamic, multifaceted, and malleable system, which can be (and certainly is) affected by factors other than supply, demand, and prices, i.e. social and cultural.

In *Social Justice and the City*, Harvey (1973: 216) connects Polanyi’s forms of economic integration with urban form, explaining that different forms of economic integration are capable of producing and concentrating different amounts of social surplus product, through which cities are formed. Furthermore, particular modes of economic integration manifest in a variety of forms and the domination of one mode does not preclude the continued presence of other modes. This, he relates to the concept of the “balance of influence” among the various modes (and manifestations) of economic integration in a

specific historical and geographical context (1973: 240). He suggests “we can thus interpret historically occurring forms of urbanism by evaluating the balance of influence among the various modes of economic integration at a particular time and by examining the form assumed by each of the modes at that time” (Harvey 1973: 240). In other words, the specific “balance of influence” among reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange is a reflection of the material and social dynamic of the urban context in which the economic process occurs.

Geographers Murdoch, Marsden, and Banks (2000), broadened the theory of embeddedness to suggest that economic activities are embedded in the natural environment as well as society. They specifically cite the example of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the UK beef industry as an example of how the natural environment can have a significant effect on economic processes. This relates to the concept of the *triple bottom line*, an expanded approach to the measurement of organizational and societal success that integrates economic, social, and ecological inputs and outputs.

Geographer Andrew Sayer (2007) relates this discussion to the ‘moral economy’, which “studies the moral norms and sentiments that structure and influence economic practices, both formal and informal, and the way in which these are reinforced, compromised or overridden by economic pressures” (Sayer, 2007: 262). Sayer suggests that Polanyi’s work lacks an account of this moral dimension in his analysis of what shapes a particular mode of economic integration; thus, Sayer seeks to extend Polanyi’s framework and foreground the role of social norms and cultural mores in shaping social practice. To this end, he

advocates a moral economic approach to the embeddedness of economic processes (Sayer, 2004: 12). Both Sayer (2004) and Harvey (1973) note that by disregarding the moral dimension, as is the case within the self-regulating market paradigm “money becomes not merely a means to the end of production and consumption but an end in itself, pursued through production” (Booth, 1993 as cited in Sayer, 2004: 4).

As the authors above suggest, ‘disembedding’ economic activity from the social, moral, and environmental contexts in and through which it occurs results in the social and environmental exploitation and degradation that permeates the contemporary globalized economy. ‘Alternative’ economic arrangements are a response to these consequences and can therefore be conceptualized as an attempt to ‘embed’ or *integrate* economic activity with society, culture, and the natural environment.

PART II – The Alternative Economy

Discovering the Alternative

Initial investigations of alternative food networks sought firstly to acknowledge this emerging sector of the economy as ‘alternative’ to the industrialized food sector – a sector dominated by large, multi-national corporations whose specialized production processes respond to economic standards of efficiency and competitiveness. Although ‘alternative’ networks were contextually varied, their orientation towards local, small-scale, transparency, and quality (environmental, nutritional, or health) defined them as

a group (Murdoch and Miele, 1999). In their edited book *Alternative Economic Spaces*, Leyshon and Lee (2003) discuss the concept of the 'economic alternative' in a general sense as an alternative to neo-liberalism; i.e. the movement to liberalize the global economy by reducing barriers to the flow of trade and investment, which, its supporters believe, improves living standards. Whatmore et al (2003) position alternative food networks against the logic of bulk commodity production (i.e. the mainstream) and suggest they differ in that they redistribute value through the food chain, inject 'trust' into the producer/consumer relationship, and foster new forms of political association and market governance.

This early phase of research was largely concerned with understanding what distinguishes these arrangements from the mainstream, as well as, the effects of such arrangements, specifically in the context of rural development. In their analysis of short food supply chains (SFSC) for example, Renting, et al (2003) studied alternative food networks (AFN) in the European Union, assessing their ability to support rural development. They found that, "the very process of shortening food supply chains, at least partly, engenders new market relationships which are built around new forms of association and institutional support" (408). Renting et al (2003) also discuss, from a theoretical perspective, the social construction of markets; citing that SFSCs are not the product of the 'invisible hand' of the 'free market', but a result of "the active construction of networks by various actors in the agro-food chain, such as farmers, food processors, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers" (399). In regards to

community benefit, the authors found that SFSC “development, although uneven in Europe, is by no means marginal. SFSCs have developed substantially throughout Europe, and in some countries SFSC-centered trajectories have become key elements of rural development” (Renting et al 2003: 408). They go on to suggest, “AFNs, by their nature, employ different social constructions and equations with ecology, locality, region, quality convention, and consumer cultures” (394) and that AFNs have the capacity to “resocialise” and “respatialise” food, which in turn affects the consumer’s value judgments. The authors therefore suggest that the relations within these ‘alternative’ economic systems are distinct from those of the ‘mainstream’.

The Alternative and the Mainstream

A growing interest in acknowledging and analyzing ‘alternative’ economic systems has been met with scepticism on the part of some scholars as to whether such systems do indeed exist as a distinct form outside the mainstream. In Crewe et al’s (2003) chapter in the book *Alternative Economic Spaces*, entitled ‘Alternative Retail Spaces’; retro retailers and traders were investigated in an attempt to better understand the extent to which they represent an ‘alternative’ economic space. The authors suggest that for retro retailers, there is a tension between the concepts of the alternative and the mainstream. Although the retro retailers have a desire to differentiate themselves from mainstream retailers, it is argued that the distinction does not actually exist. “The ‘alternative’, it would seem, is but a temporary, imaginary space - as soon as it is definable, it is lost.

The working practices of retro traders are hardly revolutionary; the spaces in which creative work occurs are even less so" (Crewe et al 2003: 101). Beyond the alternative as imagined, they go on to argue that "at the bottom line, retro traders, no matter how progressive, distinctive and pioneering their work plans may be, ultimately need to make enough money to stay in business and this, above all else, governs their market position, stability, permanence and positioning vis-à-vis the 'mainstream'" (Crewe et al 2003: 101). The authors specifically cite the revalorization of property within retro trading districts, the recent scarcity of good sources of clothing, and the need for situated knowledge and tacit skill as examples of why retro retailing does not represent an alternative economic space. The conceptual dichotomy employed by these authors is such that the 'alternative' is completely negated and the 'mainstream' is posited simply as commercially based economic exchange and therefore pervasive.

In a study of the social relations of two types of direct (face to face) agricultural markets: farmers markets and community supported agriculture; Hinrichs (2000) highlighted the potential presence of social inequality in those types of economic interactions. Furthermore, he argues "tensions between embeddedness, on the one hand, and marketness and instrumentalism, on the other, suggest how power and privilege may sometimes rest more with educated, middle-class consumers than with farmers or less-advantaged consumers" (Hinrichs 2000: 301). Finally the author contends that if direct agricultural markets are to become transformative alternatives, assumptions about 'close

relations' must be tempered, as "social ties, personal connections, and community good will are often appropriately seasoned by self-interest and a clear view of prices" (Hinrichs, 2000: 301). Here we see a more critical approach to the alterative economy, as Hinrichs (2000) highlights the persistent traits of the market/mainstream (i.e. self-interest), which a different or 'alternative' context (i.e. farmers market) does not necessarily negate.

In Taylor's comparative analysis of two forms of market-based social change; Fair Trade coffee and Forest stewardship council certification, he found that Fair Trade products "struggle with contradictions posed by the fact that if they are to make meaningful progress toward their goals, they can neither isolate themselves from mainstream markets nor abandon their alternative visions of the market" (Taylor, 2004: 143). He described this conflict as being "in the market but not of it" (2004) i.e. the desire to expand the initiatives without sacrificing their original environmental and social goals. Here, Taylor (2004) applies the alternative/mainstream dichotomy subjectively; highlighting a significant point of contention within 'alterative' economic systems based on theoretical conceptions of alternative (good) and mainstream (bad) that in turn manifest in the real world of the economy.

Even those that acknowledge the existence of an 'alternative' suggest the need to further probe the contours of such an economy and the challenges regarding its practical implementation. Hughes (2007) studied the effects of ethical and fair trade products on the agri-food supply chains of major

supermarkets in the UK. By comparing the character of retailer-manufacture relations among various UK supermarkets fostered by ethical and fair trade, she found that “the relationship between ‘alternative’ and ‘mainstream’ forms of trade is mutable and grounded in particular supply channel dynamics informed by specific corporate strategies, modes of governance, product characteristics and competitive niches of producers” (Hughes, 2007: 185). In other words, the extent to which UK supermarkets altered their business relations, when dealing with ethical and fair trade producers, was contingent on the company’s stated values and strategies. Implied in this study is that the actual existence of ethical or ‘alternative’ systems must be analyzed, rather than assumed.

In this phase of research we see the alternative/mainstream dichotomy begin to dissolve. Although the studies are framed on the dichotomy logic, their results tend to suggest a more fluid conceptualization of the two ‘branches’ of the economy, which leads us into the next phase of research.

Beyond the Divideⁱⁱⁱ

Rather than debating the subjective existence of an economic ‘alternative’ in relation to a ‘mainstream’; authors have begun to look beyond the inherent dichotomy of such a framing and consider the competitive relationships between alternative and mainstream networks in order to reveal specificities of their nature in relation to regional development processes (Sonnino and Marsden, 2005).

Demonstrating the limits of the dichotomist framing, Murdoch and Miele (1999) employ comparative case studies to illustrate how a large producer uses the 'alternative' concept of quality – natural and animal-friendly, to sell their products and how small organic producers harness a standardized commercial structure to sell theirs. Similarly, Staete and Marsden (2003) consider two dairy companies in Wales and Norway that employ 'alternative' qualities in their promotion while they modernize traditional recipes in an attempt to satisfy industrial claims.

Looking beyond the common strategies employed by both alternative and mainstream actors, McDonagh & Commins (1999) analyzed both the industrial and specialty/local food sectors in Ireland in relation to rural development. They argue that the inclusion of a speciality (i.e. alternative) local food sector alongside the industrial (i.e. mainstream) contributes to maintaining rural population levels, "through diversification of the economy, dispersal of employment and the promotion of rural enterprise" (369). This finding reveals the practical benefits in considering the relations between the 'alternative' and 'mainstream' branches of the economy, rather than trying to establish or problematize the differences (i.e. the previous phases of research).

Maye and Ilbery (2006) studied the nature of the local 'specialist' food supply chain in the region of the Scottish-English border. They found the 'alternative' businesses in the region to be dependent on national and international suppliers, including links with 'mainstream' suppliers" (351). For example, in terms of local

cheese production, although the base ingredient, milk, comes from the region, other essential ingredients (such as rennet and starter culture) come from mainstream national and sometimes international producers. They observed a 'mixing together' of 'alternative' and 'conventional' economic systems and argue that specialist producers were developing their own "niche spaces" within the overall system (Maye and Ilbery 2006: 351). The authors concluded that "local specialist food chains are often of a 'hybrid nature' when surveyed in terms of the geography of their supply links. In this case, the alternative/mainstream dichotomy is employed objectively, revealing the practical relations among economic agents operating on different scales, with (arguably) different philosophies.

Clarke et al (2008) in considering the largest supplier of organic food in the UK, Riverford Organic Vegetables, found that

the space of organic food production and distribution is neither the small, local, counter-cultural farm nor the large, transnational, corporate firm. Rather, simultaneously, the spaces of organic food production and distribution are the national network, the regional distribution system and the local farm (p. 219).

Looking specifically at the promotional strategies of this organic vegetable distributor, Clarke et al. (2008), describe the ethics employed in that regard as *ordinary*, in that they relate to everyday concerns such as taste, quality, and value for money, as opposed to "strongly held ideological or spiritual blueprints for action" (224). *Ordinary* or virtue ethics, rather than encouraging altruism or discouraging self-interest (i.e. consequentialist and deontological ethics, see Singer, 1997) seek to reveal the interconnectedness of self-interest with care for

the other - other people and other natures (Barnett et al., 2005). The authors went on to reveal a promotional narrative working to *refetishise* rather than *defetishise* the commodity; a process commonly attributed to the mainstream (see also Goodman, 2004 and Bryant and Goodman, 2004 for a discussion of the commodity fetish implicated in fair trade and organic trade networks). In delving below the 'surface', these authors have revealed that the alternative/mainstream dichotomy does not conform to the character of the promotional strategies employed by 'alternative' economic actors.

These studies substantiate the views of Sonnino and Marsden (2005) who suggest that framing alternative food networks in binary terms – standardized vs. localized – does not reflect the reality of the contemporary food sector. And from a theoretical perspective, “this warns against the widespread inclination to posit clear distinctions between conventional and alternative food networks and it encourages the search for new conceptual and methodological tools to explore the nature and dynamics of the alternative sector” (p. 184).

It is in light of this most recent phase of research that this study takes its direction. I endeavour to reveal how the actors of Montreal's ethical fashion industry engage with both 'mainstream' as well as 'alternative' sectors of the economy as they attempt to increase their share of a market dominated by 'mainstream' brands. The *terms* 'alternative' and 'mainstream' will be employed to demonstrate the *dualistic* nature of the industry, and enable engagement with the wider theoretical debates within the alternative economy literature outlined above. This approach aligns with the findings of Blay-Palmer and Donald (2006)

who acknowledge the value in clarifying how these systems differ due to the “different policy options for governments at multiscales and dimensions, from food policy to social inclusion to public health and planning” (396). As a point of clarification, in this study, ‘mainstream’ refers generally to economic systems controlled by large, multi-national corporations whose specialized production processes respond to economic standards of efficiency and competitiveness and ‘alternative’ generally refers to small-scale and local economic systems oriented toward transparency and a broadened conception of quality that includes the environment, nutrition, and health. In particular, this study speaks to the debates concerning the nature of the relationship between the ‘alternative’ and the ‘mainstream’, their theoretical and practical convergence and the consequences for economic development.

Chapter II

Situating Ethical Fashion in Contemporary Industry Trends

PART I - Analysing the Contemporary Fashion Industry through a Commodity Chain Lens

For undertaking an analysis of an economic sector, such as fashion, the concept of the commodity chain provides a useful heuristic device to capture the networks and relations that are implicated in the production process. A commodity chain is “a network of labour and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity” (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1994: 159). This approach not only allows for a clear understanding of how a single commodity, a pair of jeans for example, is produced from cotton production to retailing (i.e. its input-output structure) but it reveals the dynamic relations among interacting firms and governments as well as the local contexts that both shape and are shaped by the chain (Bair & Gereffi 2003).

The contemporary fashion commodity chain is complex in nature and global in scale, a single product can travel across the globe in its journey to the retail store (Gereffi, 1994). As essentially all manufacturers now sub-contract production to potentially many different companies (and in some cases, individuals), in many different locations, transparency is reduced (and potentially

lost) in the labyrinth of the commodity chain.

Gereffi (1994) described two types of commodity chains: *producer driven* - capital intensive industries in which large transnational corporations maintain direct control over production (e.g. auto manufacturers), and *buyer driven* - labour intensive industries in which brand name merchandisers (which includes design houses and retailers) “play the pivotal role in setting up decentralized production networks in a variety of exporting countries, typically in the Third World” (Gereffi, 1994: 97) (e.g. apparel industry). Within buyer driven commodity chains merchandisers possess near absolute power, they dictate the prices and the time lines and due to the sub-contractor system, if one manufacturer is unable to meet specific demands, another will be found who can. Moreover, in the last few decades, apparel retailers and department stores have been moving towards consolidation, reducing their total number and increasing the power in the hands of those who remain, compounding the uneven power relations (Gereffi 1994, Appelbaum et al 1994, Hurley et al 2005).

The consequences of the concentration of power and surplus at the consumption end of the apparel industry are meticulously detailed by Naomi Klein (2000) in her book *No Logo* in which she describes the general shift from a focus on the production of products to the production of brands on the part of apparel manufacturers. This in turn has transplanted production from the domestic to the international scale, where trade barriers and labour laws are bypassed in export processing zones (also known as free trade zones) (Klein, 2000).

It is precisely this shift, and the consequences therein, which spurred the backlash of protest and boycotts of the 1990s (Polanyi's (1944) double movement). As a response, big apparel brands introduced codes of conduct and corporate social responsibility, hoping this would placate the socially conscious consumer. However, their tarnished image in conjunction with the complex nature and global scale of their commodity chains ensured the persistence of consumer concerns and the demand for an alternative. And as economics teaches us, where there is demand, there is supply. Thus, ethical fashion was born.

PART II – The Ethical Fashion Industry in Montreal

Ethical fashion as concept and practice is difficult to define, as it is subjective, contextual, and relational. In the context of this case study, we define ethical fashion as *clothing and accessories that are produced with environmentally friendly materials and socially responsible practices*. Here, environmental 'friendly' materials in Montreal's ethical fashion industry include mainly organic cotton and recycled fabric as well as bamboo, hemp, and lyocell^{iv}. Environmental friendliness can also include types of dye used in the colouring process. Social responsibility generally refers to non-exploitative *local* production but can also include international, fair trade production. While the latter involves an extensive certification process^v, the validity of the former may or may not be verified by a third party certifier; the element of trust, a component of the alternative economy, is therefore involved.

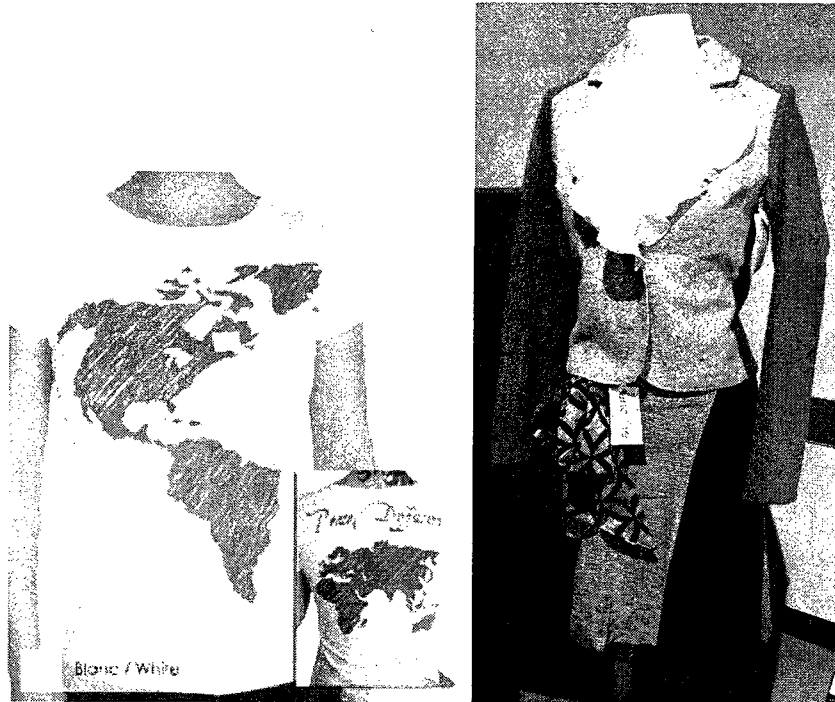
Montreal's ethical fashion industry is as diverse as its definition is

subjective. There are no two producers or distributors who operate in the same way; each business is structured based on the personal values and ambitions of its owner(s). The two main segments of production relate to the kinds of material used: new material and recycled material^{vi} (see figures 2.1 & 2.2 below). Within the recycled material segment, scale and method of production vary greatly, from an individual designer producing in their own home to a design team and sub-contracted manufacturers. Lines that use recycled fabric commonly incorporate a portion of new material to their clothing, this generally happens as production quantities increase and retailers demand a higher degree of consistency (Interviews 2008).

The most common new material used is organic cotton, and within the Montreal context, fair trade cotton is rapidly growing in popularity, in part due to the Montreal based non-profit organization Fibrethik, which has facilitated the cooperative importation of fair trade cotton from India and promotes its consumption. For the production of new materials, various local sub-contractors are used whose ethics may or may not be verified by a third party certifier. In the case of fair trade garments, every step of garment production (both international and local) must be fair trade certified. Some lines even use non-profit organizations for their production (e.g. Petites Mains). These organizations provide the training of skills applicable to the Quebec economy, such as sewing for the unemployed, and produce clothing in the process (Interviews 2008).

There are several boutiques in Montreal that specialize in the retail of ethical fashion. The range of these boutiques is a reflection of the diversity of the

producers they distribute. The map in figure 2.3, seen below, shows the locations of the ten boutiques interviewed for this case study; the four categories are my own.



Figures 2.1 & 2.2: (Left) Organic cotton t-shirt by OOM. (Right) Skirt and jacket made from recycled material by Encore Creations. Source: 1 - www.oom.ca, 2 - Photo by Ryan Craven

Retail-manufacturers are generally the most established producers and retailers due to the high level of investment needed to operate in both capacities as well as the apparent advantages such an arrangement provides. The *eco general store* is a cooperative retailer that sells a wide range of ecologically friendly products including a modest collection of clothing. *Art Gallery* is a boutique that distributes a wide range of recycled fashion as well as visual art, which tends to follow the recycled theme. Finally, *retailers* are general fashion boutiques that distribute mainly or exclusively ethical fashion. The range within the *retailer* category will be discussed in detail in chapter IV.

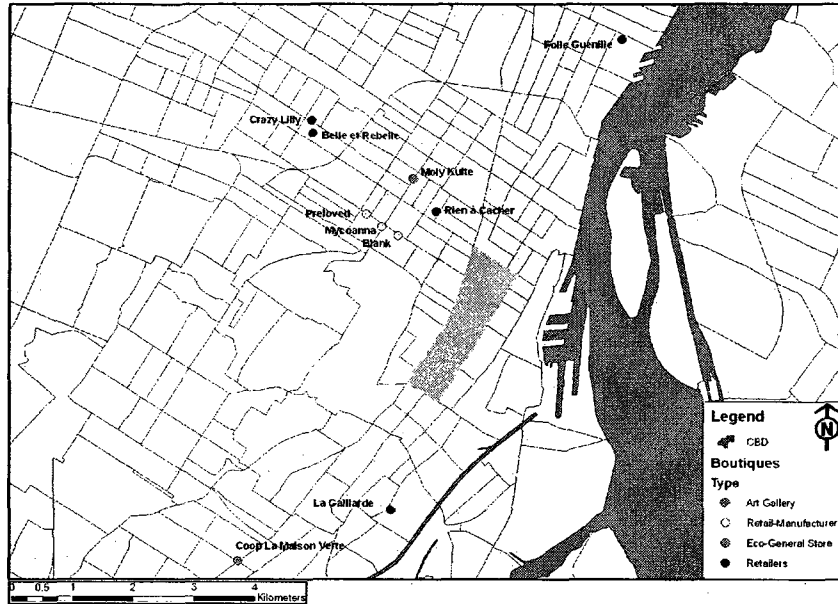


Figure 2.3: Location of ethical fashion boutiques in Montreal by category. Source: Ryan Craven and Mark Notte, 2009

The diverse nature of what constitutes ‘ethical’ fashion in Montreal, as well as the growth and consolidation of this burgeoning field as a distinct industry, offers a unique perspective on alternative economy debates, which have tended to privilege an analysis of individual actors who are either local and green (organic) or global and fair (fair trade) (Morgan, 2008). By considering the industry as a whole, it is therefore possible to seek out characteristics common to all elements of the ‘alternative’ economy, including those characterized as organic, fair trade, local and everything in between. Furthermore, to date, studies on alternative systems as they pertain to food have mainly considered the context of rural development, leaving the urban context largely unexplored in relation to alternative economies.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This thesis is a case study of the ethical fashion industry in Montreal. Yin (1994) suggests the case study research design is ideal in answering 'how' and 'why' questions when dealing with contemporary real-life phenomena in a specific context. The strength of this method lies in its ability to incorporate, through triangulation, a range of data sources that together form the final results. Semi-structured interviews were the main methodological tool employed in this study. Interviews were conducted with the use of an interview guide that contained open-ended questions. The merits of this type of interview are that it allows for flexibility in the interviewee's responses and in the interviewer's line of questioning. Although an interviewer generally asks all the questions in the guide, it is not necessary for she/he to follow a specific order and questions not included in the guide may be asked if the opportunity, based on interviewee response, presents itself (Bryman and James 2005). Due to the exploratory nature of this research, the flexibility afforded by the semi-structured interview is integral.

Beyond flexibility, the value of the semi-structured interview lies in its focus on the concerns of the interviewee, rather than the researcher. Discussing the merit of 'qualitative corporate interviews,' Schoenberger (1991) suggests that such interviews recognize "that firms are institutional agents embedded in a complex network of

internal and external relationships” (181). The goal of an interview, she argues, “is to understand the firm’s observed behaviour in light of the firm’s own history and circumstances” (180). In this sense, the interview can get at the ‘why’ behind observed conditions.

Schoenberger (1991) goes on to discuss how internal checks, which were used in this study, can be built into the interview “by requiring the respondent to explain the same events or decisions in different contexts” (187). By asking questions with potentially overlapping responses, the interviewee is encouraged to think about an issue in a different way and this could confirm a previous response or provide new information. A form of ‘external’ check was also employed, which involves the cross-referencing of the responses of interacting agents (i.e. retailers and producers). This is particularly relevant in the fashion industry; as Crewe et al (2003) warned that creative industry members can superficially glamorize the nature of their work in interviews.

Although a powerful methodological tool, the semi-structured interview does have its weaknesses. The potential to ‘lead the witness’ (i.e. encouraging desired responses) exists through poorly designed questions as well as more subtle linguistic indicators such as body language. Furthermore, in analysis, the misinterpretation of responses is possible, as the researcher can over-emphasize certain sections of the interview over others (Schoenberger, 1991). Finally, the sample size is limited by the large amount of time involved in conducting and transcribing the interviews.

Due to the subjective nature of the concept of ethical fashion, the selection process for the sample was relatively open although restrictions did exist. Each

company was required to address both the environmental and social element to some degree. On one end of the spectrum there is the company NKI, which uses fair trade cotton (grown in India) and produces in local fair trade certified factories. On the other, the company Blank uses non-organic cotton but sources it from as close to Montreal as possible (the southern US), reducing transportation based carbon emissions and produces with non-certified (but personally guaranteed) local subcontractors. Within this range of ethics exists a further range of size and scale: from the well-established retail/manufacturer, which started over 10 years ago, has annual sales over \$300,000, up to 20 employees, and sells in over 70 boutiques worldwide to the young designers who has just started, working in their home, with annual sales under \$5,000. Incorporating a range of business sizes and scales provides a diversity of perspectives, and can also illuminate the effect of growth on the ethics of a business. A connection to Montreal was also necessary, although this too was flexible as four companies were located outside of the city. In these cases, they were either in the Montreal region and a significant portion of their sales took place in Montreal or in the case of two retail/manufacturers, based in Quebec City and Toronto, one of their boutiques was located in Montreal.

Finding potential interviewees was not difficult, as every designer and boutique has a website for publicity. There was however occasional hesitancy on the part of some designers and boutique owners, who were not interested in being interrogated about their 'ethics'. My volunteer work for the ethical fashion fair Modethik, as a member of the planning committee, however, helped to establish a positive presence and to forge networks within the industry. This additionally provided an opportunity

for participant observation, involving various other ethical fashion events put on by associated groups throughout the year.

Between May 2008 and December 2008 I conducted 38 interviews with actors in Montreal's ethical fashion industry. The interviews generally lasted one hour; the shortest lasted approximately 30 minutes and the longest nearly four hours. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Seven interviews were conducted in French and these were translated into English as they were transcribed. Before each interview, I conducted an Internet and media search on the interviewee (generally the owner) and the business itself in order to tailor questions to each specific case.

Two generic consistent interview guides were used; one for designers/producers and one for retailers upon which new questions were added as I learned more about the industry (see appendix for an example guide). The designers were asked additional questions as part of a larger study being conducted in conjunction with the Innovation System Research Network (ISRN), based at the University of Toronto. The guide was comprised of 6 themes, the first was 'background', which involved both personal and business questions concerning education/work history, how long they have been in business, how/why they started the business, etc. The second theme, 'key industry networks and connections', aimed to construct a detailed documentation of the organization of the industry. The theme 'nature of business relations' attempted to learn how retailer-producer business relations functioned in general and how they may differ from those in the 'mainstream' fashion industry. The theme

'notions of ethical trade', asked the industry members to describe their conceptions of ethical trade, ethical fashion, as well as their ethical business and to explain how those conceptions may affect their business relations. Finally, in the theme 'constraints to engaging in ethical practices and relations' the interviewees were asked to describe the challenges they face in operating as ethical retailers or producers and how they overcome those challenges.

Representatives of non-profit or public institutional intermediaries were asked questions depending on their role in the industry and those questions were generally concerned with the themes of 'key industry networks and connections and 'nature of business relations,' since their position afforded them a unique perspective in both regards. I was also interested in their role in the industry as well as their perceptions of it.

In total, I interviewed 18 producers/designers, 6 boutiques, 4 retailer/manufactures and 10 intermediaries. Table 3.1 provides a more detailed scheme of the interviews that make up this case study.

Although semi-structured interviews represent the main research method, I also consulted a variety of media sources – local newspapers, fashion magazines, and other printed material as well as web based sources, mostly the websites of the businesses. As previously mentioned, I also conducted participant observation in my capacity as a volunteer for Modethik, and as an attendant of other events relevant to ethical fashion where I would have

Capacity	# of Interviewees
-----------------	--------------------------

Retailer	6
Retail/Manufacturer	4
Producer	18
<i>Intermediaries</i>	
Enviro-social promotion (Equiterre, Ethiquette, CV)	3
Ethical fashion promotion/support (Fiberethik, PM, FEM)	4
Certification organization (Transfair)	2
Local economic development organization (CDEC)	1
Total	38

Table 3.1. Scheme of interviewees

follow-up discussions with designers who I had previously interviewed. I would also periodically visit different boutiques to observe as well as to converse with the owners. The information gathered from these other sources was used to triangulate (i.e. to verify or enable comparisons with) interview responses in order to form a more complete picture of Montreal's ethical fashion industry.

CHAPTER IV

Results: Ethical Fashion, Practice and Perception

This section consists of two parts. In the first part, I will briefly highlight the material and social elements of Montreal's urban geography that work to both constrain and support the ethical fashion industry. The second, and more substantial, part of the analysis will highlight the various promotional strategies employed by the producers and retailers of Montreal's ethical fashion industry to illustrate how the alternative/mainstream divide is bridged in practice.

PART I – Supports and Constraints

Constraints

The various constraints faced by small-scale fashion producers have been described in previous studies and include high production minimums, lack of financing, the concentration of power in a small group of major retailers, and the loss of local industrial infrastructure (Rantisi, forthcoming). These constraints represent a significant barrier to entry, as well as a limit to growth for small-scale, locally oriented fashion producers.

Beyond such constraints, engaging with ethical fashion entails further constraints and consequently greater barriers to both entry and growth. The higher cost and limited supply of “eco” fabric augments the constraint of financing and production minimums. Furthermore, the specific skills required in the production of recycled clothing, unknown to the current body of clothing manufacturers, increases the cost and time of production (Interviews 2008).

Similarly in regards to consumption, there are various constraints faced more generally by all small-scale fashion producers in Montreal. These constraints include limited market size, limited marketing infrastructure, and the retailer’s need for high volume due the seasonality of the fashion industry (Rantisi, forthcoming; see Weller (2007) for a similar discussion of the Melbourne, Australia context). Ethical fashion however is limited not only by the size of the local market but also by the portion of that local market who are aware of and willing to pay more for ethical fashion^{vii}. Furthermore, the nature of recycled fashion – that of unique pieces – is not conducive to the standardization and consistency demanded by clothing retailers.

Supports

Material and social aspects of the city of Montreal support the development of small-scale creative enterprises in general and fashion designers specifically. On the material side, low rents, in conjunction with the industrial and spatial remnants of North America’s former textile manufacturing epicentre, provide access to the needed space and infrastructure. The cheap rents in Montreal, a

product of provincial rent control, not only provide designers affordable work space, but also keep the general cost of living low, which is a significant aid to any low income creative worker, such as a small-scale fashion designer (not to mention *ethical* fashion designer).

On the social side, supportive local media, and non-profit/government support for local economic development, help small-scale creative enterprises obtain crucial free promotion and financial aid respectively (Klien, J-L et al 2009, Rantisi, forthcoming). In regards to ethical fashion, a system of social supports in Montreal also played an integral role in the development of the various components that make up the industry. Over 60 percent of the retailers, producers, and intermediaries involved in the industry received aid from the government via non-profit organizations oriented towards community economic development (CED) (e.g. Corporation de développement économique communautaire - CDEC) (Interviews 2008). Beyond the organizations oriented towards CED, other non-profit organizations support the industry with promotion and networking (Equiterre), event organizing (Fem International), and cooperative buying (Fibrethik). These material and social dimensions of Montreal's economy are a reflection of the "balance of influence" among the different modes of economic integration – reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange - (See Polanyi 1944 and Harvey 1973) and are intrinsically connected to the form and nature of Montreal's ethical fashion industry. With the material supports and constraints relative to the urban geography of Montreal now established, we can begin to explore how the producers and retailers of ethical

fashion have endeavoured to adapt their promotional strategies and tactics to that materiality. These strategies and tactics constitute an integral contribution to the growth and success this industry has experienced in recent years and are furthermore telling of the nature of 'alternative' economies in relation to the 'mainstream'.

PART II [E]merging Alternative and Conventional Tactics

The strategies employed by the producers and distributors of ethical fashion transcend the alternative/mainstream dichotomy while they endeavour to increase their share of the highly competitive apparel market. The self-imposed limitation of 'ethical' materials and production methods does not limit promotional strategies; rather, it acts to widen the scope of opportunities by creating new avenues for promotion and distribution on top of the pre-existing conventional options. The scope of ethical fashion's promotional strategies is related to the hybrid nature of fashion itself, as it is at once material and symbolic. Hirsh (1972, 2000) highlighted the integral role of cultural intermediaries (e.g. marketing and distribution organizations at the consumption end) in the production of a cultural good (e.g. fashion). Bourdieu (1993) called them "institutions of diffusion or consecration" (p. 133) underscoring their role in the "production of the value of the work or, which amounts to the same thing, of belief in the value of the work" (p. 37). Rantisi (forthcoming) elaborated on the significance of cultural intermediaries, explaining that "through their

gatekeeping function, they not only mediate tastes for the consumer but qualify and requalify a product's image and symbolic value, and offer creative stimulus for future rounds of design." The non-linear, 'dynamic' relations between designers and 'institutions of diffusion' (e.g. magazines, boutiques, and events) are therefore of critical relevance to this analysis. Promotional strategies are thus a result of these 'dynamic relations' and will be explored below.

Retail Distribution Channels

Boutiques specialized in the retail of ethical fashion provide producers several advantages, particularly to those that are young and emerging. By choosing to retail 'ethical' clothing, these boutiques are subject to the consequences of the productive constraints faced by 'ethical' producers, which locks them into a specific set of practices that are alternative to those of conventional boutiques. These practices relate primarily to the limited amount of 'ethical' options on the market, which obliges the forgiveness of grievances such as late deliveries and quality inconsistencies (Interviews, 2008). This scarcity of 'ethical' lines in turn fosters a co-dependence between the producers and retailers of ethical fashion. The owner of Rien à Cacher describe how the nature of this co-dependence plays out in practice:

...so we'll try the samples, it's great, we order, the production run is completely off the samples and we pretty much know if we send this back, the guy's dead, you know so we'll take it in and we'll just try to sell it, usually we reduce the cost, we give feed back to the designer, "look, this is what you did wrong, you know, we're having trouble selling because of this" But we'll never say 'the collection sucked, we had to liquidate,' we'll just say you know 'these are the challenges we had with your collection this season' (Interview July 2008).

Boutiques like Rien à Cacher provide 'ethical' producers a space where production errors represent a lesson rather than a loss, a space that ethical fashion producers have taken full advantage of, as 'ethical' boutiques were the point of entry for nearly every producer interviewed in this study (Interviews 2008).

Although 'ethical' boutiques are often the point of entry for 'ethical' manufacturers, they are certainly not the end point; manufacturers capable of producing the needed quality and quantity also sell in conventional boutiques. Conventional or 'non-ethical' boutiques are in fact coveted by 'ethical' manufacturers but not simply as an additional sales point. The owner/designer of a line of recycled clothing explained that "it's harder to get into the non-ethical boutiques but it sells actually really well because it's the only [ethical] one... they have something to say about it so sometimes people are really interested and they're really going to look at it" (Interview 2008). Beyond the exposure to more and deeper wallets, selling to these conventional retail channels allows producers to place their lines alongside 'big brands' and this lends fashion credibility to an industry plagued by the 'granola' and 'hippie' stereotype (Interviews 2008). Furthermore, some producers associate selling in the conventional retail sphere with morally oriented objectives. The owner of NKI described what selling in the boutique *D Tox*, a national chain with 35 outlets, meant for him;

[T]his was one of my bigger accomplishments, because in the beginning, my goal was to make fair trade more cool, trendy, and get rid of the hippie image associated with it. So I wanted to make a brand that had nothing to do with what we saw before in fair trade. Really for the youth, cool, trendy. I wanted people to buy the brand because they thought it was cool and after they realize that it was fair trade

and then learn more about fair trade. That was my objective, make it happen from the other side, make a cool brand that is bought on its own merits and after have people realize that it's fair trade and then start buying it because it's fair trade. (Interview, 2008)

Selling in both 'ethical' (alternative) and 'non-ethical' (conventional) boutiques is therefore a key strategy for the producers of ethical fashion, not only in order to increase sales but also for the social and environmental causes associated with their brands. The focus on quality and style rather than 'ethics', as mentioned in the quote, is also an important strategy, and a theme to which we will return.

Certain retailers, similar to ethical fashion producers, operate as 'alternative' and 'conventional' simultaneously. The owner of Belle et Rebelle explained how selling both 'ethical' and 'non-ethical' clothing benefits the 'ethical' producers she carries; "[conventional] importation is my cash cow, which allows me to make less profit on the other local, ethical pieces. I know that I often sell things for less here than other places in the city" (Interview 2008). This tactic, although potentially subject to criticism, does help to increase sales for the 'ethical' producers and therefore benefits their associated socio-environmental causes. Several producers mentioned that they sold best at Belle et Rebelle (Interviews 2008). In contrast to the more 'relaxed' ethics adopted by Belle et Rebelle is the case of Rien à Cacher, whose owner turned down an opportunity to sell Levi's line of organic cotton jeans because he was dissatisfied with the information provided regarding the production method (Interview 2008). This kind of variation among the ethical fashion boutiques in Montreal reveals the limitation of the

alternative/mainstream binary and will be explored below in relation to their geography.

Ethical Retail Geography

Beyond specific strategies employed by 'ethical' boutiques, their geographic and aesthetic variations speak to how alternative and mainstream exist along a continuum rather than as discrete categories. While some of the boutiques were situated in fringe locations with the actual designs of the buildings and interiors representing a more alternative, unrefined, rough aesthetic, others were situated in established, medium-range as well as upscale retail districts with a more finished, professional, and clean style (see figure 4.1 below). This variety is captured in the three cases discussed below.

The boutique Folle Guenille is found in the neighbourhood Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, located on the Eastern edge of the island of Montreal with a working class population that is composed of a mix of Francophone Quebecois and recent immigrants. It is considered one of the poorest districts in Montreal and the province of Quebec^{viii}. A commercial survey conducted on Rue Saint Catherine East, the district's main commercial street, where Folle Guenille is situated, found that 59.1% of individuals had an annual income of less than \$20,000 a year and 62.6% came from the immediate neighbourhood (Info-Site Survey, 2002). The nature of the boutique is a reflection of its environment. It began as a friperie (second hand store) and gradually evolved to sell ethical fashion, mostly recycled, in conjunction with the second hand clothing^{ix}. The rent

is shared by the boutique owner and two other women who use a portion of the space as a workshop for their personal sewing projects. These women also provide alterations for items sold in the boutique, as well as advice for young designers (free of charge), based on their experience in the production of clothing and costume design. The boutique owner's unconventional philosophy regarding fashion is summed up in this quote: "to me, it's not for the fashion here ... you must dress in a responsible way because it's a necessity for the environment. It's not fashion. It's not because it's fashion now, it's because you have to do it" (Interview 2008). The owner furthermore talked about a strong connection to the surrounding community, where she also happens to live. Finally, the hand painted window display and the unpolished, cluttered, and whimsical interior design is a clear indication that this store is anything but 'mainstream' (see figures 4.2 & 4.3 below).

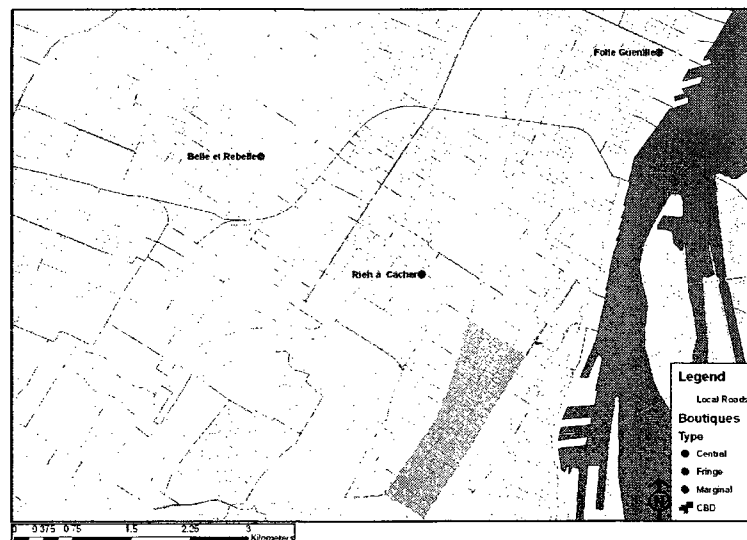
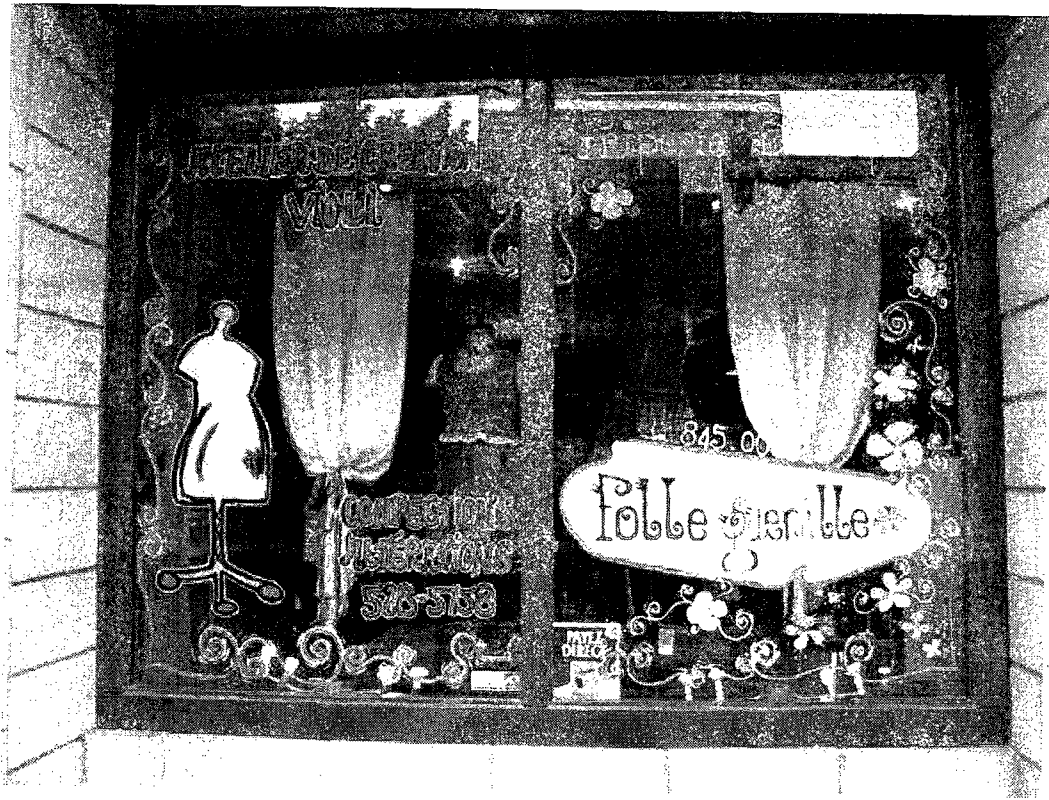


Figure 4.1: Location of three ethical fashion boutiques in relation to the Central Business District. Source: Ryan Craven and Mark Notte, 2009.



Figures 4.2 & 4.3: (Top) Window display and (Bottom) interior of the boutique Folle Guenille. Source: <http://www.myspace.com/folleguenille>

The boutique Belle et Rebelle is located in Plaza St. Hubert, an outdoor shopping district known for its glass covered sidewalks and concentration of boutiques specialized in fashion accessories and wedding dresses. Approximately 6 km and an extensive set of train tracks separate this commercial strip from downtown Montreal. The same consumer study found that 37.2% of consumers surveyed lived in the district and 40.5% had an annual income less than \$20,000 a year (Info-Site Survey, 2002). The composition of boutiques in this district is a mix of medium and low-end chains (Le Château, Reitmans, Payless Shoes Source) and many independents. Belle et Rebelle sells locally designed clothing, ethical fashion, and imported/'unethical' clothing. The boutique's owner explained that she "buys what she likes" which includes but is not limited to ethical fashion (Interview 2008). Lacking a second hand section, this boutique has a relatively more finished and professional look than Folle Guenille, but is still quirky and cluttered with a wide range of clothing and accessories (see figures 4.4 & 4.5). The success of this boutique as well as its owner's philosophy is exemplified by the recent opening of a second location called Petite Rebelle. This satellite boutique is also located in Saint Hubert Plaza, two blocks up, and has a slightly more refined and upscale look.



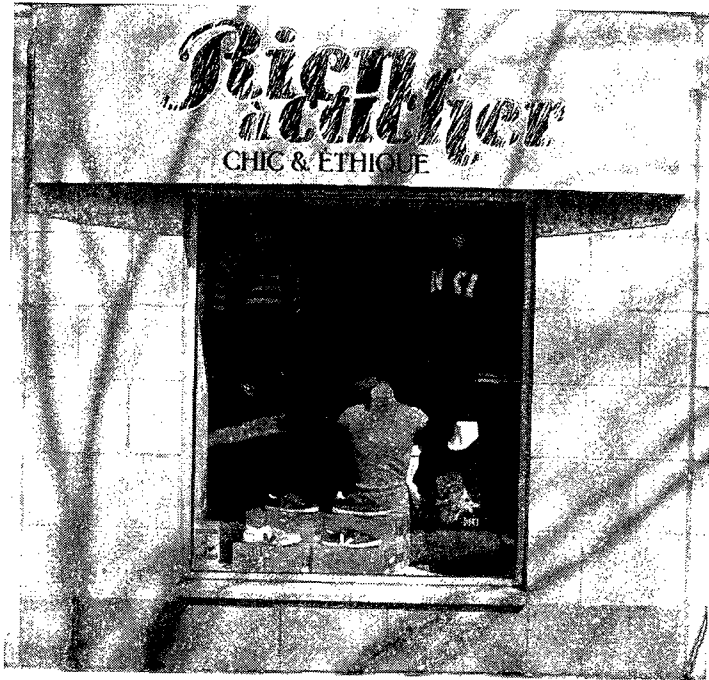
Figures 4.4 & 4.5: (Top) Window display and (Bottom) interior of the boutique Belle et Rebelle. Source: 4.4 - Photo taken by Ryan Craven, March 2009
4.5 - www.facebook.com/belle.et.rebelle#/belle.et.rebelle?

The boutique Rien à Cacher (Nothing to Hide) is in the centrally located Plateau neighbourhood on the hip and trendy Rue Saint-Denis. This commercial street is filled with up-scale restaurants, cafés, and boutiques. The consumer survey found only 24% of those asked were from the area and 33% had an annual income under \$20,000. Rien à Cacher is surrounded by middle and upper-range boutiques e.g. The Gap, Jacob, Le Château, and Calvin Klein. Not surprisingly, the look and feel of this boutique is similar to those in its environs – modern, clean, and chic. The only thing being *hidden* is the fact that all the products inside this store are ‘ethical’. Upon close inspection however, signs of ‘alternativeness’ do exist, a Transfair (fair trade) sticker in the window, and a sign that reads: “Rien à Cacher Chic et *Ethique*” (see figures 4.6 & 4.7 below). With regards to fashion and ethics, the boutiques discussed above tend to favour one at the expense of the other, while Rien à Cacher’s approach is to more consistently integrate the two and is summed up in the following quote:

no matter what, we’ll always make sure that the labour and the eco side is there before the style works. But it’s kind of like, if a collection doesn’t work stylewise there’s no reason to research all the other things... it’s a very important part (the style) because it’s what’s going to sell the clothes... no one will ever buy just because of the values, it’s sad to say but they don’t (Interview 2008).

In selecting such a central location, with the associated high cost of rent, the owner of Rien à Cacher is obliged to structure the business in a manner similar to the conventional boutiques in its surroundings; prioritizing consistency, organization and image.

The geographic and aesthetic nature of Montreal's ethical fashion boutiques do not conform to the alternative/mainstream binary framework and reveal more of the nature of the spectrum upon which 'alternative' businesses operate.



Figures 4.6 & 4.7: (Top) Window display and (Bottom) interior of Rien à Cacher .
Source: Photos taken by Ryan Craven, March 2009.

Industry Events

The members of Montreal's ethical fashion industry participate in various events for promotion and sales to both consumers and distributors. These events include trade fairs, trade shows, and other kinds of events and they further highlight the dualistic (alternative/conventional) strategies employed in the ethical fashion industry and speak more to spectrum of alternative and mainstream tactics.

Trade Fairs

The producers of ethical fashion participate in two types of trade fairs; eco-themed and craft-themed. Eco-themed trade fairs, such as *Salon National de l'Environment* and *Noel Vert a la Biosphere*, can promote any kind of 'eco-friendly' good and/or service and often include a significant education component as well as direct sales (i.e. to consumers rather than buyers). These fairs are used by a variety of producers of ethical fashion but especially those in the emerging phase, as they represent both an avenue for sales and venue for the face-to-face promotion, an important marketing tool for small-scale fashion designers (Interviews 2008).

Although craft fairs are not framed as 'ethical', they share some common elements, i.e. local and small-scale production. Many ethical fashion producers, especially those who use recycled material, participate in craft fairs such as the *Souk @ SAT*, *Puce Pop*, and *Salon des métiers d'art*. These events are primarily geared towards sales but also provide promotional and networking

opportunities. Multiple interviewees noted that craft fairs are in fact better for sales than those that are eco-themed (Interviews 2008), most likely due to their primary orientation towards retail, rather than education. For recycled clothing in particular, craft fairs represent a superior venue for the sale of products. Unique pieces, a relative disadvantage in boutiques, becomes an advantage in craft fairs. The co-owner of a line of recycled fur and leather accessories explained that in craft fairs “it’s even better when everything is different, people see it and you tell them ‘you’ll never see another one exactly like that’ and they’re happy” (Interview 2008).

Trade Shows

In the conventional US fashion industry, trade shows have become the major venue for meeting potential buyers (Rantisi, 2002). Although this may or may not be the case for the ethical fashion industry, (no such data exists at this time) the recent emergence of ethical/alternative trade shows (e.g. Ethical Fashion Show® in Paris and Modethik in Montreal) in conjunction with the introduction of eco or ethical exhibitions within conventional/mainstream trade shows (e.g. Ecolection - Magic, Las Vegas, Green Market - D and A, New York, So Ethic - Pret a Porter, Paris, and Estethica - London Fashion Week^x) suggests that their role within the industry merits examination.

Modethik, ‘The ethical fashion fair of Montreal’, was established in 2006 and modelled after the Ethical Fashion Show® in Paris. The show involves a retail fair that is oriented to consumers, a trade show oriented to buyers, a fashion

show, and a conference with seminars and roundtable discussions involving producers, distributors, intermediaries, and consumers. The primary role of this event is to generate publicity, both for individual designers (by enabling face to face interaction with consumers and buyers) and for the industry as a whole (by attracting media attention). It also serves as a space where the individual parts of this emerging industry come together as a whole, an important service for any creative industry as work is often performed in isolation (Bathelt et al. 2008). The owner of the boutique Rien à Cacher described the role of *Modethik* in this way:

...well it helps in a solidarity kind of sense, people usually get pretty pumped up about seeing each other and being together... Makes it feel like an industry, when there's events that we're all involved in. Sometimes it's like you haven't talked to anyone in a while and you may have gotten some negative feedback from customers because they're ignorant or whatever and it seems like more of a struggle and then you have an event and then everybody gets charged up again... I think it's good for networking, sometimes you find out new things that are happening with different people. I think for the young designers it's good because they can see what some of the more established designers are doing ... [which can] give them an idea". (Interview 07/08)

Beyond encouragement and knowledge transfers, interviewees also highlighted the importance of the education and open discussion components i.e. the seminars and roundtables of this event (Interviews 2008). This relates to the findings of Bamett et al (2005) who suggest this to be an integral component for promoting ethical consumerism due to the implausibility and undesirability of a set of unchanging ethical consumer practices. They argue that:

...an important dimension of ethical consumption initiatives therefore becomes that of finding ways not just to enable people to change their

consumption practices, although that is important, but also of facilitating more widespread public participation in debates and decisions about the meanings, objectives and responsibilities involved in contemporary consumption (Bamett et al. 2005: 24).

Engagement with the mainstream/conventional trade shows in the US and Europe on the part of Montreal's ethical fashion producers and retailers has been minimal, due to the high costs associated with participating in such shows. I will therefore turn to the local, by discussing two 'mainstream' Montreal fashion events – Le Semaine de Mode de Montreal and the Festival de Mode et Design de Montreal, which have both begun to engage with ethical fashion to varying degrees.

Le Semaine de Mode de Montreal, the premier fashion show for the industry was established in 2001, as a way to market Montreal fashion in a context of trade liberalization (Leslie and Rantisi: 2009). It is a biannual event oriented to buyers and the media. The high quality and cost demanded by Le Semaine de Mode de Montreal limits entry into this event to only the most established 'ethical' designers. However, in the Fall 2007 edition^{xi}, an ethical fashion show was presented that included some of the more established ethical lines such as Mycoanna, a Quebec City based manufacturer/retailer founded in 1995 with a boutique in Montreal and Harricanna, a Montreal based line of recycled fur, as well as Création Genest, a more up and coming, small scale line of recycled fashion. The benefit provided by this event is largely in terms of credibility, which again, works to dissuade the granola and hippie image associated with ethical fashion.

Festival Mode et Design de Montreal is an annual outdoor fashion show that takes place on a major street in Downtown Montreal and is oriented to the general public. This show has established a stronger relationship with Montreal's ethical fashion industry. For example, for the past two years, the boutique La Gaillarde has, organized a show for the festival involving the various local designers whose lines they sell. The boutique's coordinator explained the significance of this "big, big event" for their boutique: "you have professional local designers there, you have big stores like Le Château and Browns and all these stores participating also and you have thousands of people in the street looking at your clothes. They (the clothes) have to be good quality, they have to see this and think 'wow, it looks professional'" (Interview 2008). Here we see that the conventional fashion industry is not framed as something to be shunned or avoided rather as an indicator of credibility and a benchmark towards which to strive in regards to management and promotional practices.

In the previous example we see a 'mainstream' cultural intermediary engaging with an 'alternative' actor, a relational exchange that clearly affects both parties involved, although certainly not equally. A fundraising event organized by the non-profit Boutique La Gaillarde in collaboration with the non-profit organization Equiterre^{xiii} speaks further to their perception of and relationship with the 'mainstream'. Tickets to this event cost 40\$, it was held at the 'glamorous' Opus Hotel in downtown Montreal, had a famous Quebecois actress as *porte-parole* (spokesperson/mc), and four established, mainstream Montreal designers were used as judges in a design competition. The title of an article in

the Quebec based fashion magazine *Clin D'oeil* read "L'ethique en version glamour" (The glamorous version of ethical) (<http://lagailarde.blogspot.com>). Winge (2008) highlighted the commodity fetishism and celebrity chic involved in the promotion of 'ecofashion', focusing on an article in *Vanity Fair* in which its editor declared, "Green is the new black." Winge (2008) sees the use of celebrities to market ecofashion as problematic, due to the instability of this kind of attention. Furthermore these types of promotional tactics employed in ecofashion reveals its subjectivity to the ebbs and flows of the (mainstream) media and fashion industry (Wing, 2008). The embracement of 'celebrity chic' and glamour as strategies in the promotion of Montreal's ethical fashion industry suggest that the 'master's tools are being used to dismantle the master's house', a strategy which feminist Audre Lorde (1984) suggests may allow a temporary shift of power dynamics but will never bring about "genuine change." In relation to fashion, this begs the question; what role ought commodity fetishism have in an *ethical* fashion industry?

Marketing Strategies

"Preloved creates one-of-a-kind clothing from reclaimed vintage fabrics. Our passion is *design* and our philosophy is *sustainability*" (www.preloved.ca, italics mine)

Within the set of marketing strategies deployed by the ethical fashion industry the story of its dualistic nature continues. The strategies are largely limited, due to financial constraint, to media relations, via in-house public relations initiatives but also Internet, events, and the boutiques themselves,

which represent an important promotional space for small-scale fashion producers (Interviews 2008; see also Beard 2008). The well-crafted quote from the website of Preloved, a Toronto based company founded in 1995^{xiii} with a boutique in Montreal, is a fascinating framing of this duality as it makes the distinction between a *passion* in design and a *philosophy* of sustainability.

Adams and Zutchi (2005) observed two tendencies in promotional strategies within ethical markets; the 'market niche', primarily promoting ethical credentials and the 'mainstreaming', primarily promoting material factors (quality, taste, style, etc.) with ethical credentials as secondary. Reference to such tendencies will be employed in this discussion as it relates specifically to marketing strategies.

Both boutique owners and manufacturers expressed the idea that 'ethical' clothing must be worthy of purchase based on material aesthetics independent of ethics (Interviews 2008). This was most apparent to boutique owners who have learned this lesson through interacting with consumers. The owner of the boutique Rien à Cacher explained that when approaching customers you "don't want to push [the ethics] too much because it tends to turn people off" (Interview 2008). When asked why that was the case, he explained, "I think one thing is that you are preaching, the other thing is that again, there has been a negative image with this trend and so people think you're like 'hemp poncho'" (Interview 2008). That being said, this boutique owner and his sales clerks are fully informed of the ethics of the products sold in the store and will gladly discuss them, should a

client inquire. Nonetheless, within the space of consumption, marketing tactics appear to be within the 'mainstreaming' tendency as ethics come second to aesthetics.

However, in seeking attention from the media – the industry's primary source of (mass) promotion – it is the ethics, rather than aesthetics, that are highlighted in relation to a product. A supportive local media, in particular fashion magazines, has been cited as a key advantage for Montreal's *local* fashion industry. As these magazines, and other forms of local media, look for ways to distinguish themselves in the marketplace, the coverage of local, independent designers provides a form of distinctiveness (Rantisi, 2009). Aside from support for the local; environmental issues have recently become a major media interest and the ethical fashion industry has directly benefited from this attention. This quote from a part owner of the line Grace & Cello demonstrates the nature of the popularity of the 'green theme' in local media and its role in their success:

We didn't really initiate it at all, we have our web site and I don't know how it all happened. A lot of people know us because of the website. We get contacted a lot for media but we don't even try because we don't have the time. Lulu or Lucky [local fashion magazines] will get in touch with us and ask us to send them stuff" (Interview 2008).

For the manufacturers and retailers of ethical fashion it is their 'ethics' that distinguish them from other local fashion brands and it is therefore the 'ethics' that are employed to garner the media attention and free promotion. Furthermore, within the articles and TV segments covering ethical fashion, both the aesthetics and ethics are mentioned, the proportion of which depends on the nature of the media establishment involved, which brings us to the next point.

Speaking further to the continuum are the *kinds* of magazines that give coverage to this industry. Specialist magazines *Natural Health*, *Styles de Vie*, and *E Magazine* target the niche market of eco/ethical conscience consumers while conventional fashion magazines such as *Elle Quebec*, *Clin D'Oiel*, and *Lou Lou* introduce ethical fashion to the mainstream consumer market. This was also observed by Beard (2008) who furthermore noted that in the UK, nearly every major newspaper “now has a dedicated “ethical” columnist or section, such as the *Eco-Worrier* column that appears every Saturday in *The Times*” (Beard 2008, 460). Although both ethics and aesthetics are always mentioned in both camps, not surprisingly, the specialist magazines tend to favour the ethics and the conventional fashion magazines, the aesthetics. These findings would suggest that the distinct tendencies of ‘the ethical niche’ and ‘the mainstreaming’, observed by Adams and Zutchi (2005), are both present in ethical fashion, revealing the limits to their dichotomist framework, and the need to see how these tendencies are co-constituted.

Another important distinction in the literature that informs how we read the promotional tactics of ethical fashion actors is that of ‘ordinary’ vs. ‘grand’ ethics. In the ethics of fashion, we see ‘ordinary’ ethics articulated in the importance of quality, style, and value for money (as previously discussed) however, we also observe a strong presence of ‘grand’ ethics, which refers to “strongly held ideological or spiritual blueprints for action” (Clarke et al. 2008, p. 224) in producers’ promotional material as well as interview narratives. NKI’s slogan “One Brand : One Cause” is a clear attempt to align the commodity with the

'cause', which in this case is the fight against world poverty (see figure 4.8 below). On their web site, the universal declaration of human rights is quoted along with shocking facts describing the extent of global poverty (www.newkindustry.com). This 'solidarity-seeking commodity culture' embraces the commoditizing fetish of capitalist markets in the promotion of economic and social advancement for poor producers (Bryant and Goodman, 2004). Now, contrast these *grand* ethics found on NKI's website with the *ordinary* ethics found in the words of the owner - "I wanted people to buy the brand because they thought it was cool and after they realize that it was fair trade and then learn more about fair trade" (Interview 2008).

The employment of both *grand* and *ordinary* ethics is evident in the practices of several manufacturers; for example, on the website of Lilidom, the slogan "Un autre *mode*, un autre *monde*" (another fashion, another world) is displayed along with the famous quote from anthropologist Margaret Mead^{xiv} (www.lilidom.com) and on Respeterre's website, consumers are encouraged to "Portez l'avenir!" (Wear the future!) (www.respeterre.com). Furthermore, like the owner of NKI, the owners of both these lines conveyed the need and desire to sell their clothing based on material aesthetics (Interviews 2008). The difference between this finding, i.e. the use of both ordinary AND grand ethics, and that of Clarke et al (2008) relates to the difference between clothing and food. The ethics employed in the promotion of food are 'ordinary' (taste, quality, and value for money) due to the inherent connection between ethics and quality in the context of food. In the context of fashion, such a connection is far from evident. In fact, quality,

which in fashion relates (among other things) to consistency, is often compromised due to the dominance of seasonal (i.e. short and frequent) production cycles and a turnover in styles. It is therefore necessary for the promoters of ethical fashion to employ grand and idealistic, as well as ordinary and quality-based, ethics.



Figure 4.8: Brand and slogan of NKI.
Source: www.newkindustry.com

CHAPTER V

Conclusion: Seeing the Forest for the Trees

The concept of *ethical fashion* brings multiple contradictions to mind. How can an industry that bases its profitability on planned obsolescence be sustainable? How can a product be considered ethical when its high price limits its consumption to the financially privileged? And how can a commodity as intensely fetishized as clothing ever be stripped of its magical status and returned to reality? Addressing these inherent contradictions was not my objective, although, they were certainly omnipresent throughout the investigation and most likely infiltrated both the process of data collection and analysis. Moving beyond these contradictions, however, allowed me to explore the inner workings of the ethical fashion industry, which has in turn offered insight into the nature of an emerging trend in contemporary economics – a trend commonly identified by what it is not.

In terms of the key findings, this case study validates the views of Hirsh (1972, 2000) and Bourdieu (1993) who highlight the social construction of cultural goods and their value (such as fashion) and foreground the dynamic

relations, among cultural intermediaries and designers, as a key component in that process. The ethical fashion industry in Montreal is the collective result of fashion designers, manufacturers, boutique owners, journalists, non-profit employees, volunteers, government workers, teachers, celebrities, and consumers motivated by a combination of profit and environmental and social awareness, whose individual actions, and collective product, cannot be simplified to the binary of alternative and mainstream.

Furthermore, this case study demonstrates that the actors of Montreal's ethical fashion industry do not limit the scope of their promotional strategies to those defined strictly or even primarily on the bases of their ethical values. Rather, strategies are associated with both mainstream and alternative/ethical tendencies. The depth and diverse range of these tactics, as detailed in the discussion above on retail distribution channels, industry events, and marketing strategies, illustrate the fundamental role *both* tendencies play in allowing this 'alternative' industry to exist and thrive as well as the need to overcome the alternative/mainstream divide in contemporary theorizations.

It is nonetheless possible as well as constructive to discuss this emergent sector of the economy by considering it in relation to what came before, i.e. the conventional fashion industry, and how it builds on and departs from the prevailing system. I have attempted to describe the nature of Montreal's ethical fashion industry as one that embodies the conceptualizations of both the 'mainstream' and its 'alternative' and that in practice these two tendencies exist

not as oppositional binaries but upon a continuum. The position of Montreal's ethical fashion industry on this continuum is varied and subject to the dynamic and interrelated social, cultural, environmental, and economic relations involved in its production. The fate of this emerging economic sector is therefore an appropriate topic of discussion, as it will result from these dynamic and *pliable* relations.

The role of the commodity fetish in the promotion of Montreal's ethical fashion industry is particularly relevant to this discussion, as its increased presence has been accompanied by increased sales (i.e. the alternative approaching the mainstream). Clarke et al (2008) cautiously suggested that "refetishisation might be desirable if the purpose is to move organic food into the mainstream (with certain ends in mind such as biodiversity or consumer health)" (Clarke et al 2008: 227). Similarly, Goodman (2004) argued,

it is specifically the commoditization of fair trade that is the 'form giving fire' to the embedded moral economy and sentiments that are situated at the core of these commodity networks. Entry in to the 'magical' form of the commodity, with its attached aesthetics, meanings, and materialities, allows these commodities to perform their 'magic' of alternative development. (Goodman, 2004: 909)

However, both Clarke et al (2008) and Goodman (2004) (as well as Bryant and Goodman, 2004) highlight the need for the commodity fetish employed in ethical consumption to be *tempered* by a continually open discussion and debate of the environmental and social implications, as well as the future, of the economic activity being promoted. This thought is echoed by Bamett et al (2005) who discussed the need to not only enable ethical consumption but also to facilitate

more widespread public participation in the debates and decisions involved in contemporary consumption (24).

This necessary political discourse was observed in Montreal's ethical fashion industry as occurring in and through the cultural intermediaries (boutiques, events, magazines, newspapers, and Internet) involved in the material and symbolic production of this cultural good. Although these cultural intermediaries are not unique to *ethical* fashion, it is their injection (and ideally infusion) with *information* regarding the environmental and social implications of the good's material production and their creation of spaces in which discussion can occur that is integral. In the examples of the boutiques, events, and media discussed in the results section, we see the variety of depths and forms this injection can take (i.e. the continuum). It is therefore the responsibility of the individuals implicated in the material and symbolic production of ethical fashion, including the consumers, to maintain and indeed broaden the indispensable political component of this dynamic exchange.

As exemplified by the "playful and on-trend" Barbie™ BCause collection, as well as Levi's line of organic cotton jeans and Simons^{xv} Créer Vert (Create Green) line, large scale corporate relations are increasingly involved in the shaping of this rapidly evolving sector of the economy. In fact, some local ethical fashion producers interviewed in this study have begun selling under the Créer Vert label at the 'mainstream' department store Simons. Partially out of personal interest, I went to the Simons location on Rue Saint Catherine in Downtown Montreal and

asked a sales clerk what the Créer Vert label on a nice pair of dress socks referred to. Unable to ascertain the answer from the information on the label, which indicated that the socks were made of bamboo; the clerk went to find a manager who eventually arrived, looked at the label, and told me what it read. This anecdote, as well as the Barbie™ BCause collection, exemplifies what is referred to as greenwash: the disingenuous employment of environmental awareness in marketing.

Returning to the previous discussion, such examples of greenwash represent one extreme of the continuum that defines ethical fashion, where the open discussion and debate component is nonexistent. Such examples also speak to the anti-political and anti-democratic nature of the self-regulating market, a tendency that Birchfield (1999) identifies as destructive. Birchfield (1999) suggests that this tendency can be challenged by bridging Polanyi's critique of the self-regulating market and discernment of the 'double movement' with Gramsci's theory of ideological hegemony and proposal of a 'good sense' hegemony, which he describes as one that is based on "a conception of the world with an ethic that conforms to its structure" (Gramsci, 1971: 346) i.e. social and environmental embeddedness. In other words, whereas Polanyi provides a foundation upon which the market ideology can first be challenged, Gramsci reveals the pivotal point of transformation to be in the realm of *popular belief*. To quote Birchfield (1999: 48): "Gramsci's 'good sense' might be seen as the guiding thought behind the action of the progressive side of the 'double movement'".

The marketing of ethical fashion attempts to transform popular belief such that the concept of *value* is broadened to include the environmental and social inputs and outputs associated with the product. The cultural intermediaries involved in the creation and promotion of ethical fashion are also involved in the formation of the dominant hegemony, as described by Gramsci. It is furthermore apparent that the *commodity fetish*, tempered with varying degrees of political discourse, is playing a role in the marketing of ethical consumption as well as in the shaping of popular belief. However, the consequences of this engagement with commodification are difficult to foresee. The findings presented here are based on an exploratory study that delineates the organization and the emerging strategies of this nascent industry. Further studies are needed on the evolution of the industry and on the nature of consumer awareness in order to assess whether Audre Lorde's (1984) dichotomist^{xvi} metaphor holds – and the master's house remains intact – or whether the strategies we are witnessing today will lead to cracks within the current hegemony, marking the beginning of a long, arduous road toward an economy reintegrated with society and the natural environment.

You can say the sun is shining if you really want to,
I can see the moon and it seems so clear.

You can take a road that takes you to the stars,
I can take a road that'll see me through.

-Nick Drake, excerpt from the song Road

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Appendix

Example of Interview Guide

I Background; Person and Business

1. Where were you born? If you were born outside Montreal, when did you first move to Montreal?
2. What is your age? ____ Family status? _____
3. What is your educational background and credentials? (institution, degree, program, location, years)
4. Please describe any additional training, apprenticeships, or other on-the-job learning that you have engaged in.
5. What is your current occupation?
6. What is your professional background? If you have changed jobs, why did you do so?
[If the individual has moved between sectors, ask: "Can you effectively apply your knowledge between sectors?"]
7. Does your current occupation fully utilize your skills, training and education?
8. How long have you been in this business?
9. What motivated you to start an ethical business?
10. How did you begin your business? [Prompt: Did you receive any government / NGO funding?] Has it evolved (e.g. in terms of the market you serve)? How?
11. What are your future career plans and aspirations?

II Montreal

12. What characteristics of Montreal make it an attractive place to work in your field?
13. What characteristics of Montreal reduce its attractiveness to work in your field?
14. Is Montreal open to experimental designs?
15. Is Montreal a tolerant or welcoming place in terms of race/ethnicity/sexuality/gender equality?

16. What characteristics of Montreal make it an attractive place to live?
17. What characteristics of Montreal make it a less attractive place to live?
18. Are certain neighbourhoods of Montreal more open to creativity than others?
19. To what extent are Montreal's strengths unique to the city?
20. How do other cities compare to Montreal in terms of career opportunities in your field? In terms of quality of life?
21. If you were to move to a city other than Montreal, which one would it be? Why?
22. How likely is it that you would move to another city within the next three years for the reasons just discussed?

III Characteristics of the Store

23. Number of employees _____ ; where are most of your employees coming from (prompt: fashion schools?)
24. What is the businesses' management structure, i.e. who does what?
25. Annual Sales: Can you check one of the boxes below?
 Under \$100,000
 \$100,000 - \$249,999
 \$250,000 - \$499,999
 \$500,000 - \$749,999
 \$750,000 - \$999,000
 \$1 million - \$ 5 million
 Over \$ 5 million
26. What is your mark-up?
27. What kind of environment do you want to create for your clients? Do you offer any special services (e.g. alterations, made-to-order, lattes?)
28. What do clients value most about your store? What do you think your clients are most concerned with? (Prompt: local? Environmental? Non-sweatshop? Style?)
29. Do you market/promote your store? How?

IV Key Industry Networks and Connections

29. a) What percentage of the designers/clothing manufacturers that you do deal with are local (e.g. from Quebec)? What % are from Canada, but outside Quebec? What % outside of Canada?

b) How do you source your lines? [Prompts: tradeshow, receive cold calls, magazines, word-of-mouth] What criteria do you use?

c) How do you find the ethical products produced locally? [in terms of quality, design, fit]; is there a large pool of local talent from which to draw?

30. Customer Profile: How would you characterize the 'target market' of your store?

31. Approximately what % of your customers are local?

32. Do you assist in promoting the lines you carry? If so, how?

33. a) What other key suppliers do you do business with (e.g. do you sell anything other than clothes)?

b) What other businesses are central to your operation? e.g. shipping, etc.?

34. Based on what criteria do you select the other firms you do business with?

35. Do you deal with any government or non-governmental groups? Can you elaborate:

a) Which groups? [e.g. Fem International; local fashion school]

b) Nature of your relations with them? [e.g do you sponsor interns?]

36. Do you receive support from any other groups? If so, which ones?

37. What role do fashion magazines play in the industry?

V Nature of business relations

38. How would you describe the nature of your business relations with designers/apparel producers? [Prompt: Long-term? Contractual? Arms-length?]

39. Do you interact with other retailers in the industry? If so how? How would you describe those relations?

40. How does your ethical mandate effect your business relations [suppliers, employees, customers]?

41. Do you have any specific ethics-related policies? [Prompt: or are they more general?]

VI Notions of Ethical trade

42. How would you define your business?

43. How would you define ethical fashion/trade? What distinguishes an ethical retailer from a mainstream retailers?

VII Constraints to engaging in ethical practices and relations

44. What are the kinds of constraints you deal with as an ethical producer? [prompt: do any conflicts arise between your ethical mandate & the need to make profit]

45. Do you see any new trends emerging in ethical retail in general? in Montreal?

46. There has been much discussion recently about mainstream businesses adopting ethical practices or developing ethical lines. What are your views on this?

47. Do you know anyone who was formerly in the ethical fashion industry (as a producer or retailer) and has subsequently went out of business?

Notes

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- ⁱ Ethical clothing data includes organic, Fairtrade and recycled clothing, sourced from Pesticides Action Network (PAN), the Fairtrade Foundation and company income data respectively. Fairtrade clothing data pre-2006 is sourced from IFAT-accredited fair trade clothes outlets.
- ⁱⁱ Polanyi notes that markets had been commonly regulated by government or other organizations prior to the 19th century
- ⁱⁱⁱ Sonnino and Marsden (2005).
- ^{iv} Lyocell is a fibre made from wood pulp cellulose and is marked under the trademarked brand name Tencel.
- ^v The certification of fair trade involves Transfair Canada at the local level, who is responsible for certifying the distributors of fair trade goods within Canada and the Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) headquartered in Bonn, Germany, who is responsible for certifying the producers of fair trade goods, which generally takes place in the South.
- ^{vi} Recycled material generally comes from second hand clothing, either bought (from a second hand store or distribution centre) or from donations.
- ^{vii} The relatively high price is due to local production and organic/eco materials.
- ^{viii} Portrait du Territoire, L'Arrondissement Mercier/Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Centreaide du Grand Montréal, Service d'analyse et d'allocation sociale. Octobre 2003
- ^{ix} Starting as second hand and gradually incorporating ethical fashion is a path observed in other boutiques in Montréal, most notably La Gaillarde.
- ^x Note that the shows in the US focus on eco and green while the shows in Europe focus on ethical. This trend was highlighted consistently in The interviews as the main difference between the US and European ethical fashion markets.
- ^{xi} Although this was the only edition to include an ethical fashion show, certain ethical fashion designers have since presented shows in the main event (e.g. Mycoanna).
- ^{xii} Equiterre “develops projects that empower citizens to make environmentally and socially responsible choices.” (Equiterre webstie, accessed June 17, 2009)
- ^{xiii} Preloved is perhaps the most established of all companies in this study, with 79 sales locations in Canada, the US, Asia, Europe, and Australia and 3 of their own boutiques
- ^{xiv} “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” – Margaret Mead.
- ^{xv} A Quebec City based department store with a major location in Downtown Montréal.
- ^{xvi} Aude Lorde’s dichotomy is that of the master and the servant.