

How far is the rise in traditional making within Indigenous communities more about the immateriality than the material outcome, and what is the role of immateriality in offsetting the harms of commodification?

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For many indigenous communities and cultures, art, craft and even garments are an important arbiter of value, history, and tradition. However, a large part of history presents the mistreatment of these minority cultures through cultural appropriation. In this essay, an investigation will be made into the importance of immateriality and how the reclamation of these values will empower and authentically represent individuals and collectives in the face of exploitation.

The essay will discuss immateriality through different ideologies and theories such as dependent rising, memory, well-being, and non-verbal communication, to contextualise the silent side of textiles, which arguably speaks the loudest. Examples will be shown through a range of indigenous cultures extending from Native America, and Canada to the Himalayas, to demonstrate the importance of immateriality across different cultures and continents. Part of this study will look at the role of spirituality (or soul), heritage and tradition, as well as connection to other generations. The relationship between cultural identity and immateriality will be examined, including the analysis of the importance of emotional collectivity, and a sense of belonging to your place and your past. This essay will look at the consequence of having little immateriality, and how art can become commodified.

Marxist theories of 'use value' and 'exchange value' as well as 'commodity fetishism' will be used to understand the impact of commodification on the artefacts and the artisan. Examples from Indigenous communities in Latin America will be used to show the impact of commodification on censoring and suppressing cultural identity. Multinational companies, Zara and Anthropologie will be investigated to highlight the widespread global scale of commodification to understand the large impact on minority communities.

Finally, I will present how immateriality plays a role in offsetting the harm of commodification. This will be shown through Indigenous-owned companies; B Yellowtail and Supernaturae. Observations will be made into how they empower communities and dismantle commodification. I will introduce Faherty, a company that has changed their ethos to accommodate native initiatives, building a future for communities. I will establish the extent of global commodification of indigenous cultures, to show how this is altering company ethics while highlighting the importance of immateriality and reclaiming it.

Immateriality and its cultural importance.

In the context of immateriality, I am referring to a sense of 'other', an almost spiritual side to the cloth that is made due to the fact that the creator is embedded and reflected in the creation. The word 'other' can also be associated with terms such as 'soul' or 'spirituality'- something 'other' than the physical that is associated in the fabric.

The term Spiritual, or acting 'Spiritually', according to Oxford languages, is "the human spirit, soul, or mind; with regard to the spirit or spiritual matters (as opposed to material or worldly things)" (OED, 2023), or "concerning the spirit, immaterial" (etymonline, n.d.). Spirituality, in

the context of creating, is the quality of being concerned with our soul reflected in the fabric as opposed to the material outcome, since 'we are literally creation contemplating itself, and art becomes the embodiment of that quintessence' (Franklin, 2018, pg51).

We are reflected in what we create, everything that has made us who we are now: environment, upbringing, friends, all influence our creations. "The craft of questions, the craft of stories, the craft of the hands- all these are the making of something, and that is the soul" (Pinkola Estes, 1992, Pg13). This suggests that art is bigger than the individual, that it is relational to culture and community.

One key ideology I will be using to help understand the importance of immateriality in textiles, and how it links individual craft to community and culture, is the Buddhist teaching of 'dependent arising'. "Dependent arising... means the thought I am thinking now is co-dependent with many known and unknown connections to other thoughts and experiences" (Franklin, 2018, pg 73). What we create, consciously or unconsciously shows the relational influences of dependent arising; eluding that our soul is reflected in the fabric, and the creator is not separate from their creations.

Assuming that the idea of dependent arising and 'soul' is intertwined with the idea of 'spirituality' (in relation to creating).

This can be seen in native and indigenous cultures as the immateriality is the most important aspect to their creations. Art is "embedded in daily life, family connection, traditional law as well as... spirituality... it represents a multi-layered connection to the past, present and future" (Parliament of Australia, 2020). These ideologies will be explored through native and indigenous owned companies such as B Yellowtail, Copper Canoe Woman and We Are KAL.

Byellowtail is "a native American woman owned fashion and lifestyle brand dedicated to sharing authentic indigenous design with the world" (Yellowtail, n.d, E). Copper Canoe Woman, an Indigenous Canadian company, focuses on design while "maintaining a deep connection to ancestral strength and heritage" (Brown, n.d.). We Are KAL, describe themselves as a "community of individuals... farmers, spinners, weavers, nomads, designers, knitters, and culture lovers who made it [a] goal to create meaningful products in harmony with nature and humanity." Immateriality and 'soul' are central to each company ethos as well as their daily lives, as art is "an expression of their tribe." (WeAreKAL, n.d, A).

Creating artwork that has 'soul' means that it becomes a map for the future, and a reflection of the past as "the pattern of progress isn't linear but more one of revisitation and reflection" (Dormor, 2020, p. pg17). You can tangibly study the construction to recreate it in the future, as well as reawaken the stories of the past. Having soul is being concerned with the immateriality as opposed to the material, therefore a fabric that has a soul can be regarded as spiritual. This reflection on the past, or memory, within textiles is important as it combines both Declarative memory and Procedural memory. "Declarative memory is memory of information and events. Procedural memory is memory for skills and of how to perform actions" (Frise, n.d.). Not only

then is memory and creation a connection to the past, but it is a “catalyst for action in the present and future” (Gonzalez Arango, 2013, pg 60) through knowledge of these skills.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes states that “Art is important as it commemorates the seasons of the soul, or a special or tragic event in the souls’ journey” (Pinkola Estes, 1992, Pg13). This is the idea of dependent arising, the sense of interconnectedness with heritage to create a narrative with cloth. Vina Brown, an indigenous Canadian and owner of Copper Canoe Women states: “I remember watching my Granny Elsie weave...We would be playing on the floor beside her. I remember feeling at ease, at peace, and very content in those moments. I did not know it at the time, but she was transferring knowledge, an experience with me.” (Brown, n.d.)

Textiles, both the objects themselves and the ideology attached, is passed on through generations. Not only does it enable knowledge and skill of traditions to continue, but it also connects you with your ancestors, and your culture. The company We Are KAL recognises that “These crafts are often passed on through many generations and [they] see it as a valuable way of connecting the future to the rich heritage of a culture” (WeAreKAL, n.d, B) suggesting that generational skills are extremely valuable, as the future of making is revisitation and reflection. I have fond memories of my Grandma and mother handmaking my primary school cardigans. My grandma would knit them, and my mother would sew them together. I was extremely precious over them and would go to great lengths to keep them clean and not lose them in the playground, as I knew and understood the time and love imparted through the process of creating these garments specifically for me. I now associate knitting, a skill passed down to me from my mother, and her mother before that, with feelings of love and care. As Sabrina Gschwandter states, “knitting is community” (Gschwandter, 2008, pg. 139) The memory is interlinked into the fabric, giving it a soul.

By looking at Vina Brown and KAL I can understand the rich experience of heritage; it is something of deep resonance within our cultures and upbringing. “Martin Heidegger believed that artworks should always be considered in the terms of the event of their creation” (Dormor, 2020, pg17) or rather, artworks cannot be separated from the event of their creation. The material will only hold value and importance when it houses the soul of the creator, or their ancestors.

Just as I watched my Grandma and Mother knit for me, I now have the wisdom and embodied experience that will “deeply direct how the fabric is made” (Champigne- Klassen, 2022). The knowledge lies in the fabric, intrinsic in the making due to dependent arising effecting one’s knowledge of creating, it becomes an expression, through stitch or weave, of values and environment. “Most important in cloth is its tactility” (Smith, 2014, pg. 16), because the material output is an embodied knowledge of skill in production; ‘declarative’ memory intersecting with ‘procedural’ memory, where the fabric itself represents a ‘reflection of the past’ and a ‘map for the future’. Maria Teresa Uribe explains that “rituals and commemorations are bridges between the past and the future” (Gonzalez Arango, 2013, pg60), shown through weft and warp, or knit and pearl, in my case. Immateriality and tacit knowledge cannot be

separated, as for the cloth to have 'soul' it has to have a tacit meaning to the creator and/ or community.

Cultural context is important in understanding the relational forces that make up the immateriality. "It is only by seeing cloths in their cultural context that we begin to understand their true value and meaning" (Maxwell,2003, pg11). The 'soul' becomes not only a reflection then of the individual, but a whole culture, as nothing can be separated. "Besides others, the identity of a culture is especially manifested in the things people make" (WeAreKAL, n.d, B)

Creation cannot be fully understood without implied cultural context. It is a reflection of a way of life, holding individual meanings alongside community values. One important aspect of cultural identity is creation, as it is "an expression of their tribe" (WeAreKAL, n.d, B). Without understanding the cultural meanings and values, the creation is just an object, losing its value to become a commodity, the symbolism lost. Our relationships with craft practices and our emotional collectivity to the creations allow intuitive understanding of the immaterial in relation to the material. This enables a relation within craft to the community- through emotional collectivity to the creations and understanding the immaterial side to the materials.

We Are KAL are a cultural collective of artisans who create using traditional techniques. Tashi Yangchen, who is a weaver and spinner for the company explains that "spinning and weaving a snambu... [holds] importance... in the nomadic community. To her weaving means tradition" (WeAreKAL, n.d, C) Creation plays a role in "building community" whilst "memorialising life events and enabling non-verbal communication" (Kaimal, Arslanbek, 2020). The immateriality here is important as it builds a foundation and intrinsic expression for values that community members such as Tashi Yangchen hold.

When weaving with immateriality or tradition, Yangchen implies that one is "interconnected with spiritual traditions, narrative storytelling, counselling and wisdom for the community, [and] respect for all living and non-living in nature," (Kaimal, Arslanbek, 2020) The practice of creating binds the individual to the surrounding world, increasing awareness and sensitivity. The products can never be solitary. A bond is established, a sense of belonging to oneself and culture which increases individual and collective wellbeing. "The higher sense of belonging and the higher level of meaningful participation were congruent with higher level[s] of wellbeing". (Litevsky, Komemi and Velikovsky, 2023). Reflecting the importance of the creator's connectivity to immateriality, generating positive change through wellbeing.

Vina Brown, founder of Copper Canoe Woman observes; "Through art I've become connected to my roots in ways I never imagined. The journey has been an unravelling" (Brown, n.d). This continuation of tradition through art enables one to not only connect but find 'belonging' within a rich cultural heritage. Therefore, 'Knowing' cloth through "handling it, through making it, through making with it" (Dormor, 2020, pg1) becomes a discovery, not only physically- through techniques and symbolism -but spiritually, creating a bond and a sense of belonging.

The increased sensitivity and awareness imparted into the product as I mentioned above, is “congruent with higher level[s] of wellbeing” (Hiam-Litevsky, Komemi and Velikovsky, 2023) as the participation of creating becomes meaningful. This awareness and sensitivity are not only external but can be reflections of internal awareness as “indigenous art offers an expression of identity and culture, providing avenues for self-expression, self- determination and self-understanding” (Cameron, 2010). Innermost thoughts are able to be reflected upon, this consciously creates the product- every stitch or shuttle movement becomes intentional as the unconscious becomes conscious. Relationships can be made between internal reflections and external experiences. “In weaving the artisan’s reflection on their culture and environment is revealed” (WeAreKAL, n.d, B), as well as their internal understanding.



Figure 1. (WeAreKAL, n.d.) Wool from the Himalayas

Figure 1 shows artisans weaving on the loom, directly surrounded and influenced by their environment and reflecting their culture. The immateriality and what it represents runs deep through the material as it reflects the awareness in both the internal and external worlds which improves wellbeing.

Without knowing and connecting to the process of making we lose that internal and external awareness and sensitivity, as “[With art] we no longer have to feel separate from creator and creation, which is a core reason for so much spiritual anxiety in modern life” (Franklin, 2018, pg 52). This separation from creation means it will not have a soul, and therefore no connection can be made culturally or intimately. The work becomes a commodity with little to no value. Without this connection to creator and creation, it “causes many to feel... limited [and] alone”

(Franklin, 2018, pg 52). This separation from our awareness, due to a lack of belonging, shows the importance of the immateriality of materials within cultures and communities.



Figure 2 (B YELLOWTAIL,n.d) Medicine Wheel collection.



Figure 3 (Taha, 2010) Spirit of the Eagles Medicine Wheel.

Bethany Yellowtail, the owner of B.Yellowtail, a Native American owned company, has designed the “The Medicine Wheel Collection” (seen in figure 2) which has come at the heels of immense social-cultural change on a global scale, as well as on an intimate personal level. “Many of us have experienced deep grief, loss, and sadness, myself included.” (Yellowtail, 2022, B.) This grief and sadness can be assumed to be from colonisation and a loss of cultural identity. Bethany Yellowtail exhibits the importance of the non-verbal communication that creating can express, as I mentioned previously, creating can communicate “self-expression, determination and understanding” (Cameron, 2010). The “deep grief, loss, and sadness” is demonstrated to the community and acknowledged within herself so that Yellowtail is not limited and alone in her emotions. Through her “ancestral teachings and wisdom... [she has] found humility, clarity and most importantly strength” (Yellowtail, 2022, B) This is then reflected in the fabric, giving it a soul and allowing it to belong.

Bethany Yellowtail offers “visual language that speaks to the ancestral roots and cultural identity” (Aroa, 2023). She also expresses this; “When someone wears B Yellowtail, they essentially are expressing that they own who they are as an indigenous person... it’s a celebration of our culture, of colour and beauty” (Yellowtail, 2023, A). It is a representation of

who they are as an indigenous person. Visual communication, therefore, conveys not only values, but also cultural significance.



Figure 4 (Amaru America, n.d.) Dyed Dress inspired by Quechua traditional dying.



Figure 5 (Howard- Wroth, 2020) Andean Natural dyes.

These feelings of cultural connectivity are reiterated by Maria Calderon, of Quechua heritage who “regards traditional dyeing as a sacred practice with great cultural weight and energy” (Amaru America, n.d.), as seen in figure 4. She doesn’t just dye the fabrics, she utilises colour as a way to communicate “community connection, ethnobotany, and seasonal localized environmental consciousness” (Amaru America, n.d.). She encourages land preservation through natural dye colours, intrinsically communicating her priority of sustainability. “Colour has empowered the Quechua people socially, spiritually, economically, and personally for thousands of years and continues to be a valuable contribution to human culture” (Howard-Wroth, 2020). Colour is culturally significant to the Quechua people due to the symbolism and representation of thousands of years of heritage and interconnection.

Symbolism as non-verbal communication is impactful not only because it creates connection, but because it creates a voice that holds deep and lasting significance. “Visual awareness has been a key element in communication.” (Ryder and John, 2005, pg. 4). The importance of visual communication can also be seen in early human culture as “early cave paintings held deep significance for artists and the cultures that produced them” (Ryder and John, 2005, pg. 4). Although we cannot fully understand the significance of the paintings anymore, due to the loss of cultural context, it suggests that the immateriality, the symbolism behind the creation is significant both then and now, as we communicate intrinsically in the same way. An intrinsic way to communicate this awareness can only be understood fully when placed in cultural context, as the people of that culture will understand the sacred significance of the symbologies. It isn’t just the process of making, the connection with heritage, the benefits to

wellbeing that demonstrate the importance of immateriality, it's the complete symbolism of the end product.

Cultural appropriation and commodification in modern consumption.

The importance and preservation of immateriality, and its over-all value, is challenged however, by cultural appropriation and commodification. Rina Arya defines cultural appropriation as the "taking of items (whether tangible or intangible) including ideas from one culture by another... [with] reference to the inequality in power between the two cultures should be included, which problematises the taking" (Arya, 2019). When taking the item, they are taking it as an object and not it's immateriality.

Commodification means the "cultural goods or ideas are transformed into commodities, or objects of trade" (Arya, 2019). Commodification is the 'exchange value' of the creation. For this reason, commodification means that the soul is not reflected in the fabric, as the cultural context has been disregarded, so visual communication, connections to heritage, and the process of creating is dismissed for an object, that now has empty meaning.

"In Marxists terms, the use value of an object (the cost of making) is replaced by the exchange value, which is essentially its commercial worth- the cultural value of owning the commodity" (Arya, 2019). The ownership of the commodity holds more worth than the immaterial or relevant importance of the object- the 'cost' of making. Marx further explained this as 'commodity fetishism', where "modern society worships [the]... objects, which, at the same time, erases the... history, memory, and love behind the production" (Gomezde la Torre, 2022). The 'use value' of traditional creations could be something worn culturally, like ceremonial garments. The Native American owned company, B Yellowtail, from the Northern Cheyenne Nation, "do not and will not sell items such as ceremonial garb, traditional regalia, or sacred items" (Yellowtail, n.d, D), this would turn the use value into exchange value and culturally appropriate any items sold, fetishizing them through commodification.

Economically powerful companies and cultures have placed little value and appreciation on traditional skills. "Even In the past 5 years alone [since 2021] companies like Gucci, Victoria's Secret, Chanel, Loewe, Marc Jacobs, Prada, and Dior were accused of cultural appropriation." (Maiorescu- Murphy, 2021). The culturally sustainable company, We Are KAL states that "where we see these traditions, they are becoming increasingly less encouraged" (WeAreKAL, n.d, B). The use value, or 'cost of making' is seemingly becoming irrelevant in the face of industries such as tourism for example. Instead, objects are taken for face value as commodities.

The Henequen, a fibre that is part of traditional Mayan life in Central America, was thought to have been "lowly, spiny and aggressive. It was overlooked by the chroniclers who came with the conquest and subsequent colonialization". (Hemmings, 2023, pg. 288) Still today, the Henequen is overlooked, as there is "no market for them", being things of practicality (use value) instead of beauty or colour (exchange value)-which tourists mostly look for in "Mexican

souvenirs and handicrafts”. (Anaya, 2016, pg.288) “The loss of value of craft [through commodification] is leading towards a loss of skill” (WeAreKAL, n.d, B). However, it is not only the physical skill that is lost, it is the connection to ancestry, community, non-verbal communication, and wellbeing that is damaged also- the entirety of the immaterial aspect of the material. As seen in the case of the Henequen, colonisation “disrupted Indigenous culture, resulting in loss of... cultural knowledge” (Cameron, 2020). Therefore, as I mentioned earlier when speaking about memory, the material will only hold value and importance when it houses the soul of the creator. Thus, it can be said then that commodification sets alight the house of the community’s soul.



Figure 6 (Friedman, 2019) Carolina Herrera Dress.



Figure 7 (Navarro, 2023) Tenango de Doria embroidery.

The fashion designer, Carolina Herrera, has been accused of cultural appropriation by the cultural minister of Mexico in her Resort 2020 collection (Friedman, 2019). The bright embroidery of animals and flowers from the Tenango de Doria community are used in her designs, seen in figure 6 and 7. The embroidery, also called ‘Otomi’ embroidery, is “an important skill in the [Otomi] community” (Mondragon, 2021), it was originally embroidered onto squares and used to wrap food (Campos, 2023), however, today it is a “primary source of income”(Mondragon, 2021) for the communities. The embroidery is “a local interpretation of the region’s flora, fauna, and aspects of everyday life” (Mondragon, 2021), they also “represent the stories, myths and beliefs of the Otomi people” (Campos 2023). The appropriation of these motifs, colours and style not only deprives the Otomi people economically, but it removes the

immateriality and damages the cultural value of their creations, portraying them as 'exchange value' and culturally appropriating through commodification. This loss of immateriality also means that native and indigenous communities have lost a voice and an ancient way of communicating, as "each piece of embroidery tells the story of the community and each element has a personal, family or community meaning" (Jones, 2019). Clarissa Pinkola Estes states that "loss of our creative milieu means finding ourselves limited... suppressing, or censoring feelings and thoughts, not acting, not saying, doing or being" (Pinkola Estes, 1992, pg316). Commodification, therefore, censors and suppresses not only voices, but an intrinsic way of life: their "being".

Turning sacred creations, that hold immense importance to cultures, to just 'exchange value' marginalises the culture and disempowers them through the lack of voice that immateriality communicates. "Marginalised groups do not enjoy the same privileges or rights to self-expression which makes crucial the need for them to have ownership of their culture." (Arya, 2019) Taking the value of creating away, also removes the power and spirituality that individuals hold within the creation, as art making is a "worthwhile tool for empowerment, that can transform, enrich, and empower" (Kaimal and Arslanbek, 2020). The lack of ownership that the community of Tenango de Doria has over these items makes uncertain their identity due to the conflicting representation of what their embroidery represents. As Rina Arya states, "The use of their culture by others destabilises ownership" creating "distortion through oversimplification" (Arya, 2019).



Figure 8 (Hills, 2021) Anthropologie product



Figure 9 (Harp, 2015) The women of Tlanhuitoltepec.

Anthropologie has also been accused of cultural appropriation. "The Mexican government claimed that the item, which cost nearly £70, features symbols reminiscent of those used by the Mixe community, in Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec." (Hills, 2021) The disempowerment is not recognised by Anthropologie, where the item remained for sale, even after criticism by the

Mexican government. This confirms that “marginalised groups do not enjoy the same privileges or rights as majority cultures” (Arya, 2019), or large companies- showing a double standard and an imbalance of power.

Return to roots: the socio-cultural re-valuation in immateriality.

Kaimal and Arslanbek state that “Undergirding all interactions with indigenous communities is the need for the recognition of trauma and misrepresentation that resulted from cultural imperialism and oppression” (Kaimal and Arslanbek, 2020). Representing indigenous communities is de-commodifying their traditional and sacred items to give back the power and voice to the community. “My people will sleep for one hundred years. When they awake it will be the artists that give back their spirit” (Tsosie, 2002, pg. 1). Expressed by Louis Reil of the Cree/ Metis nation in Native America, he suggests that through art and the power that immateriality holds, a community can fight back against cultural oppression and censorship, which he figuratively puts as ‘sleep’. Companies such as We Are KAL have started doing this through culturally sustainable design, as they believe that “business is an opportunity to affect real and positive change in a society” (WeAreKAL, n.d, A). Which begs the question, “why support indigenous-inspired art [from designers and companies such as Carolina Herrera and Anthropologie] when you can actually support Indigenous artists?” (Conscious Fashion Collective, n.d.).

Byellowtail clothing company, which make garments inspired by Bethany Yellowtails heritage within the Native American Crow Nation, assert that “In a world where Indigenous images are often stolen and misappropriated, Bethany serves as an unapologetic arbiter of authenticity; a genuine voice who seeks to empower through design and equitable representation.” (Yellowtail, n.d, E) The company has become a voice against suppression and censorship inherent in commodification; creating an authentic traditional design company such a Byellowtail is to keep these skills alive, it is less about the company and more about the community, less about the materiality and more about the immateriality. “Bethany’s artistic vision and work is irremovable from her vision for her community” (Yellowtail, n.d, E). As community and identity is revealed through the immateriality of making, creating connectivity and a sense of belonging. Suppression of ‘their being’ through the restriction of creative and immaterial expression, is dismantled through the voice of the designs, which come from “a place of intention, prayer, and personal power” (Yellowtail, 2022, B). Combining culturally significant design and economic viability, the ‘use value’ remains just that, as the designs reflect those who made them. The ‘soul’ is intact, giving a sense of control and a feeling of empowerment through this.



Figure 10- (Supernaturae, n.d.)

The value of traditional textiles lies within the soul, and this is reflected in the company Supernaturae, seen in figure 10. Founder, Benedictine Lux, states that “the beauty of materials lies within their innate spirit” (Knight, pg. 15) and the importance, or beauty is founded within the immateriality and the creator reflected in the creation. Recognising this shows that the ‘use’ value is more important in her design ethos. With her company Supernaturae, “Lux is evolving a dialogue with artisan communities- in a manner that respectfully honours their shared goal of universal uplift and the sustainable evolution of traditional crafts.” (Knight, pg. 15). Their core values are similar to the ethos of B Yellowtail. Through Immateriality, individuals and communities are empowered through voicing their cultural identity within craft, which generates a “universal uplift”, spiritually and economically. For example, “[Supernaturae creates] sustainable economic opportunities for women through craft while preserving the ancient embroidery technique” (Knight, pg 15) of Kutch, in Western India. The embroidery also becomes a voice against the oppression of commodification, as values and ideologies can still be expressed through symbolism. The reappropriation of traditional production is significant in re-establishing cultural identity and confidence. Ghandi recognised this power and considered traditional production as “central [to the] freedom for colonial India.” (Parekh, pg73) which highlights the importance of immateriality. Brands such as Supernaturae are changing the way companies view their products through positive examples; they place importance on the preservation of traditional techniques whilst also empowering local artisans economically and spiritually. They have become a “revered presence in the fashion community” (Supernaturae, n.d.) and have been featured in high-end magazines such as ‘Selvedge’ because of their commitment to craft and the value they place on tradition.

Another brand that has changed its ethos to curate a culturally sustainable business model, is Faherty, a global clothing company based in America and Australia, who are dedicated to

people and the planet. “For years, the fashion industry has exploited and appropriated Native prints — and... so did Faherty” however, now “It is part of [their] mission as a brand to model a mutually beneficial relationship between native artists and non-native companies for collective healing”.(Faherty, n.d.) Taking accountability and giving native communities a platform to frame their authentic designs, also puts them in a position of power through their creations. Faherty “believe that in order to heal the planet and its people, power must be restored to Indigenous communities” (Faherty, n.d.). They give power through offering their platform as a way to reappropriate and retaliate against cultural appropriation. Faherty partner “with Native and Indigenous designers, hire Native interns, host a Native Board member, and work with Native-led non-profits”. Their business model not only aids Native and Indigenous communities, but influences wider modern thinking, modelling the way for other companies. “Now that we know better, we must do better” (Faherty, n.d.), consumers are positively responding to this, as Faherty have 208k followers on Instagram (FahertyBrand, 2023, A), and 71k (Fahertybrand, 2023, B) on Facebook, suggesting a socio-cultural revolution.

Companies such as Faherty or B Yellowtail have the responsibility to highlight “the brilliance and creativity of Indigenous people in the face of constant colonization” (Yellowtail, 2022, C). ‘Brilliance’, that can no longer be suppressed, as Lehi Thundervoice Eagle from the Navajo Nation states that “your dollar can change what is happening to the world”, “Building that hope” (Global Fashion Agenda, 2023), for the future of indigenous and Native communities.

In conclusion, immateriality holds cultural value. Making in a way that celebrates the immaterial is central to many communities, as it holds their values, beliefs, and cultural identity. The products created, through dependent arising, are interwoven in their beings, as the material becomes a reflection of their lives and environments. Having awareness and sensitivity to creations is a valuable way to connect back to ones roots, as the creator has imbibed the creation with cultural weight and energy through symbolism, and this can also be awakened when practicing the skill. This demonstrates that the soul bestowed within immateriality holds significant cultural value compared with the material, or end product. To further this, explorations could be made into how immateriality effects non-indigenous communities, to further explore its wider importance within society.

Modern consumption threatens the immaterial, as the voice expressed through the creation is removed through commodification, as well as the economic benefits, leading to suppression and censorship of minority cultures. To focus on just the material outcome will create a product that is disconnected and dislocated from the authentic community that it originated from, allowing commodity fetishism to take hold. Contemporary brands propel this by commodifying sacred artefacts, which then are turned into symbols of oppression, creating uncertainty around cultural identity.

I have argued that the rise of traditional making is mainly due to the immaterial aspects focused on by companies such as Faherty and B Yellowtail, that authentically represent the culture of indigenous communities. These companies have recognised the value of the immaterial and what it represents to individual communities and cultures. Yellowtail, Faherty and

Supernaturae to name a few, have established businesses that promote the immaterial values rather than the simple material product. Yellowtail has ensured that these values are central to the making of their garments, not only supporting the business but communities behind it. It could be further deduced from their success that the consumer is choosing the authentic over the inauthentic. This could be explored further by statistically examining consumer behaviour towards culturally ethical and unethical companies.

Immateriality offsets the harms of commodification by empowering indigenous communities, giving them ownership of the commodified product. The role of immateriality is to celebrate the 'soul' of the product, and the community it originates from. It becomes a key reason as to why people want to engage with the companies, over the cultural appropriation practised by Zara and Anthropologie. Indigenous voices are being heard through platforms such as Supernaturae and Faherty, and the consumers are listening. Immateriality, therefore, is one of the main antidotes to commodification.

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