A Critical Lens on Drawing the Body: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Size in Fashion Illustration Textbooks

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Scholars have extensively studied representations of race, gender, body, and size in visual imagery circulating in the fashion system. Studies examining fashion magazines reported a significant lack of racial diversity (Fowler & Carlson, 2015; Mayo, Mayo, & Mahdi, 2005) and a higher number of women than men in stereotypical or passive positions (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). Sypeck, Gray, and Ahrens (2004) found a decrease in body size from the 1980s to the 1990s in magazines, while Luff and Gray (2009) found an increase in the body size of models from 1956 to 2005. Scholars looking more critically at people of color found more light-skinned than dark-skinned models in *Ebony* magazine, a publication targeted towards African American women (Keenan, 1996); however, Mayo, Mayo, & Mahdi (2005) analyzed *Vogue*, and found nearly half of the ads featuring African Americans were dark-skinned women.

We argue that textbooks in the textile and apparel discipline are a part of an extension of the fashion system in that the future fashion and beauty producers (i.e. fashion students) utilize theses texts throughout the formative years of their college education. Reddy-Best and Kane (2015) were the first to critically analyze design and merchandising textbooks, and found a majority of White individuals, more women in passive positions than men, and an increase in women's body sizes over time. Our study extends Reddy-Best and Kane's (2015) study and examines representations of gender, race, and the body in fashion illustration textbooks in the 21st century, as they did not examine these texts in their sample. We asked (a) what body sizes are present?, (b) do the illustrations have diverse racial representation?, (c) and how are bodies positioned?. This study is informed by intersectionality theory, in that we are critically examining multiple subject positions (race, gender, body size) in relation to systems of oppression or discrimination (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality theory informed our research questions, the coding categories, and our analysis of the data.

We used the visual content analysis method, and examined 14 books published between 2006 and 2013. In total, we coded 3622 individuals in seven categories: gender (man, woman, or gender neutral), race (Black, White, Asian, other person of color, or indistinguishable) skin color (1-10), hair texture of Black people (straight, natural, dreadlocks, braids, or bald), body size (1-9), body position (open, closed off, active, mixed, or neutral), eye gaze (at self, at another model, at reader, at unknown, at activity, or none), and provocative (yes or no). We coded skin tone using the NIS Skin Color Scale where 1 was the lightest and 10 was the darkest. Body size was determined using a visual body scale from 1-9, where 1 was the smallest and 9 was the largest, and eye gaze was coded using an adaption of Goffman's (1979) scale. We created a codebook and continually refined each code as the coding process unfolded. An intercoder reliability of 92% was reached after we coded 20%-35% of each category in the texts.

We coded 3124 women (86%), 482 men (13%), and 16 gender-neutral individuals (0.4%). Race representations included 84% White, 5% Black, 1% Asian, 3% other persons of color, and 7% indistinguishable. Most illustrations had no color (49%), followed by 33% in the 1-2 skin color range. When examining Black individual's skin color, most images (43%) were coded in the 3-4 range, followed by 17% in the 5-6 range. For body size, most men (76%) fell in the 3-4 range, and women were most frequently (59%) in the 1-2 range, followed by 40% in the 3-4 range. A higher percentage of women (12%) than men (4%) were in provocative positions. Most women (39%) were in an open position, while most men (44%) were in a neutral position. Although few men and women were pictured in closed off positions, more women (15%) were depicted as closed off than men (10%). The gaze of most women (46%) and men (42%) were looking at the unknown. Most Black individuals had natural hair (46%), followed by straight (33%), braids (15%), and dreadlocks (2%). When examining race, gender, and body position, most women pictured (33%) were White and in an open position, and most men pictured (33%) were White and in a neutral position. All findings for each category will be reported in addition to other important findings that did not fall within the coded categories such as the consistent use of "intelligent" to describe a White male wearing glasses and the use of "sporty" to describe a Black male.

Based on the findings it is evident that fashion illustration texts are lacking mostly in racial diversity, which supports previous findings by scholars examining fashion magazines and textbooks. Additionally, Black individuals were more often pictured with lighter skin colors continuing the issues of colorism in society. These findings highlight the reflections of racial hierarchies present in our society, and support the need for more diverse representations in fashion illustration texts, an integral component to the fashion system.

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